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Officers participated in the 2022 Police Unity Tour gathered on Central Office grounds for a send-off ceremony.

POLICE UNITY TOUR

BY CHRIS GARDEN

For the participants of the 26th annual 2022 Police Unity Tour, it was the beginning of a journey. A journey for more than a dozen active and retired officers and supervisors who were about to make a 300 mile bicycle ride from New Jersey to the nation's capital, and an altogether different journey for the fallen officers whose badges they carried to honor their sacrifice.

Under grey skies, participants and New Jersey Department of Corrections executive staff gathered at Central Office Headquarters to celebrate the riders and commemorate those who paid the ultimate price in the service of law enforcement. Despite the solemn rain the ceremony was a hopeful sendoff to the

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officers headed to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C.

“The loss of a loved one is extremely difficult, but to know that they gave their lives in the name of the law enforcement profession hopefully brings a measure of comfort and certainly a level of pride,” said NJDOC Assistant Commissioner Willie Bonds, Division of Operations.



Assistant Commissioner Willie Bonds awarded this years cyclists for their participation in the Police Unity Tour.

The four-day event culminated in the names of two Department officers, SCPO Vincent Butler and SCPO Edward Jamandron, being etched into the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. The event also raised money for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, bringing the total to more than \$30 million since the tour’s inception in 1997.

“The NLEO Memorial is one of the few memorials that will never be finished,” said SCPO Michael Tirado, Vice President, PBA 105. “I’ve personally been there at different times of the year and you’d be surprised at how many families visit just to see their loved one’s names engraved on a wall, the very place of solace for them.”

There is a measure of solace as well for at least one of the riders, Correctional Police Sergeant Anna Miglio, whose personal connection to loss makes the journey especially meaningful.

“I lost my father in the line of duty in 1995 and I joined the Police Unity Tour in 2014,” Miglio said. “I’m very proud of the team that we have and it really means a lot that the Department is supporting us.”

This year, over 2 million dollars were raised for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.



Sgt. Anna Miglio joined the Police Unity Tour in 2014 after losing her father in the line of duty in 1995.





ACTING COMMISSIONER KUHN NOMINATION RECEIVES SENATE APPROVAL

BY DAN SPERRAZZA

Governor Phil Murphy’s nomination of Acting Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq. to be the next Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) received approval by the State Senate on May 26th.

“I am thankful to Governor Murphy for the opportunity to continue to lead the Department of Corrections as we enact bold reform and reintegration efforts critical to the reimagining of corrections in the Garden State,” said Kuhn. “With the Governor’s support, a host of initiatives are underway to preserve the dignity and well-being of our incarcerated population while investing in the professional development of our dedicated custody and civilian staff. Additionally, while we streamline the infrastructure of the Department, we are retaining staff and enhancing recruitment to maintain an effective and highly skilled workforce.”

Since assuming the position of Acting Commissioner just nearly one year ago, Kuhn has established partnerships with

advocacy and reentry groups, encouraged input from staff, external stakeholders, criminal justice experts, legislators, and held focus groups with the incarcerated population to promote transparency and build a “corrections community” in support of the Department’s mission. Critically, she has also implemented changes in policy, training, and support services to enhance the safety and security of the state’s justice-involved female population at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility.



NJDOC's Commissioner, Victoria Kuhn.



HERO SPOTLIGHT

The Department is proud to have Officer Hugo Rebelo amongst our ranks as part of our NJDOC Strong team. Officer Hugo Rebelo of Northern State Correctional Facility assisted Sergeant Rudolfo Correia of the Union County Prosecutor's Office in performing CPR on an overdose victim in the community and administering Narcan, saving the individual's life on Christmas morning --once again demonstrating, not all heroes wear capes.



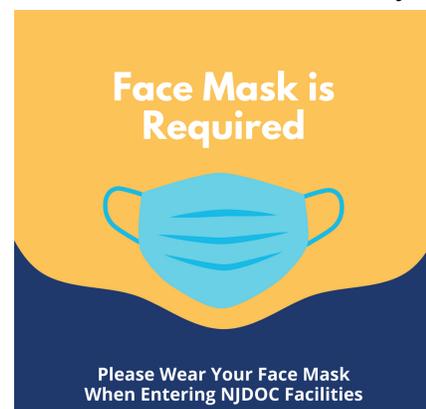
Officer Hugo Rebelo of Northern State Correctional Facility is awarded for his heroic actions.

STAFF REMINDER

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), wearing a mask can help slow the spread of COVID-19 which is transmitted through respiratory droplets. Wearing your mask the proper way is a crucial part to maintaining a healthy and safe work environment. New Jersey Department of Corrections Administrator Raymond Royce served in the National Guard on the COVID response team at the height of the pandemic and worked alongside mask manufacturing companies, gave a great piece of advice he learned at the COVID testing site. “The mask manufactures told me the most effective way to wear your mask is to wear the blue side facing outward to prevent contracting the virus and wear the blue inward to prevent

expelling the virus,” said Royce.

As a reminder to staff, for everyone's safety, you must wear your mask properly with your nose covered when entering all NJDOC facilities. COVID-19 vaccinations are also mandatory at the NJDOC in accordance with Executive Order 283 and 290. Vaccinations are available to staff at NJDOC locations and are readily available in the community.





NJDOC'S EDNA MAHAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY HOSTS AN EMPOWERING WOMEN SPEAKER SERIES.

NJDOC's Edna Mahan Correction Facility (EMFC) hosted guest speakers at its facility, providing words of encouragement and empowerment for incarcerated women.



Guest speaker Helen Higgenbotham discusses the theme "The Comeback: Reinventing Ourselves."



Guest Speaker Jeannine LaRue poses with NJDOC staff after discussing the theme "You are Enough" at EMCF.



Incarcerated individuals from EMCF pose with speaker Jeannie LaRue.





Pictured above are the NJDOC's LGBTQIA+ Liaisons.

PRIDE MONTH SEES THE FORMATION OF LGBTQIA+ LIAISONS

BY CHRIS CARDEN

As a Marine when the armed forces struggled with acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community, Senior Correctional Police Officer (SCPO) Mary Amato knows the importance of diversity and the meaning of pride.

“Pride means being whoever I want to be whenever I want to be it,” Amato says. “Coming from a military background when it was ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell,’ I’m very proud to be in an organization that accepts me and celebrates me for who I am.”

This Pride Month, the Department announces the establishment of LGBTQIA+ Law Enforcement Liaisons, a chapter of a national organization dedicated to fostering positive relationships between the LGBTQIA+ community and law enforcement agencies in the State of New Jersey.

“This will be groundbreaking for the Department,” said Custody Recruitment Unit’s Correctional Police Sergeant Tiffany Thompson, who was tasked with heading up the group’s formation. “The national organization reached out to us and we came together to support local law enforcement agencies and their efforts to increase awareness, educate, and support the LGBTQIA+ community.”

Beginning with nine liaisons, Thompson wants to expand the group to include representatives from every NJDOC facility.

“We want LGBTQIA+ liaisons identified in each institution,” she says, “where we can offer training, education and resources to custody and civilian staff across the state.”



The group mission is focused: to raise awareness of the community, erase decades of mistrust between LGBTQIA+ individuals and law enforcement, and provide a resource to LGBTQIA+ custody and civilian staff who may find themselves socially adrift in the Department.

“You have Cop-2-Cop, 4BlueNJ, EAS, and other resources but people may not be inclined to use them because they are perceived as being attached to the Department,” says Thompson. “We can offer Pride Centers, outside therapy, Safe Place, and other resources in the community that our liaisons can use to help guide someone who’s experiencing a challenge.”

SCPO Thomas Wilson echoes those sentiments but says today’s more inclusive environment is right for liaisons. “Growing up I found it was a lot harder to be gay than it is now,” he says. “People seem to be

more open-minded and that’s a good thing. It helps people be more comfortable with who they are and take pride in who they are.”

Yet many of the liaisons say representation, in the form of this newly established group, is the beginning of a long-held desire for recognition and acceptance in law enforcement.

“For me, pride means being able to be me unapologetically and confidently with no backlash or negativity,” says SCPO Amber Garcia. “We are a diverse group and I feel like it’s important to know that there is an LGBTQ community within the Department.

For more information about the LGBTQIA+ Law Enforcement Liaisons, or to join in their efforts, please email NJDOCoutreach@doc.nj.gov



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NJDOC NEWS

