

Our Mission

The Department of Correction shall strive to be a global leader in progressive correctional practices and partnered re-entry initiatives to support responsive evidence-based practices aligned to law-abiding and accountable behaviors. Safety and security shall be a priority component of this responsibility as it pertains to staff, victims, citizens and offenders.

From the Commissioner



Once again I found myself coping with the conflicting emotions of anger and sadness when I learned of the most recent tragic deaths of correctional professionals while carrying out their sworn duty of protecting the public. In one case, two sergeants from the Georgia Department of Correction were shot and killed while transporting inmates between facilities. In Texas, a female officer died of a suspected heart attack shortly after being involved in a use of force incident with a female inmate.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the families and loved ones of those affected by these terrible events. After I had recovered from my initial shock, I responded by reviewing the department's policies not just in general, but in relation to these specific events as well, with an eye towards avoiding a similar tragedy within our ranks. I urge you all to do the same. It has been famously said that, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." To paraphrase the sentiment, I would say that, "eternal vigilance is the price of safety." Although it can admittedly be difficult not to, do not become complacent.

see [Eternal Vigilance/page 9](#)

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Tip A K9 Handler

Department of Correction K9 officers participated in a Tip-A-Cop event held at Joey Garlics in Newington on May 17. This was the seventh year that members of the K9-Unit participated in the annual event. All the tips received from serving the restaurant's patrons



were donated to the Special Olympics Connecticut in support of local athletes. This year's event raised over \$1,200. Overall, members of the Connecticut law enforcement community have raised over \$5,000 this year alone for the cause. Special thanks go out to K9 Officers Charles Ellison, Jamie Rivera, Kristen Thibault, Lieutenant Ron Zaczynski and Captain Andre Cox for their participation. Their dedication, spirit, and generosity helped to make the event a success. Everyone involved felt proud to be part of such a great cause.

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Scott Semple
Commissioner

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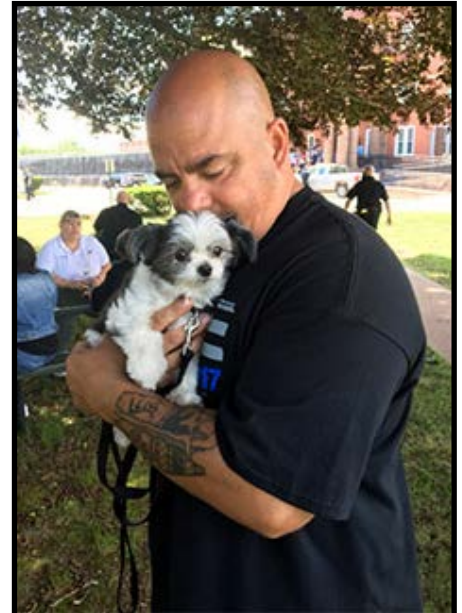
With Gratitude from Warden Erfe

For the second time in my 28 ½ year career, I found myself, my facility, my correctional family in need of assistance. I found myself reaching out to my dysfunctional correctional family for help, and without hesitation, you came to our aid. Why dysfunctional you ask? We, as a family, are quick to argue, quick to fight, and quick to kick each other down. We are also quick to pick each other up, and come to aid when really needed. As with Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center years ago, Cheshire Correctional Institution was in need of help, help of a different kind. Luckily, most of you have not experienced the riots. Most of you have not seen the chaos that occurs. Most of you have also not seen the brother and sisterhood that occurs when your lives are in immediate danger. What sticks out in my head as one of the most memorable feelings of family in the agency is when my CERT element arrived at one of the Carl Robinson riots and relieved the team already on site. Another member from another CERT shook my hand, wished me luck, and gave me all of the supplies he had, food and water, everything to get me by. I found myself, again, feeling this way when I was assigned to Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center, when a staff member passed away and I was in need of assistance. With the approval of the administration, and union leaderships, staff from all over the state that had never worked in the facility, and those that have, came to the facility and filled every post so that staff were able to pay their respects to their fallen brother. This process repeated itself two more times at this facility. As you know, recently your brothers and sisters at Cheshire Correctional Institution have fallen upon tough times. Over the last few months, the Cheshire family has had numerous parents pass away, and two staff members within a week of each other. Once again, my dysfunctional family of over 28 years came to aid. Both times, those of you that came over and took post gave us all the ability to go and pay respects to our fallen brother and sister. Once again, Administration and Union came together, and the result was a beautiful thing. It allowed a grieving facility the ability to pay respect and say goodbye to our brother and sister.

It is comforting to know that this dysfunctional family we are part of can and will come together in time of need, and it does not have to be a riot that brings us together. As many times as we fight, argue, and disagree with one another, rest assured, your brothers and sisters behind the walls will come together to help one another out. In our everyday dealings with one another, remember this. I ask you to remember that there is a person or persons in your life that you chose to allow in, a significant other, a friend, and you do not get along with them every day, all day. We, as a DOC family, did not chose each other, we are going to disagree, but that does not define us. Moments like what Corrigan-Radgowski and Cheshire experienced, moments when staff come to the aid of staff they do not know, may have never met, define us.

I would like to once again, thank my DOC family for assisting us in our time of need. We will be there for you as well.

Scott Erfe
Correctional Warden
Cheshire Correctional Institution



Warden Scott Erfe with
therapy dog Gizmo

5 reasons first responders should take yoga seriously

Yoga allows people to increase their ability to focus and problem solve, gives them heightened situational awareness, and helps them make intelligent gut reactions to situations

By Olivia Kvitne, Founder and Director, Yoga for First Responders

This article first appeared on *CorrectionsOne.com* and is reprinted with permission, www.correctionsone.com

As a yoga instructor working specifically with first responders and veterans, I'm accustomed to being the one who initiates conversations with fire and police departments. So it came as a welcomed surprise to be contacted by one of the largest police departments in the country. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) reached out to me after they lost several high commanding officers from heart attacks. The agency realized that many of its members were experiencing medical issues caused by years of unaddressed, cumulative stress. The department's behavioral sciences department was searching for ways to save their team members from such preventable medical conditions. At the time I got the call, I had spent the last several months teaching yoga to members of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD). Word had spread that LAFD was having success using yoga techniques as a resource for reducing stress among firefighters.

Until recently, officers were discouraged from acknowledging that they were having issues coping with stress and the pressures of the job. Such admissions were often considered a sign of weakness and brought into question an officer's ability to perform his or her duties. As a result, many officers who experienced symptoms of secondary traumatic stress suffered in silence. Sadly, this stress broke many good officers, who resigned or caused them to behave in a way that caused them to lose their jobs. Fortunately, today there are more conversations happening about how to handle the mental health challenges that go with being a law enforcement officer and first responder. While this is good news, the stigma of acknowledging stress remains, and many people are not actually taking the steps to manage that stress.



Recruits from the Des Moines Iowa Police Academy Police Academy practice yoga as part of their academy curriculum.

CAN A YOGA PRACTICE BE THE ANSWER?

As I got deeper into my own study of yoga, I realized that this practice is not just "good" for first responders; it is meant for them. Why? Because the original and true intents of yoga are to obtain a mastery of the mind and achieve an optimal functioning of the entire being—from the subtle nervous system to the whole physical body. This authentic objective of yoga is thousands of years old, with no relation to how recent Western culture has marketed it as trendy and hip.

Individuals who practice with this purpose are often better able to process stress and convert it into higher levels of performance. Yoga allows people to increase their ability to focus and problem solve, gives them heightened situational awareness, and helps them make intelligent gut reactions to situations. People who practice yoga also have the ability to make self-directed biological changes, meaning they can impact the functioning of their brain and nervous system through their own actions. Such biological changes are shown to be a possible outcome of those who practice mindfulness exercises, such as yoga, thanks to research projects using biofeedback machines that track activity inside the brain and body.

K9 Training at Carl Robinson

Carl Robinson Correctional Institution staff members recently had the pleasure of participating in hands-on training with members of the departments K-9 Unit. The training was conducted on June 7 at the Carl Robinson facility. During this training participants were instructed on the proper procedures for responding to incidents with K-9 staff; the utilization of K-9 units for narcotics detection; and the immediate action needed to preserve evidence and crime scenes to assist with the successful tracking of an inmate escaped from custody.



Through the use of live-action scenarios, CRCI staff members learned how best to work with K-9 teams.

In addition, the K-9 handlers acted out numerous scenarios, including how to respond to incidents involving weapons, and on how to disengage and secure a K-9 in the event a handler was injured or incapacitated. This is the first time this type of training has been conducted within the department on a facility level.



Participants in the K-9 training at Carl Robinson CI

Around the Cell Block



GEORGIA - The two men accused of shooting and killing Georgia Department of Correctional officers before escaping from custody appeared in court on Wednesday morning in Putnam County. The representative for the state told the judge that they will be seeking the death penalty against the two men.

CALIFORNIA - In Los Angeles, some inmates have all the comforts of home right in their jail cells. At these so-called pay-to-stay jails, inmates with money have the opportunity to avoid the often-crowded and sometimes crime-ridden Los Angeles County Jail. The facilities, which can run \$250 a night, offer such amenities as unlimited access to movies, books and cable TV. Some facilities even allow inmates to leave during the day to work and return in the evening to serve their sentence.

**Total
Supervised
Population
on
June 2, 2017
18,936
On June 27, 2016
the population was
19,701**

Carrying the Torch

Once again, members of the Department of Correction took to the streets in support of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Connecticut, which took place this year from June 7-9. More than 160 staff members from facilities across the state ran, walked and provided general assistance to the Torch Run. Even some retired staff members laced up their sneakers and joined their former coworkers for the cause. Below is a partial list by facility of those who participated.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) is the largest public awareness vehicle and grass-roots fundraiser for Special Olympics. Annually, more than 97,000 dedicated and compassionate law enforcement members carry the “Flame of Hope,” symbolizing courage and celebration of diversity uniting communities around the globe. More than \$619 million has been raised since the inception of the LETR.

2017 Torch Run participants by facility:

Bridgeport CC

Runners: Sec Pamela Neuendorf, Cpt Ronald Poidomani, Lt Jeffrey McDonald, CO Michael M. Smith, CO Thomas Finnucan, CO Lamont Henry, CO Cara Tedesco, CO Patrick Forde, CO Corderol Williams, CO Kingi Thomas, CO Nereida Nieves, CO Christopher Smudin, CO Stephen Kaine, CO Chad Milling, CO Edison Clarke, CO Brandon Miller, CO Maurice Vereen-Foust, RN Tarika Loganle Sullivan, Counselor Melissa Quarantra

Assisted: All above also rotated to provide assistance.

Brooklyn CI

Runners: DW William Colon, Cpt Robert Judd, Lt Jeff Brehler, Lt Ed Scarchilli, CO Holly Gedney, CO Armando Malavenda, CO Luis Lopez, CO Jayson Belleville

Assisted: Lt. Dan Ruggiero, Retired Lt. Kevin Schmidt, Retired Lt. Paul Mancarella, Sec Louise Downer

Central Office - Runner: DC Cheryl Cepelak **CTU South - Assisted:** Captain Kimberly Lauray

Corrigan CC

Runners: Warden Stephen Faucher, Dep Warden Ronald Cotta, Lt Timothy Halloran, Lt Paul Senita, CO Quinn, Counselor Katherine Iozzia,

PO Elisha Chronoby, PO Anthony DelPaine.

Assisted: Cpt James Shabenas, CO Joseph Hartung, CO Scott Servidio

Cheshire CI

Runners: CO Juan Urena, CO Bruno Ovalles, CO Glen Carney, CO Harvey Potts

Enfield CI

Runners: Warden Anne Cournoyer, Maint Supv Saverio Rosato, CO Rebecca Suarez

Garner CI

Runners: Cpt Thomas Kenny, CSW Michelle Demers, CO Wanda Grant, CO Anthony Blekis, CO Dominick Badamo, Locksmith Eric Meady, Phlebotomist Terese Williams.

Assisted: D/W Denise Dilworth, Cpt Michael Capellaro

MWCI

Runners: Cpt Craig Patton, Lt Miguel Rivera, Lt Alycia Cavanaugh, CO Patrick Velie, CO Shannon Brown, CO Angelo Prisco, CO Thomas Chambers, CO David Hunt **Walkers:** Kim Sokolowski, Kelly Stamm,

Kelly Champagne, Michelle Deveau **Assisted:** Locksmith Richard Turcotte, Counselor Wilson, CO Douglas Donovan, Plumber John Haynes, GMO Chad Rypysc.



The Brooklyn CI Torch Run contingent.

DoC Torch Bearers continued

from page 5

Manson Youth Institution

Runners: SST John Ho, SST Matt Erasmus, SST Kristin Curley, SST Jen Corti, SST Laurie Capobianco-Garibaldi, CO Carl Drouin, CO Delores Medina, CO Jason Guerrero, CO Ryan Jones, CO Chad McCann, Counselor Brenda Floser, Rec Dir Zack Thomas, Ret CO Chris Donovan.

Assisted: DW Danielle Borges, SST Robyn Medina

New Haven CC - Runners: CO Steven Carlino **Assisted:** CO Officer Sylvia Vazquez

Northern CI

Runners: CC Kristan Mangiafico, GME Peter Pelczar, CS Carlene Davis, CC Andrew Morrison, SST Heather Lehninger

Osborn CI

Runners: Cpt Jeanette Maldonado, CS Aesha Mu'min, CC Tracy Miller, CO Amanda Williams

Assisted: CC Laurie Eagleson, Cpt Luis Colon



The Torch Run participants from the Manson Youth Institution

Parole and Community Service

PS Dawn Rizzuto, PO Larry Bransford, PO Rodney Blais, PO Jennifer Desena, PO MCKinley Sprawling, PO Robert Johnson, PO Jeanne Torpey, PO Carmen Gonzalez, CC Jennifer Schepp, CC Anne Szumigala, CS Nicole Thibeault, Rec Spec Guarino Lauren, PO Alan Piascik, Ret Dep Dir Jen Bennett, Ret PO Scott Tetreault

York CI

Runners: Lt. Michael Beaton, CO Brian Blair, Sec. Kathi-Rae Perry, CO Robert Vuoto, CC Karolina Urbanowicz, CC Jeffrey Picardi, RN Joel, LPN Jessie Loss, CO Brian Blair, Lt. Mark Sizer, Retired CO Burke, CO Thomas Goyette, CO Eric Morin, CO JP Smith, CO Dana Mohrlein, CC Ashley Brisson, CO Shane Libby

Walkers: Warden Antonio Santiago, AA Neena Lucarelli, CC Shawnday Boney, CC Kristi Desrosier, SST Jean-Claude Ambroise, CS Erin Murphy-Pelletier, CS Adam Barczak, Capt. Eva Agathos, SST Thomas Prince-Warinsky, Com Op Mary Trudeau, SST Jack Robinson, CO Annita Harris, CO John Robert.

Assisted: CO Craig Olsen, DW Cynthia Scarmozzino, CO Oscar Cartagena, GMO John Carboni, SST Ryan Green, CC Jason Olson, CC Larissa Kelly

Final Leg Participants: CO Maura Atkinson, CO Elizabeth Brown, CO Yolanda Arroyo

Yoga for First Responders

from page 3

When stress is trapped in the body and mind and no action is taken to process it, stress causes a depletion of a person's health. However, when individuals take steps to consistently handle the stress they're feeling, they can improve their well-being and even become more resilient in the face of adversity.

HOW IS YOGA DIFFERENT FOR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yoga for First Responders takes the original intent of the practice and delivers it in a way that targets the specific needs of first responders. The curriculum provides a skill set that is simple, safe, practical and effective. This protocol primarily focuses on tactical breath work (specific breath-control techniques) to access the nervous system, physical postures for releasing stress and building mental and physical stability, and ends with a neurological reset exercise to return the system to a balanced state.

5 REASONS TO CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT YOGA AND TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

If, after reading the information above, you are still skeptical about stepping on a mat, here are five reasons to consider changing your thinking:

It's Simple. It only takes three minutes to make a change in the nervous system. You can even practice a tactical breath work exercise (see exercise below) while driving in your patrol car on your way to the next call. Just one deep breath consciously directed into the belly can make a big difference.

It's Private and Introspective. Yoga For First Responders doesn't focus on a specific incident, but on the psychophysiological effect developed from general work as a first responder. No one has to know what you are working through on the yoga mat, if anything at all. You can practice yoga because it feels good or use it to help you process something specific. All of it can be done in the privacy of your own space, or in a public class.

It's Multifunctional. Yoga serves many purposes. It not only removes stress from the mind and body, but it also builds resiliency and enhances mental and physical performance. This is sometimes described as experiencing "flow" or being "in the zone." These results can be a benefit personally as well as professionally.

It's Not What You Think It Is. Many people have the misperception that yoga is only for women. Some think it's easy; others think it's a religion. In India, where yoga originated 5,000 years ago, it is still primarily practiced by men and used to train their army. Marketing yoga to women is purely a tool of the West to increase business. Yoga can be confused as a religious practice because it developed alongside the culture of the East, which was heavily rooted in religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. Some master teachers in the past would mix their cultural, religious and yoga practices together. At its foundation, yoga is a science and a philosophy. The pure teachings of yoga have no theological orientation and can help anyone of any religion.

It's Time.

- Consider these statistics:
- Every 20 hours a police officer commits suicide
- 40 percent of officers experience sleep disorders, which too often results in deadly car accidents
- The average life span of an officer after retirement is only five years.

Something needs to change in law enforcement culture, so these statistics can change. The "macho" stereotype that has kept law enforcement away from yoga is not worth these devastating numbers, especially when you realize how strong and focused you must be to practice yoga, as well as how much stronger you will become when practicing consistently.



Stress Relief Through Yoga from page 7

WHY YOU SHOULD START NOW

The good thing is that it doesn't take much to start a yoga practice right away. Here is a simple exercise to begin your journey toward reducing stress in your life:

Tactical Breath Work:

Belly Breathing: Sit in a chair or in your patrol car with a tall, straight spine, no slouching. Place one hand on the low belly area. Inhale slowly through the nose and inflate the belly like a balloon, feeling the belly expand against the hand. Exhale slowly through the nose and feel the belly deflate away from the hand. Continue this a few times, working to make each inhale and exhale slower and deeper and directing the breath into the belly rather than the chest.

Add Breath Count: Continue the belly breathing above (hand can stay on belly or not) while inhaling and exhaling through the nose. As you inhale, count how many seconds it takes to inhale. It will probably be around 3 to 4 counts. Pause the breath at the top of the inhale, and then slowly exhale and count how long it takes to exhale. Work on making the exhale longer than the inhale. For example, if you inhale for a count of three, try to extend the length of the exhale for a count of four.

Practice the above exercise for 3 minutes at a time. Breathing through the nose while directing the breath low into the belly and consciously making the exhale longer than the inhale are the three ingredients to press the "calm" button on the nervous system. This process will also help if you are having a hard time falling asleep. This exercise is simple and subtle, yet the effect on the nervous system can make a huge difference.

For more simple and short practices on video, check out Yoga for First Responders: yogafirstresponders.org/

About the Author: *Olivia Kvitne has been a lifelong yoga practitioner and an instructor since 2003. While living in Los Angeles, Olivia taught weekly trauma-sensitive yoga classes at the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Training Center, as well as presented continuing education workshops on yoga and the neurological system for LAFD, and special workshops for high-ranking command staff of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). It is at LAFD where Yoga For First Responders was first born in collaboration with Dr. Robert Scott.*

MYI Employees of the Quarter



Correction Officer Dominic Reid

Warden John Alves is happy to announce that the following staff members have been selected as the facility's Employees of the Quarter: Counselor Michael Fortin, and Officer Dominic Reid.

Counselor Fortin currently covers B cottage, restrictive housing. He has also temporarily covered A cottage due to staff shortage in the past. Counselor Fortin also assists with Unit Manager duties when needed. He is a team player who works closely with unit officers to accomplish daily tasks. He ensures that everyone is apprised of updates and information regarding his areas of responsibility. He is always attentive and willing to help others. Counselor Fortin has a positive attitude, is extremely reliable and has no 2.11 issues. Officer Dominic Reid is very dedicated to his job. With a smile on his face, he maintains a positive attitude at all times. He is extremely motivated, and is always willing to help others. Officer Reid is very competent in his role as a Correctional Officer. He goes above and beyond to ensure that the job gets done. He's friendly, reliable, considerate, and has no 2.11 issues. Please

join Warden Alves in congratulating these well deserving Employees of the Quarter.

Eternal Vigilance

from page 1

Reexamine how you carry out your duties, be conscious of your interactions with inmates. What can you do to help keep yourself and your peers safe? We must continue to work diligently to promote safer environments. You cannot effectively carry out your duties if you are not in a safe environment.

On a related topic, I have also noticed that there appears to be an increase in the number of staff (on the current roster or retired) who are passing away at much too young an age. Although we will all eventually shuffle off this mortal coil, I can't help but think that we can have a hand in postponing the inevitable.

By taking care of ourselves - exercising, eating right, drinking less – we can greatly improve not only the quality of life, but the length of it as well. In addition to supporting your physical wellbeing, it is equally as important to also support your emotional wellbeing. It is essential to work on building resiliency and coping techniques in order to ensure that good mental health is maintained. To that end, make sure to keep the lines of communication between you and your loved ones open – don't shut them out. Family members can (and should be) a critical support system to anyone experiencing a difficult time at work.

These events have served to strengthen my resolve to reduce the incidence of trauma and to increase the safety and wellness of our greatest asset you, the staff members of the Connecticut Department of Correction. Please take care of yourselves and stay safe.

Brooklyn CI Facility Awards

The staff at the Brooklyn Correctional Institution recently held their annual facility awards ceremony. While enjoying some light refreshments, the following awards were presented to the deserving staff members of the facility:



Brooklyn Correctional Institution's Facility Award Winners

Correction Officer of the Year: First shift - Correction Officer Michael Behrle; Second Shift - Correction Officer Andrew Fournier; Third 3rd Shift - Correction Officer Jayson Belleville

Support Staff of the Year: Counselor Beth Cooper and General Maintenance Worker William Rivers;

Supervisor of the Year: Correctional Food Service Supervisor Shane DiPanni

Distinguished Public Service: Counselor Linda Trahan and Secretary 2 Louise Downer

Preservation of Life Award: Correction Officer Thomas Bergeron

Warden's Award: Correction Officer Danny Cote

Please join Warden Robert Martin in congratulating all of this year's Brooklyn Correctional Institution's facility award winners.

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