

# CONNECTIONS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## COMMUNITY

Summer 2025



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## CONNECTIONS

### Story Behind the Cover

From concept to cover, over 260 TDCJ staff representing several divisions gathered at the Centennial Plaza monument to exhibit the can do! and let's do! attitude and camaraderie that exemplifies the TDCJ community.

Nia Hodge, below, is in the bucket going up to take the group photo. Mike Jones, bottom, is placing the best group photo in what is this edition's cover!



### Community in Action

#### • A FAREWELL LETTER TO MY TDCJ FAMILY:

On August 31, I'll be closing a significant chapter in my life as I retire after 40 years of service with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, including nine years as your Executive Director. As I reflect on my long and fulfilling career with this agency, it's abundantly clear that I spent my time in the very best of company.

We often refer to ourselves as family at TDCJ, and it has truly been my honor and privilege to work alongside each of you. You are the unsung heroes of our communities, tirelessly dedicated to serving our great state. This work is tough and demands a lot from everyone, but what truly sets TDCJ apart is the way we care for one another. Whether you've been with us for two decades or 20 days, you are part of an exemplary group of men and women.

We are a family because we stand by each other through the toughest times, support one another's growth, and take immense pride in the vital work we do for the people of Texas. Every role, every contribution, no matter how big or small, is essential to our collective success.

You'll see this spirit of family reflected in this edition of Connections Magazine. The stories within these pages highlight what makes this agency so special – real stories of real people that remind us daily that TDCJ is not just a workplace, but a true community for many of us.

As I prepare for this next phase of my life, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your passion, contributions, and diligence in improving and advancing this agency. Serving as your Executive Director has been one of the greatest honors of my life. While there have certainly been challenges, I am incredibly proud of the significant strides we've made together, such as investing in rehabilitation, enhancing security, and implementing new technologies. I've personally witnessed the positive influence of our collective efforts on those incarcerated, their families, and our communities.

I eagerly anticipate connecting with many of you before my departure later this summer. I am excited to witness the continued success of this agency as you all continue to fulfill our mission and propel TDCJ forward. Thank you for an extraordinary career.

Bryan Collier  
Executive  
Director

Cover photo: TDCJ employees gathered at Centennial Plaza.  
Back cover photo: Sunrise at the Wainwright Unit in Lovelady.



## WE THOUGHT WE LOST HER A FAMILY'S STORY OF REDEMPTION AND HOPE

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**“We thought we lost her,” Rudy Hernandez said, his hands clasped tightly in front of him. “I really had no hope. I thought I had lost my daughter.”**

**A**s a father, Rudy struggled with feelings of helplessness. “The hardest part for me was, as the leader of my family and the provider, I kept thinking, ‘How can I help my daughter while still supporting my family?’”

Rudy’s daughter, Emory Hernandez, was serving time at the Patrick L. O’Daniel Unit in Gatesville – her third incarceration at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). This time, she was facing a 13-year sentence.

Sitting between her parents, Emory opened up, her voice filled with the weight of her past. “I felt like it was over. I disconnected from my family. I wasn’t parenting, wasn’t taking responsibility. I made poor choices that led me to TDCJ, and I

felt lost. I thought, 'Man, I'm going to drown in here.'"

But something changed for Emory, a shift she can still clearly recall. "I remember realizing that it was bigger than me. It wasn't just my victim who suffered. There were so many others – my family, my children, the community."

Emory reflected on the pivotal moment that changed everything. "One day, they called me to the warden's office. I'll never forget it. They just looked at me and asked, 'Are you tired of coming to prison?'"

She responded without hesitation, "Yes. I am."

The next words she heard would alter her path forever: "Let us help you."

Emory was invited to join the STRIVE program at the O'Daniel Unit. STRIVE stands for Strength Through Restoration, Independence, Vision and Empowerment, and focuses on providing reentry support services to incarcerated women, which includes career skills development, employment and community support referrals.

The program also emphasizes soft skills that help women navigate interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being.

"We had classes on parenting, anger management, job interviews, resume writing," Emory said. "They were teaching us skills we needed to get ahead – skills that would help us change."

Emory decided to dig in and learn everything she could from the opportunity she was given. "I made the decision to take whatever they gave me and learn from it – not for my parents, not

for my children, not for a spouse – but for myself. I just started absorbing everything they gave me."

Through her classes she started seeing a change in herself. "My needs and my wants started changing. I didn't want anything from anybody. Inside something took place. That selfishness, fear and anger. That lack of consideration that I had for others now was gone."

That moment marked a shift that Emory hadn't felt before. "I was given an opportunity I'd never had before, like an anchor that just secured me. It helped me find stability."

The change was soon noticeable to her family, too. "We started seeing a transformation in her this time," Rudy recalled. "Through phone calls and visits, her attitude was changing. Instead of focusing on what she needed, she was excited to share what she had accomplished, what she was working toward."

Rudy continued, "She would tell us about her goals, the things she was learning and how she was applying them."

Emory's transformation didn't stay isolated to prison walls – it began to ripple through her family.

"The STRIVE program didn't just change Emory, it affected us all. She would share what she was learning, and we started thinking, 'Well, maybe we can apply some of these things at home too.' It sparked a change in all of us."

Rudy explained, "It felt like we were getting our daughter back. It wasn't the same as before. She wasn't asking for money for commissary; she was talking about turning a new leaf. She had hope, and that gave us hope, too."

Looking back, Emory's family acknowledged the deep impact

STRIVE had on their lives. "It saved our family," Rudy said. "It kept us together. We saw a future for her again. We saw her strength, and we found ours."

Now, Emory gets to share her knowledge and story with others similar to her as the Reentry Supervisor at TDCJ's Bartlett Innovation Unit.

Rudy explained, "Emory's employed today, she's self-supporting today. Emory takes care of her children. And if you look at where it all started, it was when the STRIVE program was offered to her. That was the beginning of it all."

Emory found redemption and gave her family the chance to heal, all while showing that even in the darkest moments, transformation and hope are possible.



*Previous page: Emory and her mother and father walk along a park path near their home in Temple; Left: Emory recounts her time in prison; Right: Wall art in the STRIVE dorm at the Patrick L. O'Daniel Unit in Gatesville.*





## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

**F**or some, serving the state of Texas is a family affair.

Angela Knighten, a 22-year employee of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), who spent 20 years in corrections and the last two in the Rehabilitation and Reentry Division as a Case Manager IV at Travis State Jail in Austin, was surprised to learn her daughter, Kenshavia Knighten, who was 20 at the time, applied to work at the unit.

"I found out through the warden," Angela recalled. "He said, 'Your daughter's coming in for an interview,' and I was like, 'where!?'"

At first, she thought it was for a correctional officer position, but that wasn't the case.

"She wanted to do something just for a little bit while she was attending her nursing program, so she went to the mailroom, and she's been there ever since," Angela said.

That "little bit" turned into an Administrative Assistant II position for the last five and a half years for Kenshavia as she loved it so much and enjoys working at the same unit as her mom.

"It makes it easier, and it makes it better because I know I have someone here for me all the time," Kenshavia said.

Seeing family never gets old for Angela.

"I enjoy seeing my daughter every day because we have that relationship to where we do talk every day at work. I just enjoy seeing her flourish. It's exciting to me."

Further north in Region VI, it's not just the family in grey that's working at Woodman State Jail.

At 42 years old, Agnes Lefua was feeling lost in her various customer service jobs, and she wanted something more. After expressing this to her brother-in-law, Tapuni Uli, a CO IV, she was soon led in a new direction where a stable

income and hours were a possibility. Tapuni encouraged Agnes and even his son, Pale Uli, CO II, to join him at TDCJ. He and his son both started their roles within the agency last year.

"They graduated before me, but they were the ones that motivated me to come join," Agnes said.

For Tapuni, who has a degree in criminal justice and served five years in the Army and 10 in the Coast Guard, it was a no-brainer to join TDCJ after talking to a recruiter.

"It definitely helped me with the order and ranking structure," Tapuni said.

Fresh out of high school, Pale was looking for direction in his life and his dad had a good idea of where Pale could find what he was looking for.

"I was asking if he had any plans or sports, he wanted to do. He didn't really have a plan, so I said this is an opportunity that you can do this with me if you want," Tapuni said.

They both went to the Region VI

academy and flew through the training with Pale excelling.

"I joined TDCJ, because I needed to find structure and it really helped me grow and mature," Pale said.

His proud father saw potential right away.

"He has a good head on his shoulders. When I was in the academy, I was the captain of the class and then the sergeant asked if I wanted to give it to Pale, because I see a lot of potential in him. I said, 'yes' and he became the captain, and he thrived and did a really good job," Tapuni said.

Now, the third member of the soon-to-be trio, Agnes, had her motivation from both her own family and her family in gray.

"They always text me, 'have a great day' and 'love and miss you.' Just that motivation keeps me going," she said.

"It was a six-week program and my sergeant and my class, the major there, everybody helped each other. Everybody was motivated and dedicated to bringing out our best, which they did with me."

Now the three are reunited at Woodman and Agnes knows she's in a good place.

"I get my actual family, and then I get my Woodman family who have supported me and helped me along this journey."

For the Knightens, Uli, Lefua and many other family members working alongside each other, TDCJ is a career that spans generations of families.



*Top previous page: Tapuni Uli, Pale Uli and Agnes Lefua. Right: Angela Knighten and her daughter, Kenshavia.*

As a foundation for growth in leadership roles, the book, *On Leadership*, is a provided resource for each Emerging Leaders cohort.



## STRONGER TOGETHER: A LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

TDCJ is comprised of over 36,000 dedicated correctional professionals who strive each day to uphold the mission of the agency. From our correctional officers to the support staff that keeps our facilities up and running, TDCJ is filled with individuals who take the initiative to lead their teams and the agency toward success.

To accomplish this, the agency developed two programs that bring senior staff and mid-level managers from across the agency together to create new relationships and foster current ones - Focused Leadership Conference (FLC) and the Emerging Leaders Course (ELC).

"To meet the mission of TDCJ, it requires every piece of TDCJ to work toward that goal. No one division has more importance than the other. Sometimes it is easy to get siloed into our divisions and departments. We are a very large agency, so you must break that down and have an appreciation and respect for what your peers do," Executive Director Bryan Collier said. "That's part of the process for both of those programs. It helps you learn what all those other individuals and divisions do and why their work is just as important as your work. It takes every piece, whether it's a big division or a small

division. If we don't all work together, we don't get where we need to go as an agency."

### Focused Leadership Conference

The FLC was developed by former executive director Brad Livingston and Collier, who was serving as deputy executive director at the time, with the first cohort taking place in Marble Falls in 2009. The program uses various methods to help team build, including exercises that have participating staff lean on each other for guidance and knowledge.

"We do put a lot of pressure on them while they're in the program, but we also give plenty of support. It's a high-pressure environment designed to really test them and help grow their leadership capability," Collier said. "They lean on each other to help get through the program and

develop a strong bond and that bond doesn't go away. That bond continues."

Another component of the program is developing a personal leadership plan. Susie Gunnels, deputy ombudsman director, said developing the plan allowed her to self-reflect on her leadership path and opened her eyes to how she can continue to grow in her leadership journey.

"During the FLC I was told, 'create a leadership plan; it will keep you accountable.' Since then, I realized the value of the plan and setting goals to work on. I started with a self-assessment and identified my biggest regret was leaving Sam Houston State University as a 21-year-old junior. I quickly began taking the steps necessary to re-enroll and now I've graduated," Gunnels said. "Focused Leadership taught me the value of prioritizing my leadership plan, as well as the

"The experience reinforced that leadership is not just about position. It's about presence, purpose and people."

growth and development of others."

Chief of Staff Rachelle White participated in the program in 2022 and said her biggest takeaway was hearing directly from senior leadership on their personal leadership journeys, lessons they've learned and the vision for the future of the agency. It's an experience she said truly impacted her as she progressed in her career.

"The experience reinforced that leadership is not just about position. It's about presence, purpose and people. FLC was pivotal in shaping how I see myself within the agency. It helped me understand that my voice and perspective matter," White said. "It also created opportunities to build meaningful relationships with peers across divisions and roles, and those connections continue to enrich my work today. In my current role, I strive to promote a practice style that is collaborative, adaptable to change and focused on serving the State of Texas with excellence."

### Emerging Leaders Course

Employees in mid-level supervisory positions, not only lead their teams toward accomplishing their department goals but also assist their supervisors in fulfilling their goals, as well. For individuals in those roles, the ELC is where they can learn new leadership skills while enhancing their current skill set.

"I think historically we haven't gotten our people into leader development experiences early enough. A lot of times when you do that, people create bad habits and are kind of set in their ways. It can be hard to break those. I think it's important to start talking about good leadership earlier than we have been, and Mr. Collier recognized that there was a need for this development for mid-level managers," Training and Leader Development Division (TLDD) Deputy Director Charlene Ellis said. "That mid-level group is one of the hardest levels of leadership to hold especially in an organization this large.

In mid-level management, you are sandwiched between the front-line staff and having a good idea for the work they do, while you are also the go-to for higher-level leadership for solving problems in the daily operations. I think giving them something like this and investing in them early goes a long way."

ELC was created by Ellis and TLDD Director David Yebra at the request of Collier in 2019. After many planning sessions, the new ELC was presented to Collier, and in 2021 the first cohort was selected.

Over the last four years, ELC has been a leading program within the agency for mid-level managers. Individuals chosen for the course are selected by their respective division directors to participate in the six-month program, which consists of virtual and in-person sessions, as well as one-on-one mentoring.

As part of the program, participants are paired with a division or department director who serves as their

mentor during and after the course. In each session, individuals participate in activities and discussions that allow them to network and gain meaningful perspectives from their peers and agency leaders.

Facilities Division Director Ron Hudson, who serves as a mentor in the program, stated programs such as ELC are vital to up-and-coming leaders because it helps them see not only their strengths but weaknesses. It's a quality that he said is important for new leaders to develop.

"I think it's very important for those to identify what their weaknesses are early on in their leadership growth. When you get into a director's role or a manager's role, it is important to be able to identify others' strengths and weaknesses, so when you begin developing your leadership team you surround yourself with those that can help your team excel," Hudson said.

Ellis explained how the course is continuously evolving from cohort to cohort to fit the needs of each individual and class. This allows the lessons and discussions to be tailored to the areas the particular class wants to grow.

"We usually see there are different types of people in the class. There are some from day one that are on the

edge of their seat, and we see complete engagement, and others who are quiet the first couple of sessions," Ellis said. "People take in information in different ways, and we believe that we're putting out information that everybody in this agency can benefit from. We're doing good things and are making a difference."

A 2024 cohort graduate and Parole Division Section Director Brian Phillips said the course allowed him to take the leadership skills he gained in the military and continue to build on them through hearing from agency leaders and interacting with his classmates.

"The perspectives of not only senior leaders but also those of my classmates opened my eyes to an entirely new vista regarding leadership. I saw the similarities of the challenges I had been privy to in my previous career, but more importantly, Ms. Ellis, her staff, and my peers helped me see the differences," Phillips said. "I came to realize, leadership is not finite, but fluid in nature, albeit grounded in a common foundation. This piqued my interest, and I became excited about the prospect of learning again."

"The fresh leadership perspective and the innovative tools I acquired in Emerging Leaders have enabled me to become a stronger Section Director," he continued.

"More importantly, I am now able to pass those amazing principles on to my staff, which sets the stage for improved productivity, efficiency and the essential ability to meet loftier goals. I've also seen a marked improvement in morale and retention – which is an amazing thing! Although these accomplishments are a collaborative effort between myself and my staff (with all credit going to them), I truly believe the catalyst to this pathway was Emerging Leaders."

Another 2024 cohort graduate and Office of the General Counsel Program Supervisor Melissa Wiggins said the course taught her to be more open-minded and empathetic towards her team members and to be as hands-on as possible. She contributes her overall growth as a leader to her fellow ELC classmates and her mentor, Chief Operations Officer Bobby Lumpkin.

"The lessons I learned in this course were amazing and very informative but my classmates, my mentor and the speakers I met during this course were the best takeaway. I know that I can reach out to many of my classmates and get good advice or guidance in almost any situation. I also know that I can reach out to my mentor, Bobby Lumpkin, and he can provide me with much-needed information and direction as I grow in TDCJ," Wiggins said. "It has opened

my eyes to the fact that I need to be more aware and more involved in what everybody is doing, or if someone is struggling, trying to find the best solution to help them. I feel like this course has helped me open up to my team and hopefully let them know that they can always come to me whenever there is something they need or a problem they may be having."

The true impact of the ELC is participating individuals gain a better understanding of what it means to be a leader through constantly learning from the course and also their fellow participating staff members. At the end of the course, participants not only walk away with the knowledge to better lead their teams, but with a whole new understanding of togetherness and support within the agency.

"People can feel when it's personal to them. I have been through several leader development classes but most of it was someone talking at me. Adults learn by doing and I think with leadership, a lot of people don't understand how to practice doing it. By

just practicing how to be a leader, I think that makes more of a difference than anything," Ellis said. "I think allowing them to practice techniques and having the facilitated discussions make a big difference. Everyone can talk through issues with their peers and gain different perspectives. You are also walking away understanding you're not alone and that we're all in this together."

When it comes to the future of the agency, Collier emphasized the need to develop more programs such as the Focused Leadership Conference and Emerging Leaders Course. As TDCJ staff collectively work toward accomplishing the 2030 Vision, he said it's imperative that staff at all levels are able to build their leadership skills.

"We need to continue to expand leadership

opportunities, our goals have to include that we're going to build the best leaders we possibly can in state government, and I truly believe TDCJ has the strongest leadership of any agency in the state of Texas. I feel confident that our people can lead through things that most people can't imagine having to lead through, but at the same time, building on those skills and on the experience of our team is what I think we have to be focused on. I think what we have is good, but not adequate for 2030. We must continue to expand and broaden those leadership opportunities for the agency and those people that are up and coming in the agency at all levels," Collier said. "Our focus will continue to be expanding those programs between now and 2030 and beyond."

*Award plaques and challenge coins for completing Focused Leadership Conference in 2022.*



## BEYOND NETWORKING A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM ROOTED IN GROWTH AND CONNECTION

At TDCJ, the growth and development of staff plays a crucial role in building confidence, self-awareness, mental health and community. Having someone that can guide you to reach your full potential in every aspect of your life, whether it be personal or work related, could be the start of a newfound purpose within your career.

The agency recently made significant progress toward this vision with the creation of the Office of Organizational Development within the Human Resources Division with Oscar Mendoza serving at the helm as the director.

The Office of Organizational Development is in its early stages of innovation after being created in late 2024. Currently, there is a small team of individuals who

are working to support and expand the office's initiatives, further solidifying its place as an essential part of creating an environment of human growth within the agency.

"It is four staff members and me. We might be small in number, but we're not small in vision. I have the right people to get started going in the right direction," Mendoza said.

The Office of Organizational Development has three key pillars that serve as its blueprint for being people-first and people-centered.

- Coaching and Mentoring
- Recognition and Retention
- Wellness and Wellbeing

The main purpose of the Office of Organizational Development is to

focus primarily on the person and not just as an employee.

"We really embrace the philosophy of our director, Mary Babcock, in being people-first and people-centered and how that role can have the capability to change the culture of the agency in a positive way," Mendoza said.

The coaching and mentoring pillar was built to guide employees regardless of the role a person has within the agency. From the office level to the unit level, anyone can be a part of the program.

Tiffany Kent is the Program Supervisor of the department and has made a career within TDCJ.

"There's so many things you can make a career out of, working in warehouses, business and finance, you can make a difference wherever you are," Kent said.

After working for the agency for more than 17 years, Kent has developed professional and personal growth through her various roles. Her hope is to help the department and meet staff within the agency wherever they are in their career.

Samantha Piedra, a sergeant in the Recruitment Department is currently a mentee in the mentoring program and was excited to share the benefits of this opportunity.

Finding out so much about herself over the course of the program, Piedra has found a new sense of trust and transparency. Though these things allowed her to improve both personally and professionally, they came with some difficulties.

"I think a lot of people struggle with looking at themselves in the mirror and facing the reality of who they are and that can be hard. What was challenging for me was facing myself and the things that I struggle with, then learning and growing from them," Piedra said. "I have learned to open up and just be vulnerable and I have been able to understand that this is a judgment-free space with my mentor, which comes with building that relationship."

"I really look forward to my coaching and mentorship

sessions that I have every month," Piedra said. "It really has improved me as a person, as an employee and my mental health."

For Kent, she is hoping to continue to bring mental health to the forefront of staff throughout the state.

"We don't talk enough about mental health. When we talk about you as an employee, we want you to be okay," Kent said. "So, we started our wellness walks at the Goree Unit to see what people want and what people need. We want our employees to be okay. We must get back to being selfless and understanding that we have got to take care of each other."

The goal of this organization goes beyond the surface level of conversation. Employees like Piedra are getting guidance from experienced mentors, receiving personal support and a new perspective on their career.

Making changes within and forming relationships with a mentor or trusted staff member can help employees to be more vulnerable and open when it comes to self-improvement or issues they may run into.

The mentorship program has helped Piedra develop a new sense of belonging and identity.

"Overall, I feel like it's just made me a better human. It's kind of like a ripple effect. You have your mentor that's pouring into you and pouring into everybody else. I didn't realize I was doing that at first, but when I was learning my skills and different behaviors with my mentor, I then subconsciously caught myself doing that with my officers."

Her experience has inspired her to want to become a mentor in the future.

"I feel like that really would be so great. I know the impact that the program has on people and if I could be a part of that and have that same impact on someone, I would want nothing more," Piedra said. "I know it takes a lot of work, but the TDCJ employees are so worth it."

The mentorship program is a powerful tool for individualized growth and development.

"I really believe in the program because it is so deep and real. It does work. You must be willing to put it in the work," Piedra said.

The implementation of these initiatives within the agency will not only support employees' mental wellbeing and professional growth but will also foster a sense of community that carries them throughout their careers.



*Tiffany Kent, Program Supervisor, Office of Organizational Development*

## BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH HEALTH APPS & THE MOTIVATION

People are often in search of motivation when it comes to living a healthier lifestyle. We sometimes set goals that are unattainable or make a New Year's resolution of going to the gym and eating a healthy diet, only to feel negative about ourselves when those goals or resolutions are not achieved. But sometimes motivation can be found from hearing two words from a doctor, "you're pregnant."

When Denise Mejorado, a specialist in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) Human Resources Department heard those words, she knew she would need to make some healthy choices.

"When I thought about making changes to improve my health, my first thought

was I need to cut back on caffeine because I drink coffee every day. Also, I knew I had to pay more attention to what I can and can't eat."

Mejorado was also reminded of the health initiatives offered by TDCJ.

"We occasionally receive emails about different health apps that are available. Now I pay more attention to those offers," Mejorado said.

At TDCJ, the agency is a family, and we take care of each other. This is why such an emphasis is placed on the health of its employees. TDCJ employees have access to many health monitoring options from blood pressure monitors to

weight loss assistance. How do these apps, devices and diet plans get chosen to support us through our time at the agency and through retirement?

Tara Morales, a Blue Cross Blue Shield employee, manages a team responsible for the Employees Retirement System of Texas and the Health Select Plans.

"I definitely have a special place in my heart for TDCJ," Morales admits. "Because once a week I get to meet with the TDCJ team, and we talk about ideas that we have that really tailor what we do across the state specific to TDCJ."

Any device or program involving one's health must be tested.

"We've got a team of doctors and clinicians that are really vetting those solutions. When we as a company are approached about a solution, we spend a lot of time looking



# PEAK PERFORMANCE

ENGAGE KNOW  
PLAN ASSESS

at it, assessing the members' experience with that particular program. It goes through clinical validation before we ever put it in front of our membership."

Morales explained the region and type of state agency affects the products chosen as well.

"It's oftentimes not just a box product that we add to a benefits package. We do a lot of work to confirm the language that is used in the application, the way that someone enrolls, and we really adjust it so that it fits for the state of Texas. We also are considering who the state of Texas employees are and what their daily life looks like."

One major advancement in health monitoring for TDCJ employees was the introduction of virtual checkups and at home blood test kits provided by Catapult Health. With Catapult, employees can request a free kit sent to their homes. When the kit arrives, the employee takes a blood sample at home and mails it to the medical

facility. When the sample is tested, the employee can have a private online video call with a licensed healthcare provider to review the tests and receive advice and possible health plans for the employee's future.

A few other health apps available to TDCJ employees are Hinge Health, Learn to Live and Hello Heart. Hinge Health is an exercise and pain relief program. Employees can create an exercise routine personalized for their needs. Virtual physical therapy sessions are also available. Learn to Live is an online mental health care service. This application offers evidence-based wellbeing and cognitive behavioral therapy programs. Hello Heart is an app and blood pressure monitor. This program can track your heart health and gives real-time tips that employees can use to help manage their blood pressure. The app can also keep records of heart health statistics, which an employee can provide to their personal physician.

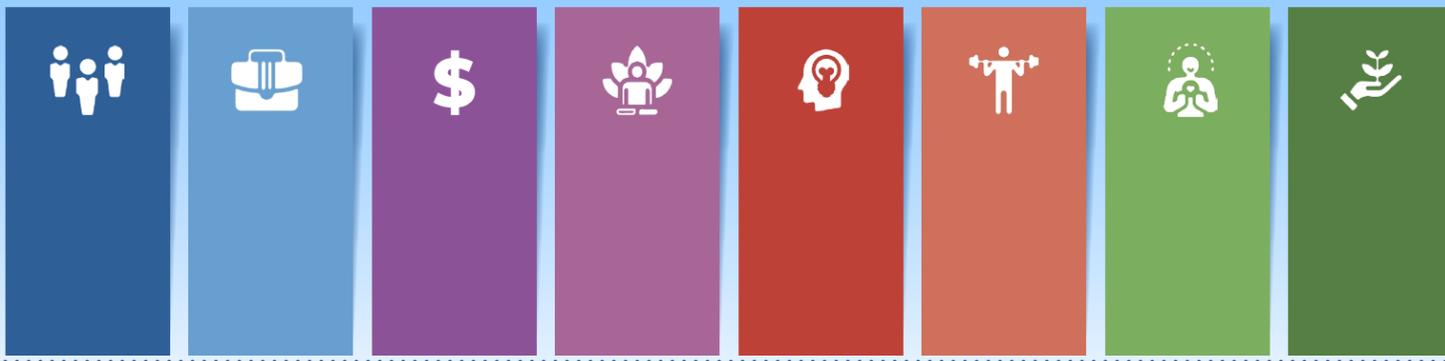
Mejorado signed up for Hello Heart to monitor her blood pressure during her pregnancy.

"I have some family members who had blood pressure issues during pregnancy, so I wanted to make sure I was keeping track." Mejorado enjoys taking walks for exercise. "I'm not a gym person, but I like to take walks around the facility during my breaks."

Morales also was able to use Hello Heart for her personal health.

"As a Blue Cross Blue Shield employee, I felt I needed to test out these devices so that I'm able to speak about them firsthand. My blood pressure was so high I had to go to my doctor and immediately get put on medications," Morales said. "The good thing though is that health scare kind of kick-started my good health. I was able to get on the right medicines and even lost weight with diet and exercise." Another new health initiative is mobile mammography. This mobile medical vehicle can be





Learn more about TDCJ PEAK Performance:

## CLOSING THE LOOP OFFICE OF FAMILY SERVICES

Having a loved one confined in a correctional facility can be a difficult and emotional struggle for family members. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is one of the largest correctional agencies in the world, not only in inmate population, but also in geographic size.

sent out to various TDCJ units around the state.

“Some correctional officers have difficulty finding time to go to their doctor for checkups and exams,” Morales said. “This mobile mammography really brings the care to them.”

According to Morales, we will be seeing a focus on diabetes on the horizon.

“We launched the Omaha Diabetes Management Program in April. This program will help employees who are diagnosed with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes and to help manage their condition,” Morales said. “That will be a big focus going forward.”

TDCJ employees can find a wealth of health initiatives available to them. Sometimes it can take a bit of motivation, but the TDCJ family will always be here to lend a hand.



*Makayla Yosko, Communications Department administrative assistant, checks her blood pressure with the Hello Heart monitor.*



**“I have a kind of unique ability to understand both views. It helps me merge the gap between inmate families and the agency while working to accomplish the TDCJ mission.”**

To the public, the inner workings of TDCJ may seem vast and complex. So what does a family member do when they have a question or are confused by a procedure? When they hear a rumor? Or when they receive a phone call or letter about an issue from their incarcerated relative?

They reach out to the Office of Family Services (OFS).

To bring a more personal touch to issues from family members, the OFS was created in the Executive Director's office to provide an outlet for information and referral for inmate families and advocacy groups.

Susan Gunnels was the manager of the OFS, but was promoted to the Deputy Director of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman at the time this article was published.

Gunnels views the office as critical to addressing inquiries, investigating concerns, and seeking resolutions that uphold transparency and trust.

“By ensuring that vital agency updates and opportunities are communicated effectively,” Gunnels said, “we strive to empower families

and organizations with the information they need. Every interaction is an opportunity to make a difference, ensuring that those in need feel heard, valued and supported.”

Looking forward, Britteny Skains has since been selected to lead the OFS, effective July 1. She has more than 20 years of criminal justice experience and has held a variety of positions within TDCJ as well as the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

“I am honored to lead the Office of Family Services and continue its vital work,” Skains said.

This transition ensures the continued dedication of the OFS to its mission of supporting families and fostering open communication.

Brandie Coffman and Briana Pope also work in the OFS. Coffman

has worked at TDCJ for 15 years, beginning as a correctional officer and rising through the ranks to captain at the Wainwright Unit. This experience motivates her to help the agency and the executive leadership communicate effectively with advocacy organizations and loved ones of incarcerated individuals.

“I personally believe that providing knowledge of an environment that has largely been closed off to the general public, can be most beneficial in assisting loved ones of the incarcerated,” Coffman said. “Time in this job has shown me that when families, advocacy organizations and incarcerated individuals are able to receive good and reliable information, it plays a big part in the agency's mission to rehabilitate individuals.”

In her five years with the agency, Pope has worked as a warden's secretary at the Beto and Holliday Units, which provided her experience with handling inmate issues as well as working with inmate families.

Pope gets her motivation to work in the OFS, because of her experience being the loved one concerned about an incarcerated family member.

“I have a kind of unique ability to understand both views. I know first-hand what it is like to have an incarcerated family member. It helps me merge the gap between inmate families and the agency while working to accomplish the TDCJ mission,” she said.

The OFS trains, supports and coordinates with the Family Liaison Coordinators (FLC) at the larger population units. The FLCs are the go-to on the unit when there is a significant question or a concerned phone call from an inmate's family.

The FLC is selected because of their level of experience and knowledge about unit operations and management. Along with their experience, they tend to have a natural ability and motivation for helping others. At the Wainwright Unit, that person is Debbie Phillips.

With 21 years on the Wainwright Unit, Phillips, a US Air Force veteran and Crisis Response Intervention Support Program (CRISP) Team member,

champions the role of the FLC, “to maintain ties with inmates and their families to ultimately reduce recidivism.”

The FLC provides families with information about an inmate's classification status, their location and any healthcare issues. “We also relay to an inmate any news of emergencies or other necessary information their family needs them to know,” Phillips said. At times, she has had to provide family death notifications and follow-up support for inmates.

Hot topics for the FLC include changes to procedures at the units, especially concerning visitation, such as the recent changes for purchasing items from unit vending machines. There are a lot of questions to answer about tablets, inmate property and medications, especially when an inmate is moving to another unit or when changing their custody level.

Like Phillips, Karen Coffindaffer, FLC at the McConnell Unit in Beeville, brings a ton of experience to her position. Coffindaffer started her career at TDCJ in 1992 and has held positions as warden secretary, grievance investigator and disciplinary supervisor at McConnell, Connally and Garza East and West.

“Each position that I have had the privilege of being selected to perform has assisted and

prepared me for the job that I accomplish each day as a family liaison coordinator,” she said.

For Coffindaffer, providing families with timely information and answers to questions, which helps ease confusion and fears, is one of the rewarding aspects of her job.

“I am able to assist wardens and other departments from having to stop their duties, and that means families of inmates don't have to wait too long for responses,” she said.

McConnell Unit Warden Larissa Wysocki emphasized the importance of FLCs to a unit.

“The FLC can be a valuable asset to a warden, promoting a more supportive and rehabilitative prison environment,” Wysocki said. “An FLC can foster stronger relationships between the prison administration and inmate families, promoting trust and cooperation.”

In addition, the FLC can:

- Facilitate open communication, ensuring families are informed about prison policies, procedures and inmate well-being;
- Encourage support for inmates' rehabilitation programs, increasing the likelihood of successful reintegration;



*The Office of Family Services. Left to right: Briana Pope, Susie Gunnels and Brandie Coffman.*



Rehabilitation and Reentry Division manager, Leonardo Colunga, discusses issues and answers questions for an inmate family at the 2024 SUMMIT.

useful diagnostic information for all the FLCs.

According to Gunnels, “The FLC or OFS staff may not be the subject matter expert for every call or question. But we are going to ‘close the loop’ and provide the family with a response.”

The OFS works closely with different advocacy

inmate tablets and medical. When a question or issue arises, we start with Susie!” Former TIFA Executive Director Sharon McKinney said. “For example, an inmate’s family members may believe their loved one is not getting fed or allowed to get a shower or go to commissary, the OFS can swiftly calm those concerns.”

The OFS is also responsible for planning and managing the TDCJ SUMMIT. Held at different times during the year and around the state, the SUMMIT provides families an opportunity to have open conversations with leaders from all of the TDCJ divisions, Board of Pardons and Paroles and Windham School District.

According to Gunnels, it’s a chance for families to meet TDCJ staff and see how all the TDCJ divisions affect the daily lives of inmates and parole clients.

“Agency representatives give presentations and engage with attendees, fostering understanding of available programs and services that support rehabilitation and reentry efforts,” Gunnels said. “Open to the public, these events emphasize the crucial role of family involvement in helping loved ones navigate their journey, strengthening community ties and promoting positive change.”

groups, as well. One of these is the Texas Incarcerated Families Association (TIFA). Founded on March 30, 1996, TIFA is now the largest such association in Texas. TIFA is almost always in contact with the OFS and the FLCs at the units. Their goals are to provide information to families who have a loved one incarcerated in a TDCJ facility.

Through cooperation with the OFS, TIFA coordinates subject matter experts from TDCJ divisions to share information with its members.

“We provide new member orientation, and we are always reaching out to Susie Gunnels to arrange for presentations for our members on topics such as commissary, visitation,

- Help resolve issues and concerns between families and prison staff, reducing tensions and potential conflicts;
- Contribute to improved inmate morale, reducing stress and behavioral issues; and
- Help maintain community ties for inmates, which is crucial for rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

Many of the questions and concerns can be easily addressed, but there are situations where a more in-depth investigation is necessary. Every family inquiry is logged and the FLC enters pertinent information into a shared database, which provides



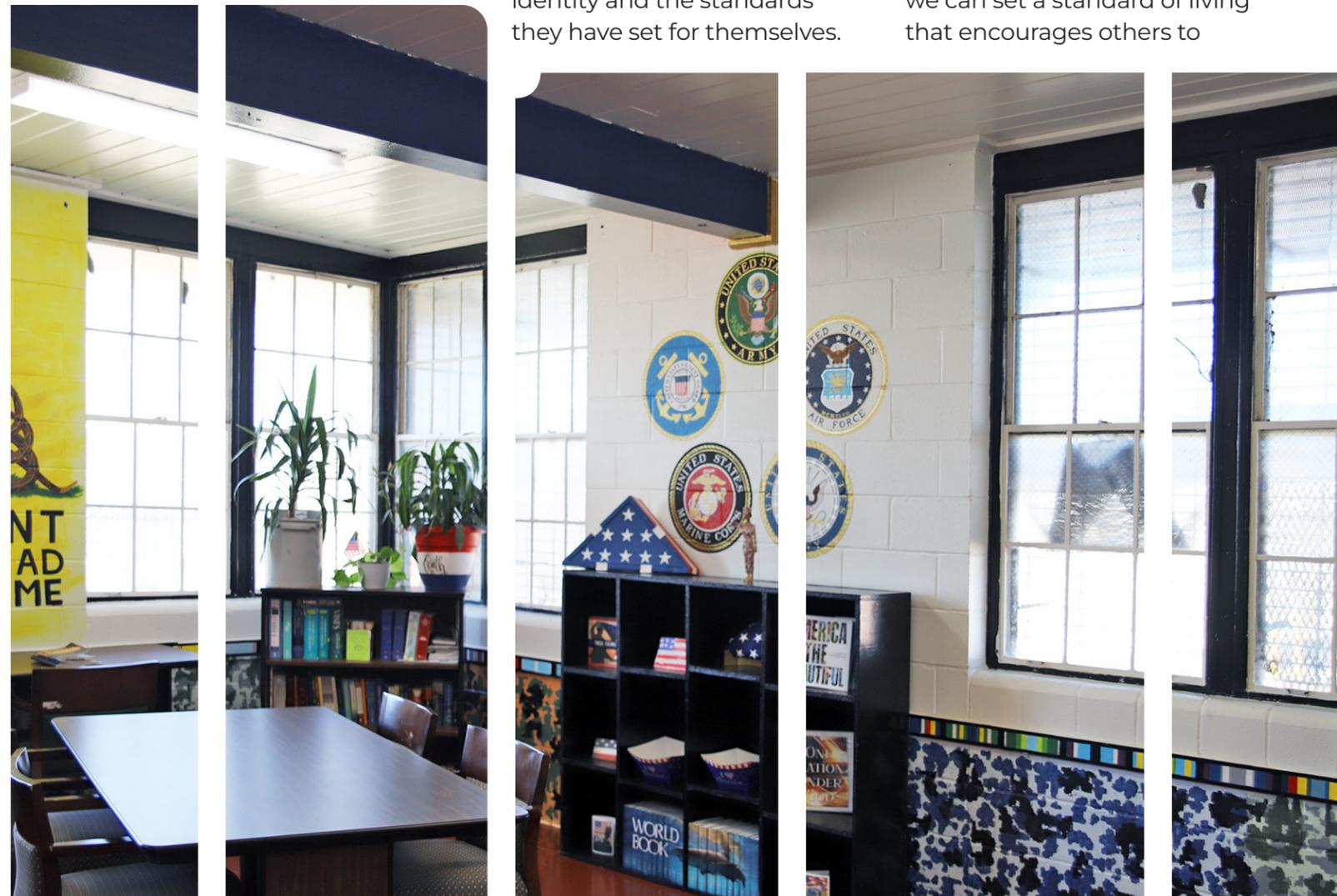
## A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

For the women in the program dorms behind the gates of the Patrick L. O’Daniel Unit, they are more than just inmates; they are a community. Day in and day out, they share their life experiences with each other, serve as cheerleaders for their successes, and act as a shoulder to lean on when life gets to be overwhelming.

Camaraderie, accountability and mentorship are the cornerstones of life in each of the five program dorms, where these words resonate deeply among the women.

A shining example of this supportive environment is in the S.T.A.R.S veteran’s dorm; S.T.A.R.S. stands for Service Through Action Reveals Strength. The women in this dorm take pride in their identity and the standards they have set for themselves.

“This program is special to us because when we are outside of this dorm and performing our duties, we are viewed differently by other inmates. It gives us a sense of pride, even though we’re locked up, that we can set a standard of living that encourages others to



**“We have success stories and people who are sincerely making changes. I know that it has helped me tremendously and changed my life.”**

meet those standards as well,” dorm member Anna Ruiloba said.

The women in this dorm have collaborated to paint their dorm and worked together to acquire coping habits such as learning to play the piano and soon, the guitar.

According to Joyce Turner, another member of the S.T.A.R.S. dorm, these dorms provide them with the mechanisms they need to cope with hardships while building relationships that expand beyond prison gates.

A lot of our sisters have gotten out and they’re reaching back in to say hi and sharing about their life. It gives us a chance to pray for them. We are trying to build an alumnus, so our support remains in here and after release,” she said.

That camaraderie past the gates is a common experience among program dorms. Kristin Gamez, a coach and mentor in the Recovery Housing Opportunity Program (RHOP), emphasized this. RHOP is a voluntary program where women live and work together to understand the foundations of recovery and sobriety, discovering what their lives can look like beyond addiction.

“As a coach and a mentor, we try to meet everybody but there are also those that we just connect with, and we can grow with each other, she said.” “What we are doing in here is translating out there. I have a friend now, no longer a peer, but a friend who is making her life work using the tools that we learned here. That has been a blessing when they reach out and we get to hear and commend the women out there that have been here.”

While the paint here is different and the living area set up for a class, the overall feeling in the room was one of comfort and healing.

Gamez stated that living in the dorms as a coach has been a positive experience.

“Everyone is here to grow and progress and having similar goals allows us to bring positivity into what we are going through and care about each other in the moments that are really hard,” she said.

For Andrisela Ng, RHOP helped her realize her drive to show other women they are not alone in their battle.

“I took the program and then I became a mentor. Before this program, I didn’t realize that sharing different struggles

with people who have been where you are really helps to process and network. It helps you learn the right way to cope and then you can adopt what works for you. Now, as a mentor, seeing their growth is exciting,” Ng said.

Similar to RHOP, the transitional dorm is focused on mindset, but not just for sobriety. This is where the life coaches are located and bring their mission of promoting positive change in inmates’ behavior to life.

The transitional dorm at the Patrick L. O’Daniel Unit was established originally as a behavioral modification dorm for inmates preparing for release. Now, it is available to anyone who is ready to change.

In this dorm, life coaches focus on teaching how your thoughts influence your feelings, which in turn influence your behavior.

Life Coach Enedelia Canales has been incarcerated for more than 15 years. The transitional dorm created a sense of community for her.

“Living in this dorm makes a difference in how you interact with others and even the way you take care of the things that happen in prison. Because

it is clean, you can walk in and it makes you take a deep breath and realize that you’re okay,” she said. “It makes a difference in your mental, emotional and physical health.”

Much like Canales, Marcie Moon has been in prison for 31 years and commended the increase in programming similar to these dorms.

“When I got to prison, we didn’t have programs like this, but I really think the programs are helping,” Moon said. “We have success stories and people who are sincerely making changes. I know that it has helped me tremendously and changed my life.”

Similarly, Angelita Salinas said that coming to the transitional dorm was full of positivity.

“It is really benefitting me because I came into the system at the age of 15 then got transferred to TDCJ at 17 years old,” Salinas said. “I wasn’t in a good headspace and my mentality, and my maturity wasn’t where it is at now. This dorm and the life coaches have helped guide me in understanding others and figuring out what I need to do next.”

*Inmates at the O’Daniel Unit in a discussion.*

“If I hadn’t come to prison, I would still be a high school dropout with no education and now I plan on going to college which is something I always imagined but never realized was possible for me,” Salinas said. “It is giving me chances that I never had in the free-world, and it is showing me that success can happen no matter what your background is. It will be hard to get there but there are greater things for me beyond my release.”

The STRIVE dorm provides women with the same knowledge that Salinas now has and places them on the path to success before even leaving prison. They work daily to teach the values of their name, Strength Through Restoration, Independence, Vision and Empowerment. The program prepares women for reentry through gender-responsive, trauma-informed programming, career skill development, employment and community support referrals.

“Whenever we leave and get to go home, the STRIVE program gives us clothes, shoes, and hygiene care. We also leave with a job, and everyone has a home plan and somewhere to go,” STRIVE cohort member, Tommi Cherry said.

Another STRIVE cohort member, Evelyn Shires said, “I have been locked up for 30 years and now I am about to go back into the world. This program is huge for someone like me because I don’t know that world out there. I get overwhelmed just thinking about it and in this program, I am surrounded by women and mentors who remind me that I can do this.”

These shared, lived experiences are the backbone of TDCJ program dorms and imperative to the overall success of the inmate. They allow those incarcerated to leave TDCJ not only with the tools they need to be successful, but also with a support system that will last a lifetime.



## NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION'S ANNUAL COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY

The Victim Services Division hosted its annual National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) commemorative ceremony on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at the Texas Prison Museum in Huntsville.

Special guests included keynote speaker, Alyssa Heatherly. A victim of family violence, Heatherly personified this year's theme: Connecting < KINSHIP > Healing, by giving back to her community and serving as an advocate and a voice for victims of childhood trauma.

Beginning when she was around three years old, Heatherly experienced physical abuse, drug use and childhood sexual trauma in her home. When she became a teenager, Heatherly found the courage and spoke out; her abuser was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Lacking a stable household with parents who made a series of poor decisions for her, she committed and dedicated herself to becoming a positive

influence on the children in her community.

"I am here to represent and be a voice for victims of childhood trauma," Heatherly began. "When I was old enough to understand what I went through, it was heart-breaking to feel the heavy hand of distrust."

"The biggest thing I want to do is to make sure that I can help protect as many children as possible from living a life like I did. Now, I want to be a safe space," Heatherly said, "and if one child felt like they could come talk to me and have me help them, I've done my job."

To promote awareness, every April, local, state and national

agencies and organizations, including the TDCJ Victim Services Division, participate in the national theme set by the Office for Victims of Crime, one of six program offices within the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice.

**I cannot tell you  
how the light comes,  
but that it does.  
That it will.**

*from "How the light comes"*  
– Jan Richardson

Speaking on the significance of the annual NCVRW ceremony, Victim Services Division Deputy Director, Amanda Gage said, "It is important to honor victims of crime and to recognize the extraordinary courage and resilience they possess."

At the first NCVRW ceremony held by TDCJ in 2022, the Victim Services Division planted a memorial tree at the Texas Prison Museum in

memory of and to support victims of crime. "By looking at the size, representation and diversity of the TDCJ staff attending the ceremony today," Gage said, "It shows how dedicated we all are to fulfilling the TDCJ mission and assisting victims of crime."

Sydney Zuiker, a member of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) who chairs the Victim Services Committee, offered these words about NCVRW. "In Texas, National Crime Victims' Rights Week is more than a moment – it's a movement!"

"Everything is bigger in Texas," Zuiker said, "including our commitment to supporting victims and their families. Through my work with surviving family members of homicide and victims of violent crime, I've seen the depths of loss, but I've also seen the strength of Texas communities who show up, stand together and turn pain into purpose. This year's theme, Connecting < KINSHIP > Healing, is a reflection of who we are – Texans take care of our own. We believe that no one should walk the road

to healing alone, and in true Texas fashion, we make sure they never have to."

Along with TDCJ staff, other criminal justice professionals and victim advocates, crime victims from around Texas made the annual trip to Huntsville. The importance of being at the event helps fulfill their need to be seen, to be heard and to participate in the criminal justice process. This year, Scot Harris made his second trip to the ceremony. Harris's mom, 76-year-old, Nancy Harris, was robbed and murdered on May 20, 2012, at her job at a convenience store near her home in Garland. During the robbery, the offender doused her with lighter fluid and set her on fire. She died from her injuries a few days later, on May 25th, surrounded by her four sons and their families.

For Harris, coming to the NCVRW ceremony offers him a healing connection from a community he never expected to be a part of. He acknowledged the importance of those who preceded him, who fought for and pioneered the rights he and his family have today.

"Throughout the difficult and long journey we've been through," Harris said, "we've always known from the beginning that there were people at our side and on our side, people who included us in this complex process and people who showed they cared about us."

Harris added, "Attending this ceremony puts faces on the criminal justice community. Even though most of the people here don't know who I am or what my family and I have been through, I can see they are people who care about crime victims."

To close the ceremony, Sydney Zuiker offered these last thoughts for the day. Zuiker said, "I love that the theme of this year's NCVRW is kinship, because kinship means humanity to me. Humanity is the most important aspect of victim services and community work. What we are doing and what is happening across the nation today is that we are pausing, to not look away from situations that are hard or scary or uncomfortable."

“Every victim of personal crime is confronted with a brutal reality: the deliberate violation of one human being by another. There is nothing more isolating than the pain of violation. It forces victims to question themselves and their world because it destroys two essential beliefs: their sense of trust and their sense of control over their lives.”

*The Crime Victim's Book*  
Morton Bard and  
Dawn Sangrey

“For victims of crime,” Zuiker added, “Kinship is more than comfort. It’s a word that means strength and solidarity and

hope. Today, we are standing together to show that victims are heard, supported and certainly never forgotten.”

*Left: At the podium, master of ceremonies, David Yebra, Training and Leader Development Division director; bottom left: Candles to honor victims of crime; below: TBCJ member, Sydney Zuiker.*



*Raeanne Hance, Global Director for God Behind Bars.*

## WALKING SIDE-BY-SIDE TOWARDS REHABILITATION

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) believes that rehabilitation is the true path to public safety. An agency this large can’t make this a reality on its own. Volunteers play a pivotal role in this mission and work tirelessly to help inmates on their path to, and in many cases, after release.

One impactful volunteer is Keidrain Brewster, owner of a trucking company, and a bestselling author. Brewster is also the creator of the Big Reform Movement, a community initiative aimed at helping incarcerated individuals find a better future. After his release on August 4, 2014, Brewster experienced success but still felt a void in his life.

“I found myself at the house one day sitting in this big, beautiful home and I was depressed. I didn’t understand why. I was like ‘you’ve got a nice house, a pretty truck, some money...’ and I could never understand why I was

feeling that way,” Brewster said. “Well, I noticed that when I was able to go inside the institutions to tell my story, that’s where the fulfillment came in.”

An agency as expansive as TDCJ relies on approximately 27,000 volunteers to help carry out its mission of rehabilitation. Many volunteers like Brewster come in and share their stories with the inmates to provide hope and show them a positive example of change.

“My job is to go in there and get the inmates to flip that switch. It has to be on the inmates to keep the light on,” Brewster said.

Brewster also highlighted the unique impact of working as a volunteer and peer.

“There’s a big difference between an officer telling them something who they see as an authority figure, versus someone such as myself who actually comes from the culture and who was actually raised in it,” Brewster said. “They’re looking at it from the standpoint of ‘well if he did it, I can do it too.’”

In recognition of his contributions, Brewster received a Governor’s Volunteer Award in 2024 for his volunteer services. This year, Raeanne Hance received a

Governor's Volunteer Award for her volunteer services.

Hance has volunteered in the prison system for roughly 30 years. She had a career in general contracting when someone mentioned that she should try prison ministry. This eventually led to her switching career paths, and after years of serving in various roles for non-profit prison ministry organizations, she is now the Global Director for God Behind Bars.

"I think that volunteers are the center of a life being changed. I think if you come in and you volunteer on a regular basis, I almost picture those inmate residents waiting for you. You're bringing hope," Hance said. "That means that the Texas government has done a tremendous job in opening

their doors to let others come in and be that ray of hope and sunshine."

Hance started to recall a story of her first time visiting a jail, where she was handing out Bibles. An inmate asked her, "What is this?" Hance replied, "Well, if you read it, I think you'll meet a man that you'll find out really loves you."

It was at this moment Hance felt like she was where she needed to be.

"There's a reason why I'm here, and there was suddenly a love that filled my heart for what society considers the worst of us. I felt the same kind of love for them as I do for my own family," Hance said. "It was just something at that moment that stayed with me the rest of my life."

Like Brewster, Damon West is a former inmate and current volunteer who understands the impact a volunteer can make on those incarcerated.

West is a keynote speaker best known for sharing his testimony of "be a coffee bean." West's story started in June 2009 at a county jail. As he was waiting for the TDCJ bus to take him to prison, he met Muhammad, another inmate who recognized West's fear. Muhammad taught him a lesson about being a coffee bean.

"You need to imagine prison as a pot of boiling water. You're going to have three choices on how to respond. You can be like the carrot that goes in hard and becomes soft by the water. You could be like an egg that becomes hard

in the water. The third choice is to be like a coffee bean. A coffee bean has the power to change the water around it into coffee," West recalled Muhammad telling him.

In addition to visiting facilities to speak with inmates, he serves them through education. In 2021, he was asked by the Board of Pardons and Parole to create a curriculum for a peer-led class. With assistance from his curriculum writing friends, Lisa and Rick Spain, West used his life principles and the coffee bean analogy to develop the the Change Agent Program for inmates to transform their lives.

"It doesn't mean they'll get out of prison, but it does mean they can get out of that prison in their mind," West said.

"Every now and then they'll ask, 'Why do you do it?' My response is, 'That's how I stay sober,'" West said. "And I think one of the reasons why God got me out of prison was to go out there and bring hope to the people in prison."

He shared a story of a volunteer who changed his life. West, struggling with his new life in prison, was talking to a volunteer who mentioned God. West became angry and said, "What do you mean, God?" When the volunteer shared "The secret of faith is, if you're going to pray, don't worry, but if you're going to

worry, don't pray." West said it stuck with him ever since.

The impact of these volunteers was so great that West said, "If I could be one tenth of what those volunteers were to me, I know that I've had a positive change."

These three volunteers are just a tiny piece of the extensive group that serve those incarcerated in TDCJ. Their volunteer service has a direct impact on the lives of inmates, their families and the recidivism rate. Together, our volunteer family strives to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those behind bars, reinforcing the belief that helping one another is what makes humanity truly great.



Left: Keidrain Brewster addressing inmates. Above: Damon West. Right: Raeanne Hance baptizes an inmate.



## GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR YOUR TEAM & YOUR TOWN



Inside any large company, corporation, or agency, you often see and hear the word team. There are some people in the workforce who love being a part of a team but the idea of a team building exercise, particularly outside of the workplace, can seem awkward.

**W**hat if your workforce team was a basketball team and your opponents were the local heroes of Livingston? Or what if your team building exercise involved a casual walk, or fast run, on a gorgeous April day where you're splashed with bright colored powder.

Recently, volunteers at the Polunsky Unit and other TDCJ facilities in the surrounding area experienced just that. TDCJ's basketball team, The Polunsky Point Guards, played the Polk County Go Getters in a basketball event that's nearing its twentieth year of existence. The Go Getters team is made up of Special Olympics athletes of all ages. These games are a terrific way to promote local Livingston athletes with special needs

to engage in community activities and sports. CID Deputy Division Director Daniel Dickerson played in this year's game. "We got stomped!" Dickerson said with a smile. "I can't remember what the score was, but we were just having fun."

Dickerson, a former warden at the Polunsky Unit, sees these games as a way for the agency to get more involved in the community.

"The public may not understand how things are at TDCJ because they only know about prisons from what they've seen on Hollywood TV shows and movies," Dickerson said. "Of course that is nothing like what it really is. So, if we can get more involved in our local towns that will show the community that we are

all normal people and just like any other person in that community."

The way employees interact with one another after a social event creates a positive attitude in the workplace, as well as in their interactions with inmates. The people may then think of new ways to connect with the community and the cycle continues. It can even be something as simple as a gift for the community members.

"Polunsky Unit made these nice gift bags for every one of the Go Getters. So, after the game we handed out the gift bags to everyone on the team," Dickerson said.

Dickerson knows it can be a struggle for TDCJ employees to get events up and running.



“It can be a challenge because everyone is busy. We all have responsibilities and families, and you feel like you can’t volunteer any time, but you need to make the time, because once you start, you immediately see the good that can come from it and becoming a positive part of these communities.”

Although Mr. Dickerson is no longer at Polunsky, he knows that unit is in good hands.

“There are some correctional staff there who go above and beyond when it comes to community engagement and TDCJ employee fundraising activities. Shari Hendry is one of them. She is always full of energy. I think a lot of the activities are going strong because of Shari Hendry,” Dickerson said.

Correctional Officer Shari Hendry coordinates Polunsky Unit events, the most recent being the 5K Color Run. It’s not every day that an employee can throw powdered paint at their supervisor, but on April

4 at the Polunsky Unit the 5K Color Run allowed employees to do just that.

Hendry promoted the event, “I knew I wanted to do a physical type of event. Something that could boost morale. We ended up having 105 people sign up and give their donations. Out of those, we had 75 people doing the run.”

“There were team members there to throw powdered paint at the runners. We all had our shirts that we’d ordered, and they were white, and they say Polunsky Color Run on them. It just brightens the mood. We had stations set up around the unit where the volunteers could throw paint at the runners. We also had gold, silver, and bronze medals for the winners of the race,” Hendry said.

The color run and other events keep Hendry busy. “That’s why I love to do it. I love to see people building their bonds and friendships. That always helps with understanding and getting to know people on the

unit. Some of our employees never even see one another because they work in different departments on different shifts, and they’re like, hey, you work here?” The money raised from this event will go into the Polunsky Unit’s petty cash, which is used for family emergencies if needed and for events during the winter holidays.

If a TDCJ employee is interested in getting their unit or office involved in community events, it can be helpful to attend local city meetings. Also, contact your local police department and sheriff’s office. Utilize social media to find out about upcoming events in your area and who to contact about volunteering.

“Get involved in your community, motivate your staff and get them involved in the community too,” Hendry said.



## PAWSITIVE IMPACT HOW ANIMALS AID REHABILITATION BEHIND BARS

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**In the heart of Bartlett, Texas, the Bartlett Unit stands as a beacon of innovation. For the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s (TDCJ) first Innovation Unit, a few unexpected and unique additions have transformed the atmosphere.**

**F**or the first time, the unit has embarked on two heartwarming initiatives: the introduction of a supervised petting zoo to its visitation area and a unique partnership with the Williamson County Animal Shelter to train deserving dogs with the dedicated help of inmates. These ventures signal a bold step towards fostering connection, compassion and valuable skill development within the unit.

The crash of a gate, a radio going off and excited voices are all normal sounds

for visitation, but at the Bartlett Innovation Unit, an unexpected symphony of sounds is about to unfold. The bleat of a goat, the neigh of a horse and cluck of chickens. Feeding animals is now a part of the family experience for visitation. This addition to visitation provides families with a unique experience they can all enjoy together.

First, a rabbit was brought out for the kids to pet. Next, they fed a miniature horse named Charlie and a goat named Esther. This was the experience that Quinn, 4 years old, and Declan, 2 years old, will likely

remember while visiting their uncle, Chris Bolton, an inmate at the newly reopened unit.

His sister, Kathryn Driver and her husband Daniel are happy for the new bonding experience. “My brother has been in for 15 years, and we’ve never seen animals, especially at visitation. It’s kind of exciting for the children because I know they get bored. They brought toys, which keeps the kids busy, and the animals are helpful. It’s exciting,” Driver said.

The adults are given a cup of Cheerios, and they distribute



them to the kids as they feed Esther and her friends through a gate in the outside visitation area. For Driver, it helps the kids connect with the uncle they rarely see.

“It’s a bonding experience that we would never have the opportunity for because no other unit offers it. I can bring my kids here and know that they’re getting a close experience with their uncle that they never had otherwise.”

For Uncle Chris, it’s about making memories of their visits.

“It’ll give them a memory when they come up here to visit me. You know, they won’t feel down the whole time. I just think it’s a great thing. It’s good for the families and brings everyone together.”

The program not only fosters connections between inmates

and their families but also provides a nurturing environment for the animals.

As the animal family continues to grow, Bartlett inmates are teaching basic commands to foster dogs from the Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter to help give them a second chance at finding a home. Eight inmates, all veterans, spend weeks training dogs from the shelter. Right now, there are four dogs in the Leashing Hope program, but they are expecting the program to grow. Through this program, they are gaining experience and learning

new skills that aid in their rehabilitation journey.

The unit’s warden, Lorie Larson, loves how the animals add to the unit.

“The inmates are experiencing a newfound sense of joy and fulfillment with their interactions with the animals showing them love and care. They are dedicated to training the animals to be their companions. The animals themselves have become beloved members of the unit, transforming the space into a comforting and welcoming home for all of us.”



*Chris Bolton, Quinn and Declan having fun with Charlie.*

## Wainwright Unit Bell

Prison units from 1849 to around 1950 had a bell. These bells were not used as a ceremonial act but as a communication method to announce different activities, such as count time, chow time, emergencies, escapes and impending weather. Bell peals of different cadences were established to alert staff of a specific activity or event.

The Central State Farm bell is still used today during the TDCJ Fallen Officer Memorial Ceremonies.



**DECEMBER 2024  
15 YEARS**

Tolani A. Abiola  
Carlos Aguilar  
Dustin G. Anderson  
Stacey C. Babauta  
Ahmed O. Banjoko  
Arturo Beckett  
Scott W. Billeaud  
William A. Boothe  
James M. Clark  
Jason T. Creacy  
Kimberly L. Davis  
Brian N. Dean  
Jerry D. Defoor  
Nicole R. Fuller  
Suzanne M. Fults  
James S. Galvan  
Odett V. Garcia  
Marcos A. Gonzalez  
Donna F. Goolsby  
Shirley Harrison  
Michael E. Hipps  
Richard C. Hughes  
Kenneth M. Hunt Jr.  
Phyllis R. Irby  
Charles U. Kanife  
Sandra P. King  
John A. Kolawole  
Kerry M. Landrum Jr.  
Latoya G. Limbrick  
John Litman Jr.  
Sandra Y. Manns  
Jared D. Maranga  
Kinsey L. Martinez  
Courtney R. Mason  
Jamie A. McClelland  
Melissa A. McDaniel  
Gina K. Monroe  
John M. Musyoki  
Victor B. Mwofoh  
Charity A. Nwaokolo  
Tina L. Offord  
Titilayo Otolorin  
David L. Perez  
Jenifer R. Piehl  
Michelle M. Ralston  
Autumn A. Raulston  
Erica J. Redic  
Jason M. Reyna  
Richard M. Rivers  
Edward E. Roman  
Keith B. Sandefer  
Juan Santos Jr.  
Courtney C. Shell  
Mary A. Stewart  
Mark J. Stobie  
Justin W. Taylor  
Timothy G. Thompson  
Jeremiah E. Walker

Rachel E. White  
Donna L. Wishon

**20 YEARS**

Stephanie R. Alexander  
Douglas R. Angerer  
Marc I. Bishop  
Laura B. Brown  
Joann J. Castillo  
Carolyn L. Dalesio  
Refugio Guerra  
Ruben R. Gutierrez Jr.  
Velvia V. Hargrove  
Sheila J. Hearon  
Mark R. Hernandez  
Kathy B. Hightower  
Thresia G. Johnson  
Cynthia Lackey  
Clarisa C. Lopez  
Juan A. Lucero  
Melissa K. Marx  
Lucian C. Marza  
Joshua L. Mattia  
Courtney M. Mize  
Martha E. Neaves  
Emily E. Nnake  
Olukayode J. Ogunbanwo  
Daniel K. Ojo  
Cynthia L. Reilly  
Lori B. Rincon  
Joe L. Roquemore  
Kellie R. Russell  
Belinda F. Sammon  
Kimberly A. Shipp  
Alicia G. Sims  
Donald R. Smith  
Sydney L. Smith  
Monica L. Smith  
Eddy Walley

**25 YEARS**

Demetria D. Allen  
Edmundo M. Cueto Jr.  
Kirk L. Curtis  
Datroynard D. Ellis  
Veronica A. Ference  
George R. Flores  
Denise A. Gomez  
Roel Gutierrez  
Amador Hernandez  
Faith P. Holt  
Stephanie A. Karnes  
Alphonsus G. Keke  
Jason L. Lindsey  
David E. Madjemite  
Helen P. Mayorga  
Dacia M. McInnis  
Gene E. Miller  
Samuel K. Okoroji  
Daryl M. Payne  
Joslyn A. Robins

Joe Rubio  
Jimmy C. Sullivan III  
Marilyn D. Taylor  
Tashena D. Wallace  
Terena Williams  
Hubert D. Williams Jr.

**30 YEARS**

Kristi D. Alexander  
John A. Bell  
Sylvia Campbell  
John J. Cirone  
Julie A. Courtney  
Michael S. Crutcher  
Debra A. Evans  
Rhonda R. Fenton  
John L. Lodini  
Jose A. Lozano  
Sabrina L. McNabb  
Lydania U. McNeil  
Javier M. Ontiveros  
Belinda A. Perez  
Mauricio M. Rincon  
Jose D. Rivera  
Felipe J. Rodriguez  
Leticia Scott  
Patrick D. Spiller  
Fred B. Steck  
Luis A. Villarreal  
Amanda M. Walker  
Sherry S. Washington  
Brandon D. Whitt  
Sammy L. Wilson

**35 YEARS**

Paul A. Belinowski  
Guy R. Cabeen Jr.  
Velita K. Humphrey  
Eunice L. Knight  
Terrilyn H. Merchant  
Tammy L. Ray  
Melanie K. Sisco  
Robert D. Warren

**40 YEARS**

Charles J. Bridges  
Curtis E. Franklin

**JANUARY 2025  
15 YEARS**

Gary L. Abrahams  
Kabiru O. Anifowose  
Anthony A. Atzenhoffer Jr.  
Nancy P. Baeza  
Jimmy D. Bailey Jr.  
Sabrina M. Barnes  
Sherry L. Barrington  
Iris J. Bishop  
Lisa A. Breder  
Dorothy M. Britton  
Ginger L. Campos  
Vicenta B. Cantu

Annadalia B. Cardenas  
Jaime M. Cazares  
Kil P. Chang  
Ernesto Cortez Jr.  
Chance M. Cozbey  
Angela D. Crager  
Jessica A. Dacko  
Justin H. Dyer  
Carla D. Evans  
Betty A. Finley  
Patricia L. Fite  
Donna L. Force  
James R. Fulton  
Arturo Garcia Jr.  
Roxana Gauna Chavez  
Tiffany L. Gilbert  
Shannon S. Gonzalez  
Cynthia D. Hagy  
Renee S. J-Rose  
Whitney N. Johnson  
Bedford F. Loyaly  
Deanna G. MacIntyre  
Jimmy L. Murray  
Oluwole O. Olasoji  
Adewale O. Quadri  
Bellarmin Remezo  
Agustin Rodriguez Jr.  
Tommy S. Runyon  
Lloyd W. Schuenemann Jr.  
Kenneth D. Shelton II  
Lori Smyth  
Andrew C. Swarm  
Ceondria C. Taylor  
Melody L. Thornton  
Jannet M. Torres  
Jude U. Uchewuakor  
Dana H. Weashington  
Miranda J. Weaver  
Clint M. Widner Jr.  
Janelle R. Williams

**20 YEARS**

Minerva Badillo  
Lucas I. Baxter  
Dorris A. Beaird  
Shane L. Brooks  
Tracey J. Ellis  
Alan C. Gilliam  
Candice M. Grable  
Trista L. Gregory  
Lance J. Horton  
Sally Y. Hosea  
Sarah T. Huser  
Shaneika N. Jones  
Justin T. Larson  
Chastity C. Lathan  
Todd E. Loaiza  
Rolando Martinez  
Kathy J. Maurer  
Michael E. Odika  
Deborah D. Owens

Joseph R. Pierce  
Ragin M. Reese  
Deborah D. Riley  
Kristie L. Robertson  
Sheronda G. Ross  
Bruce E. Salsbery  
Samuel G. Samora  
Regina A. Sanchez  
Teresa A. Sanders  
Lukuman A. Tiamiyu  
Saul R. Valdez  
Brian K. Washington  
Regina R. Young  
Kathy J. Zenker

**25 YEARS**

Cedric D. Adams  
Cristin L. Boykin  
Jennie C. Bracey  
Benny G. Bundy  
Reginald T. Burns  
Tammy M. Butler  
Peter J. Camacho  
Jose A. Chong  
Diana Clark  
Enrique M. Delacruz Jr.  
Jose L. Deleon  
Adan E. Garcia  
Seth J. Gobar  
Kelly Grant  
Robert E. Hayes  
Jaime C. Hovis  
Elena A. Hudson  
Reka L. James  
Calvin B. Johnson  
Alesia A. Jones  
Johnathon L. Josey  
Melissa A. Kimbrough  
Roland A. Lewis  
Amanda J. McCree  
Kenya A. Parks  
Michael W. Pressnell  
James W. Smith  
Jeremy R. Stanchos  
Bobby G. Stanford  
Ronald A. Taylor II  
Stacie A. Walton  
Tamika M. Williams

**30 YEARS**

Jeffery L. Beagles  
Bonnie S. Bobo Isaac  
Vonaceil Chandler  
Shera A. Colter Barton  
Shannon D. Easter  
Pablo G. Garza  
Kevin R. Grizzle  
Carlton D. Hightower  
Mary W. Hightower  
Donald C. January  
Catrina L. Johnson

Lloyd P. Kuykendall Jr.  
Virgle E. Miller Jr.  
James M. Mouliere  
Wilbert C. Orphey Jr.  
Clint E. Pavlock  
Ronessa R. Rayfield  
Ricky R. Rice  
J M Stevenson  
Jesse S. Waldon  
Billy P. Williams  
James R. Wynne Jr.

**35 YEARS**

Sandra M. Lee  
Cherie A. Miller

**40 YEARS**

Kenneth R. Batiste  
Jerry J. Brice  
Edward S. Gilbert  
David Hollins  
Linda J. Love  
Carl Neal  
Cesar Sanchez  
James W. Wenzel

**45 YEARS**

Janice M. Birks

**FEBRUARY 2025  
15 YEARS**

Mudasiru O. Adepoju  
Yolanda E. Barlow  
Jason B. Barnett  
Bryan K. Brooks  
Cherrelle W. Bynum  
Vanessa K. Campbell  
Dana L. Carrell  
Melissa Carrillopena  
Cassie L. Cooper  
Brently D. Cox  
Lisa M. Crawford  
Erwin R. Dahl Jr.  
Sean L. Day  
Kenneth R. Delaney  
Patricia Dominguez  
Willis J. Dossey Jr.  
Cordero T. Gentry  
Kristine M. Gentry  
Pedro G. Gonzales Jr.  
Indalecio Gonzales  
Dora Gonzales  
James N. Griffin  
William O. Hill  
Brenda M. Hines  
Barbie C. Hunter  
Steven M. Hyde  
Kizito O. Ibe  
Bennie J. Irwin  
Melanie L. Lassman  
Modupe O. Lesi  
Dionisio Lopez

Sara M. Lynaugh  
Billy A. McCreary Jr.  
Robert A. McLain  
Anita Mendoza  
Rebecca V. Miller  
Rebecca J. Nelson  
Oliver A. Obi  
Belen M. Olguin  
Gilbert Ortiz  
Jeffrey T. Pace  
Jiji Paul  
Minnie A. Pettygrew  
Patrick N. Pylant  
Shannon L. Reed  
Rebecca Rivas  
Miranda S. Rowlett  
Myra L. Sabbs  
Richard A. Salazar  
Bryan K. Sanders  
Doris E. Shelton  
James P. Smith  
Aryam S. Smith  
Dolores Standlea  
Michele M. Stephens  
Shirley F. Taylor  
Ernest Vega Jr.  
Donnale Washington  
Candice M. Wells  
William H. Westfall  
Crystal Y. Williams  
Tommy Ybarra

**20 YEARS**

Mark V. Allison  
Alexander L. Bell  
Martin A. Bellone  
Annie R. Coleman  
Cathryn C. Davila  
Christopher W. Divin  
Charles O. Ehikhamhen  
Martha M. Gonzalez  
Misty L. Graham  
Cory D. Green  
Lawanda Green  
Eddison Griffith  
Eliud Guzman  
Rashantay M. Harris  
Ebony T. Harrison  
Tanya N. Hudnall  
Tongela S. Jacobs  
Tajuana E. Johnson  
Crystal J. Judie  
Emilia A. Kolar  
Bobbie J. Kuykendall  
Lashonda R. Lynch  
Jennifer S. Mable  
Eric F. Maranon  
Tiffany M. Mason  
Cory A. McCarty  
Monica E. McCormick

Vonda L. McDaniel  
Becky J. Mercer  
Ernestina C. Montoya  
Natalie Noble  
Brandi N. Ortega  
Wilfredo C. Perez  
Audrianne Y. Redd  
Jack D. Reeves  
Erin F. Richard  
Albert B. Sendejo  
Terri R. Speer  
Leslie M. Swan  
Lequita S. Thomas  
Leta M. Warner  
Irvin R. Washington Jr.  
Sundae Webb Mcduffie  
Yesenia M. Yzaguirre  
Ty B. Zuber

**25 YEARS**

Larry R. Anderson  
Bertha S. Arguelles  
Kathleen K. Blifford  
Valencia R. Brown  
Paul A. Casas  
Rudolph Castaneda  
Albert L. Courtney  
Olukayode K. Dosunmu  
Sondra C. Fitchett  
Norma G. Flores  
Hilda Garcia  
Robert L. Harkrider  
Kenneth D. Herring  
Deborah L. Kelly  
Patricia A. Ledbetter  
Rachel Lipsey  
William M. Majette  
Latasha M. Maston  
Anthony T. Mature  
Daniel D. McCoy  
Kelly R. Metz  
Kingsley A. Onwuli  
Linda K. Rollins  
Martha D. Saenz  
Martha L. Sanders  
Sharenda R. Thomas  
Cheryl R. Voisin  
Rhonda R. Ware  
Linda J. Warren  
Martha A. Williams

**30 YEARS**

Rowland A. Akpom  
Jarvis L. Atkins  
Jimmy D. Bagby  
Jennifer R. Blake  
Bryan K. Broussard  
Charlotte L. Brown  
Michael B. Cross  
Rebecca L. Dewbre  
Eric G. Fletcher

*February continued*

Jimmy C. Garza  
Jason M. Gould  
Katina Y. Hollie  
Lydia A. Hudnell  
Susan J. Letter  
Honoria V. Martinez-  
Tenorio  
Kelvin D. Masters  
Randy S. Mobley  
Maxine M. Myers  
Cody R. Parker  
Karen B. Richards  
Elvis D. Simmons  
Brian S. Smith  
Katina D. Smith  
Mark W. Thompson  
Cesar D. Trejo  
Karen A. Vaughns  
Landron M. Williams  
Derek W. Williams  
April M. Zamora

**35 YEARS**

Margaret A. Birdwell  
Allen C. Cullar  
Demetrius E. Hollins  
Vijaya K. Katragadda  
David Marsh  
Cherie A. Miller  
Linda L. Osio  
Beverly M. Parker  
Philip T. Rodriguez  
Patricia A. Sonsel  
Kenneth L. Thompson

**40 YEARS**

Carrie J. Cobb  
Jesus Delapena  
Joseph P. Doherty  
Jason R. Green  
Jerry D. Jiles  
Donald E. Muniz  
Ronnie A. Sanford  
April S. Thompson  
Edith J. Webb  
Nolen E. Wilson

**MARCH 2025**

**15 YEARS**

Ramon A. Adeniji  
Kathy S. Akin  
Brady C. Allison  
Georges Bate  
Steven E. Bonton  
Steven L. Boyd  
Jamie L. Brooks  
Shannon J. Budell  
Jonathan W. Burks  
Tanya L. Cantu  
Robert F. Carroll Jr.  
Shelley R. Chambers

Brandie Coffman  
David N. Conde  
Aj Coon  
Tina M. Darity  
Cynthia M. Dean  
Trenda Y. Doze  
Jeffery A. Ervin  
Eva Q. Escalante  
Veronica J. Falaye  
Javier Garcia  
Theron K. Harrison Sr.  
Twanna R. Haskins  
Tanira D. Holman  
Thomas E. Hudgens Jr.  
James M. Hurst  
Janicka L. Jones  
Tilneshia L. Jones  
Pamela G. Lane  
James P. Lowery  
Isabel Macias  
Richard D. Manear  
John E. McClanahan  
Michael E. McLoughlin  
David J. Middleton  
Phillip C. Mitchell  
Linda F. Montgomery  
Troy V. Mortensen  
George D. Nelson  
Lisa G. Nelson  
Rose M. Nelson  
James F. Parish  
Christopher Polk  
Luis A. Reyes  
Noel R. Reyna  
Shannon I. Sanchez  
Kristy A. Saucedo  
Marjeanne Simon  
Jonathon D. Smallwood  
Keith B. Sneed  
Doris L. Sutherland  
Sherry D. Taylor  
Troy L. Thrash  
Dustin A. Twombly  
Jorge A. Vasquez  
Gloria I. Weems  
Raymond P. Wheeler Jr.  
Tiffany A. Williams  
Richard A. Wolf  
Colby A. Woodrum  
Jeffrey O. Woods

**20 YEARS**

Martin Acosta  
Oluwakemi O. Adeusi  
Cynthia C. Anding  
Juan M. Andrade Jr.  
Demetria L. Aziz  
David W. Bates  
Greg A. Batesla  
Vickie D. Brown  
Joni L. Bullard

Christopher B. Cegielski Jr.  
Cynthia M. Dean  
Steven W. Ellis  
Tarophilya L. Gordon  
Lilynn M. Hamner  
Helen M. Hartsfield  
Tonya M. Heiler  
Craig P. Huffman  
Willie Iverson  
Kimberley N. Johnston  
Charles T. Knous  
Michelle R. Lamoon  
Paula M. Lopez  
Lorie A. Manrique  
Shiemika Matthews  
Jacques N. Mayer  
Mark T. McGaughey  
Glenda J. McNiel  
Monica L. Mitchell  
Kinitra D. Mitchell  
Robin Munn  
Lawrence O. Olatunde  
Jason A. Overall  
Lavada L. Owens  
Leslie E. Pee  
Brian H. Rayburn  
Raul Razo  
Therita D. Robinson  
Amelinda Rodriguez  
Humberto Rosales  
Gary M. Schattel  
Stephen M. Sloterdijk  
Jeanetta M. Spikes  
Lashea A. Thompson  
Modesto Urbina Jr.  
Michael W. Venable  
Wayne L. Watterson  
Lisa M. Weiss  
Robert A. Wheeler  
My-Loan White  
Erick K. Whitworth

**25 YEARS**

Jose L. Aguayo  
Jenevieve Andersen  
Melinda S. Billingsley  
James M. Brinkley Jr.  
Tracy L. Brown  
Jason D. Campbell  
Russell W. Cowan  
Frank J. Cunningham Jr.  
Benjamin F. Ferguson  
Robin C. Gibson  
Beatriz E. Gifford  
Kimberly M. Gilbert  
Thelma J. Gomez  
Michael L. Gunnels  
Joe D. Mangum  
Shameka L. McGaha  
Vitalis A. Okere  
George Regalado Jr.

David B. Ritchie  
Misty M. Rogers  
Angela L. Rudd  
Guy C. Uzodinma  
Stephanie J. Vondra

**30 YEARS**

Jerry D. Adams Jr.  
Lance D. Bledsoe  
Sammy G. Bond II  
Kennith E. Brady  
Diego Contreras  
Matthew G. Dunbar  
Mona L. Ferguson  
Audrea Z. Gannaway  
Kerry P. Hahn  
Albert A. Hearon  
Elbert G. Holmes  
James A. Hoop  
Kimberly D. Keenum Pinon  
Elizabeth A. Klevenski  
Jessica Leyva  
Mike R. Malone  
Ralph Marez Jr.  
Dennis A. Martin  
Donald H. Mullen  
Paula S. Oliver  
Laura L. Pryor  
Ricky C. Rasbeary  
Charles P. Stokes  
Olene Y. Supak  
Gloria J. Warren

**35 YEARS**

Francis K. Akah  
Earl B. Brown Jr.  
Patsy L. Krueger  
Fred N. Magouirk  
Arnoldo Martinez  
Billy J. Reese

**40 YEARS**

Yulonda M. Hill  
Adrian Molina  
Ianthia Ross  
Roynett E. Shaw  
Roger C. Shed

**45 YEARS**

Guadalupe Cantu

**APRIL 2025**

**15 YEARS**

Sunday A. Adeyemi  
Bennie R. Allison  
Constance Armstrong  
Chinenye H. Ayinde  
Robert S. Bower  
Edward L. Brent  
Jekerria R. Carter  
Delana M. Chachere  
Bruce Cobbs  
Jeffery S. Daniels

Marshall D. Edwards  
Kenneth W. Flowers  
Jason P. Francis  
Fran G. Freeland  
Staycee L. Gibson  
Micheal Gober  
Darryl Goffney  
Irma L. Gonzalez  
Joseph M. Green  
Richard L. Gutierrez  
Robert R. Harrell  
Michael W. Harris  
Fredrick R. Harris Jr.  
James W. Hogg  
Frank R. Holland  
Michelle D. Hyte-  
Willingham  
Tonya Johnson  
Janice D. Jones  
Rexford Kingston  
Kadie Koroma  
Terry L. Lane Jr.  
Monica R. Lang  
Naomi A. Law  
Jacob M. Little  
Maryme B. Lozano  
Anthony A. Mack  
Steven Martinez  
Carolyn C. Mayo  
Amy E. McCalister  
Bradley R. Mcdanel  
Roy E. McGaugh  
Sandra Rodriguez  
Eric J. Rolling  
Vanessa R. Ross  
David E. Smith  
Steven R. Taylor  
James M. Thrailkill  
Michael D. Watson  
Ronald L. White  
Marvin G. Williams  
Joseph M. Wren

**20 YEARS**

Esmeralda Aguirre  
Christiana A. Akintode  
Jamie L. Brewer  
Rut M. Cano  
Ricardo Carmona  
Annette Castellanos  
Salvador A. Castro  
Karin L. Chadwick  
Sean D. Dailey  
Michael C. Dowdy Jr.  
Tiffany T. Eldridge  
Necole A. Ellison  
Theodule N. Foncha  
Desiree A. Garcia  
Cornelia Y. Garrett  
Cortney M. Gibson  
Deborah F. Grayer

Adam M. Harley  
Lisa Hasette Garcia  
Melisa I. Hill  
Neddie P. Holland Moore  
Ivory Howard  
Ltanya L. Ivory  
Jennifer R. Joseph  
Jaunissia N. Josiah  
Kurtis L. Kirkham  
Dayla L. Kitchens  
Coty L. Kitkoski  
Ramon M. Kliatchko  
Chantel D. Lavigne  
David J. Louie  
Shikkila J. Morrison  
Mary L. Pedraza  
Karen M. Pennington  
Dana D. Philipp  
Eric J. Reed  
Maricela Rendon  
Alicia M. Scott  
Jessica E. Shelly  
Donald W. Tyner II  
Melissa O. Vega  
Effie M. Venson  
Jacqueline M. Williams  
David K. Winkles

**25 YEARS**

Sanjuanita V. Aynes  
Carie A. Beaty  
Yesenia Bravo Vazquez  
Deanna E. Breckenridge  
Amy K. Brown  
Ysabel Camacho  
Angela T. Choate  
Joseph I. Degeorge  
Ramona Denson  
Tammy L. Dunnam  
Roshanda L. Ferguson  
Laura M. Franco  
Eladio S. Gallegos Jr.  
Alberto M. Gamboa  
Joe L. Garcia  
Rita L. Garfield  
Kenneth R. Griggs  
Dinah R. Hoffman  
Kara Howe  
Latashia R. Humphrey  
Victor W. Johnson  
Michael T. Johnson  
Ella V. Johnson  
Tiffany N. Long  
Olga A. Lopez  
Sandra K. Lott  
Gabriel G. Lozano  
Tony R. Mason  
Raeann Y. McMillian  
April D. Reyna  
Karla Ricalday  
Shaunte D. Rideaux

Ana L. Rodriguez  
Deborah K. Salsiccia  
Lisamarett Sanchez  
Kathy Sinette  
Christopher R. Smith  
Cynthia S. Stout  
Joel H. Subia  
Enid B. Thomas  
Michael A. Thomas  
Carolyn G. Thompson  
Jesus J. Valdez  
Marcela D. Vasquez  
Brenda J. Wilson  
Julia N. Wooten

**30 YEARS**

Leo Carbajal  
Darrell R. Carrington  
Jonathan W. Clark  
Michael W. Colley  
Laura B. Dean  
Pamela E. Duncan  
Harlan E. Gannaway  
Shirley C. Gardner  
Joe C. Gonzales Jr.  
Rodolfo Gonzalez  
Jason W. Hall  
Gregory S. Hicks  
Angela R. Hill  
Martha N. Jeffrey  
Tomeka R. Johnson  
Tiffany S. Johnson  
Kelly L. Kotzur  
Aubrey E. Lamphere  
Pamela S. McMahan  
Rachel Opeters  
Michael H. Proctor  
Bobby D. Rigsby  
Kenneth B. Rushing  
Melissa F. Strong  
Buck L. Taylor

**35 YEARS**

Kevin L. Andis  
Luis R. Garza Jr.  
Yolanda P. Green Gibson  
Denise A. Henry  
Rodney W. Lester  
Tammy L. Ray  
Edward Salazar  
Cynthia A. Tatsch  
Donald E. Williams  
Phyllis Y. Wiser

**40 YEARS**

Jeff M. Baldwin  
Louis E. Castell Jr.  
Broderick L. David  
Lee V. Glass Jr.  
Charles D. Hubbard Jr.  
John M. Knapp  
Gloria S. Mills  
James B. Whitehead

**50 YEARS**

Dazawion D. Cooper

**55 YEARS**

Terry W. Wunderlich

**MAY 2025**

**15 YEARS**

Moses A. Abdulahi  
Kolawole M. Alabi  
Michael A. Aleman Jr.  
Tony L. Baggett  
John B. Bell  
Etta S. Brooks  
Gertrude A. Brown  
Homa E. Caldwell Tomas  
Valentina Casarez  
Faisal G. Chaudhry  
Shirley A. Clark  
Stephanie L. Cox  
Jessica N. Curtis  
Titilayo S. Elias  
Shawn R. Estes  
Christopher A. Farrell  
Nolan R. Glass  
Terry C. Godosar  
Arianna A. Gonzalez  
Tommy Green  
Ashley D. Hatchett  
Moneik H. Jackson  
Ajith K. Job  
Jarrod G. Johnson  
Lekendrick D. Johnson  
Garrett N. Jonas  
Darin R. Lawson  
Sharon R. Lee  
Stacey L. Lilljedahl  
Hope B. Lopez  
Daniel L. MacWilliams Jr.  
Angela M. Martin  
Garland M. Matlock  
Gordon H. Monk III  
Joanna R. Njie  
Delicia D. Oguinn  
Jesus J. Olazaba  
Gary D. Polk  
Ashley R. Pygott  
Jose L. Ramirez  
Jeremy S. Raschke  
Donald R. Reese  
John E. Roberts  
Renato L. Rosales  
Danny W. Scott  
Sean O. Sutherland  
Ernest S. Talasek  
Cody L. Timmons  
Pamela L. Waid  
Joshua W. Whitney  
Robert N. Williams III  
Steven P. Wilson  
Colby A. Woodrum  
Thomas H. Wright

May continued

**20 YEARS**

Mudashiru O. Ajiteru  
Patrick W. Allmon  
Daniel L. Boone  
Elliott J. Broussard  
Barry L. Burton  
Jacqueline P. Butler  
Priscilla Calzadillas  
Randy Cavazos  
Robin G. Chandler  
Jonathan D. Convis  
Abel Cortinas  
Bobby R. Crawford  
Sonia Delgado  
Shannon E. Edwards  
Audrey S. Farley  
Troy K. Fisher  
Michael P. Goff  
Jimmy L. Hail  
Kevin D. Harris Sr.  
Scotty M. Henderson  
Michael J. Kluck  
Chelsie L. Lenor  
Bryant K. Lister  
Larry J. Litzman  
Nyeiches S. Love  
Raul Melero  
Sarah M. Miller  
Daniel Munoz  
Sheena D. Osborn Cross  
Mark A. Rhodes  
Marta Rodriguez  
Michael H. Ross  
Marie A. Titus  
Gregory L. Voss  
Nadia L. Washington  
Talmi T. Winfrey

**25 YEARS**

Raymond L. Cain Jr.  
Anthony W. Coleman  
Ruth A. Enriquez  
Enrique Mata  
Susan A. Moffitt  
Melinda M. Ozuna  
Misty M. Rogers  
Priscilla A. Saldana  
Yvette D. Scarlett  
Margaret A. Schillaci  
David E. Schlewitz  
Claudia B. Ukutegbe  
George R. Walters  
Rachel S. Washington  
Timothy D. Weich  
Minnie L. White  
Bernice Williams  
Joanne Williams  
Antoinette R. Winston

**30 YEARS**

Ricardo C. Acosta  
Rodger E. Bowers  
Jeffery A. Butler Jr.  
Christopher G. Carter  
Christopher W. Cirrito  
Dustan B. Commander  
Early M. Douglas  
James W. Johnson Jr.  
David L. Lara  
Sandy B. Major  
Miguel L. Martinez  
English McFadden  
Jose M. Molina  
Mario Munoz Jr.  
Christian O. Nweke  
Brian J. Nye  
Mark A. Raley  
Ricky C. Rasbeary  
Rhonda A. Roark  
Jerry J. Sanchez  
Chadwick A. Shoop  
Yolanda S. Tamez  
Eloy Torres  
Monica P. Transue  
Yvette Winston

**35 YEARS**

Leontyne Haynes  
Monica C. Lee

**40 YEARS**

Thomas R. Butler  
Susan G. Byers  
Roy G. Callaway Jr.  
Joe R. Carmichael  
Lavan J. Cooper  
Norma A. Gray  
Mumin O. Shegow  
Charles F. Washington

**45 YEARS**

Therman E. Lane  
Belton K. Woodson

**RETIREES**

**JANUARY 2025**

Amos O. Adetunji  
Ceymon S. Andrews  
Victoria Ankamah  
Samuel O. Anyamene  
James D. Arnold  
Larmon D. Arons  
Sunny Benivamondez  
Don L. Boyce  
Karen E. Buckridge  
John D. Busalacchi  
Rebecca J. Carson  
Jeryl D. Cockerham  
Jeanie R. Conn  
Robbie L. Fields-Maddox  
Vanessa C. Galvan  
Alcario Garcia, Jr.  
Michael Glaspie  
Denise A. Gomez  
Larry S. Graham  
Sharon M. Griffin  
Joyce M. Guerra  
Beverly S. Harbour  
Jose M. Hernandez  
Edgar E. Hinojosa  
Ginger L. Hoover  
Gary W. Hotz  
Johnny L. Jackson  
Jefferson L. Jacoway  
Patricia D. Jones  
Maciej T. Jug  
Kenneth R. Kirk  
Ezekiel O. Laleye  
Joadynne Lane  
Julianna Lawrence  
James I. Laws  
Lula V. Lincoln-Moon  
Lucian C. Marza  
Kim K. Maust  
Bertha M. Means  
Gene E. Miller  
Tammy J. Morgan  
Robert Muhammad  
Johnson T. Ode  
Saka B. Olaifa  
Akon M. Orok  
Norma J. Perdomo  
Sergio E. Policarpo  
Rebecca Rodriguez  
Virginia D. Rose  
Vincent E. Sidney  
Martha M. Stayton  
Cynthia M. Stiner  
Tony H. Thompson  
Craig A. Vandyke  
Juan M. Villarreal, Jr.  
Jerry L. Walden, Jr.  
Deborah A. Ward  
Douglas W. Whitten  
Tanya L. Wilson

**FEBRUARY**

Darrell D. Aguilar  
Frankie P. Alton  
Misty M. Barton  
Juanita L. Baxter  
John W. Bennett II  
Patsy R. Caldwell  
Dana M. Cannon  
Man R. Chang  
Brenda A. Davis-Green  
Maria D. DeLeon  
Shavonne M. Edwards  
Shara D. Elder  
Natalie D. Hadnot  
Terry D. Holley  
Ronald L. Hughes  
Manolito B. Icaro  
Mike D. Klodginski  
Sammy E. Magana  
Charles L. Martin  
Freda F. McDaniel  
Steven D. McDaniel  
Jeff L. McManus  
Randy S. Mobley  
Olukayode J. Ogunbanwo  
Norma E. Olvera  
Emmanuel C. Oteh  
Gary L. Patrick  
Brad C. Phillips  
Deborah A. Phillips  
Lisa E. Rawlins-Atwood  
Regina K. Schiller  
Michael J. Shaw  
Dina M. Topewith  
Billy P. Williams  
Susan L. Woodrome  
Joe H. Yzaguirre  
Veronica Zamora

**MARCH**

Yvette S. Alexander  
Mark V. Allison  
Phyllis L. Ashley  
Fnu. Babujose  
Patricia D. Benson-Myers  
Brian D. Bowers  
Maria K. Brown  
Paula P. Brown  
Mark A. Bruns  
Alberto G. Campos  
Stephen Cassidy  
David G. Decker  
Benjey B. Ferguson  
Elizabeth M. Fisk  
Ilda C. Galan  
Kimberly C. Gilbert  
Jacqueline L. Glenn  
Antonio R. Gonzalez  
Holly L. Hall  
Dennis W. Hanks  
Eddie Hernandez

Michael L. Herrington  
Kevin W. Hrebik  
Serena D. Hudson  
Sarah T. Huser  
John P. Jacobs  
Rhonda L. Jensen  
Kristen T. Kelly  
Steven T. Koncaba  
Flora M. Kynard  
Kathy J. Maurer  
Michael S. McCaslin  
Adriane A. McCoy  
Richard D. McGrath  
Marcus D. McIntyre  
Bradley A. McLane  
Sergio F. Moya  
Santos Munoz III  
Natalie Noble  
Page Okwuosa  
Florence O. Omoyeni  
Tanya E. Peacock  
Belinda A. Perez  
Allen W. Pope  
James L. Power Jr.  
Randell R. Price  
Bruce C. Reeves  
Clifford Rhone  
Barbara L. Rivera  
Therita D. Robinson  
Steven D. Roskey  
Robert J. Scampitilla  
Craig A. Schmidt  
Michelle D. Sellers  
Lance L. Slack  
Kristen M. Smith  
J.M. Stevenson  
George L. Tanyingu  
Javier Villasana  
David S. Williams

**APRIL**

Adrian A. Amonett  
Robert D. Armour  
Jerry W. Barrett  
Elena L. Bonilla  
Christopher Burns  
Harold W. Cleckler  
Latonda W. Coleman  
Roshawn B. Davis  
Juan R. DelaRosa  
John C. Dobbins Jr.  
Gina M. Dockery  
Christopher D. Doyle  
Julie A. Duby  
Robert G. Flores  
Romel Gamayo  
Velvia V. Hargrove  
Charles L. Haynes Jr.  
Gail A. Henderson  
Margie A. Henley  
Christopher C. Hernandez

Donna R. Hollingswood  
Scott A. Imhoff  
Brenda K. Irlas  
John C. Johnson  
Elwanda E. Jones  
Larry E. Kile  
Robert L. Kimbro Jr.  
Melissa A. Kimbrough  
James E. Marsh Jr.  
Hugo G. Maya Jr.  
James K. McKethan  
Cherie L. Mitchell  
Lori R. Mitchell  
Jane W. Mugo  
Cheryl M. Myers  
Amye M. Neeley  
Daryn W. Nicholson  
Oliver E. Nnopus  
Cecilia A. Omojola  
Robert C. Pearson  
Charles R. Petty Jr.  
Shannon T. Qualls  
Maria D. Ramirez  
Chelice D. Randall  
Shirley A. Salley  
John P. Schwarz  
Marilyn Slack  
Daniel L. Sullivan  
Judy C. Sullivan-Fitch  
Jamie L. Taylor  
Santos R. Treviño Jr.  
Jose M. Valdez  
Shannon D. Ware  
Edna S. Williams  
Jennifer J. Williams  
Kevin M. Willis  
Bret M. Youngblood  
Deanna M.  
Zaiontzmadson

**MAY**

Tawakalitu T. Ajenifuja  
Sylvia L. Alvarado  
Lawrence M. Alvarez  
Gerardo Arranaga  
Jimmy D. Bagby  
Tahara C. Balque  
Rachel Brooks  
Laura B. Brown  
Orkeshia L. Buchanan  
Angelia D. Bundage  
Tommy C. Cates  
Jason M. Combs  
Anissa E. Commander  
Cortez D. Crist  
Byron R. Eldridge  
Graciela G. Enriquez  
Robert A. Fitzgerald Jr.  
Theodule N. Foncha  
Victor C. Gates  
Jason P. Giorgi

David R. Gonzales  
Clinton M. Gunnels  
Denise A. Henry  
Mark R. Hernandez  
Christopher M. Hobbs  
Russell D. Jennings  
Joseph P. Kurian  
Keice L. Landry  
Kent Lucas  
Betty A. Martinez  
Monica R. Martinez  
Amber D. McCharen  
Angela McQueen  
Kathy L. Mosley  
Donald H. Mullen  
Gabriella Olachia  
Sharon A. Pannell Harris  
Samuel J. Pene  
Theresa A. Phillips  
Suresh Pillai  
Shirley M. Robinson  
Bertha L. Samuel  
William R. Schoenduby  
Lela J. Smith  
Debra S. Spinney  
Hamlin T. Stanaland Iii  
Patricia A. Stout  
Catherine H. Tipton  
Richard G. Torres  
Deloris F. Traylor  
Robert E. White III  
Quentin W. Winston  
Matthew A. Wise

**JUNE**

La Vonda P. Aaron  
Janet A. Adamolekun  
Christiana A. Akintode  
Kristi D. Alexander  
Joe Alsides  
Kim I. Anthony  
Donella D. Ayers  
Rosa L. Balencia  
Rebecca A. Bass  
Greg A. Batesla  
Rondalina L. Beatty  
Ladonya R. Bell  
Timothy G. Campbell  
Alfreda D. Carreon  
Paulette D. Como  
Christopher L. Crase  
Marla R. Demarest  
Angela M. Diaz  
Rosa R. Emerson  
Doroteo Fonseca III  
Mark Harmon  
Debra A. Hays  
Joseph S. Hodge  
Debra R. Hufford  
Tita I. Huntress  
Christie P. Idlebird  
Lashundrea P. Jefferson

Edward F. Kolenovsky Jr.  
Canton S. Laufou  
Tiffany M. Mason  
Gregory P. McWaters  
Lawrence A. Osuntuyi  
Elizabeth F. Oyetunji  
Melinda M. Ozuna  
Neva L. Petty  
Anthony Ramirez  
Ruben S. Ramirez  
Bellarmin Remezo  
George Reyes Jr.  
Ysidro A. Rodriguez  
Katheryn V. Singleton  
Sharalyn Y. Singleton  
Lorri L. Vickers  
Terry S. Vinson  
Debra A. Webb  
Earl C. Wheeland III  
Tamika M. Williams  
Beatric Yanez  
Ernest R. Yarbrough

