

Message from the Chairman



George B. Alexander

—Chairman and CEO

The summer months have been filled with a flurry of activity here at the Division of Parole.

I am extremely proud of the work done in all of our regions to make Parole Officer's Week a truly meaningful experience for our employees, our community partners, and people under parole supervision. Too often the excellent work that we do reintegrating people into society is not recognized. This is why I was honored to be able to share this celebration with so many members of our team throughout the state. Our officers and their families deserve the highest commendation for their dedication to their work and the sacrifices that I know they make to do their jobs.

The budget crisis currently affecting New York State is something we are taking very seriously. Earlier this year when Governor Paterson rang the alarm bell, we

responded and adjusted our budget by 3.5 percent. Most recently, the Governor asked agencies to tighten their budgets even more to meet the deepening fiscal challenges we are facing. Please be assured that we are working closely with the Division of Budget to do whatever we can to meet their economic guidelines while maintaining current staffing levels, continuing to deliver high quality services and ensuring the safety of the public. I know there will be challenges ahead, but I am confident in the excellent team we have here at Parole and their abilities to find creative solutions when faced with unexpected obstacles.

The re-entry arena continues to be a high priority for the Division. We anticipate release of new graduated sanctions for parolees very soon and look forward to implementing them. Additionally, we have been meeting regularly with representatives from other agencies such as Division of Criminal Justice Services and Department of Correctional Services to coordinate our efforts and

establish programs that meet our re-entry objectives. We continue to make headway toward the procurement and implementation of a risks/needs assessment as well.

We are on the verge of implementing the first phase of deploying laptops to the field that will have access to the Case Management System. This will enhance the mobility of field staff and provide them with real time access to caseload data.

On a lighter note, I am happy to report that two key staff members have joined us at central office in Albany. Cecelia Hamblin has come on board as director of policy analysis and chief information officer and Heather Groll is our new director of media relations and public affairs. Both bring an exciting depth of knowledge and a great deal of enthusiasm for improving operations at the Division. Please join me in welcoming them into our family.

NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF PAROLE

Parole Report

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Our Mission

To promote public safety by preparing inmates for release and supervising parolees to the successful completion of their sentence.

Parolee Lookup Now Operational



The Chairman works in the new parolee lookup section of the Division's website.

One of Chairman Alexander's priorities is to make it easier for the general public to understand the parole process and have greater access to information about individuals who are making appearances before the parole board.

To take the first step towards meeting that goal, Chairman Alexander asked Division staff to create a way for people to use our web site to get data on inmates who are scheduled to appear before the parole board. He also

wanted parole board decisions to be posted online, so they assembled a team and got to work.

Headed by executive director Felix Rosa and championed by project manager Estelle Council, the 22-member project team rolled up their sleeves and agreed to an aggressive 34 day roll-out of the project. Working tirelessly, they looked at what we needed from a technology standpoint and then figured out the best way to import the data from the green screen system to something that would work online.

Hats off to all the members of OIS and operations that made it possible to go from the idea stage on April 4 to live web use on May 1. Feedback from the public has been very positive and the team is now looking at ways to provide even more information via the web.

Members of the parolee lookup team.

Back row: Felix Rosa, Richard Eckhardt, Cheryl Irwin, Geoff Dunn, Rich Jones, Leon Collier and Norm Stewart. Front row: Mary Lewis, Jeff Kirker, Chris Lightner and Estelle Council.

Not pictured are: Lester G Edwards, Terrence Tracy, John Lowrey, Carole Weaver, Timothy O'Brien, Lawrence Hammond, Joseph Young, Donald O'Brien and Robert A Lucido



Two Join Board of Parole

The Division of Parole is pleased to welcome two new board members; Mary Ross from Long Island and Joseph P. Crangle who hails from western New York. The pair were nominated by Governor Paterson in early June and confirmed by the Senate a few weeks later. Commissioner Ross, who will serve through August 2013, succeeds Commissioner Jennifer Arena. Commissioner Crangle filled a previously vacant seat and will serve until June 16, 2014

Prior to joining the Board of Parole, Ms. Ross served as a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society in Queens, New York since 1998. From 1990 to 1995, Ms. Ross was the executive director of Providence House, a nonprofit

corporation that provides transitional and permanent housing for female ex-offenders, homeless women and their children. Ms. Ross was the program director of Providence House from 1984 to 1990. Ms. Ross was also the campus minister at Queens College from 1982 to 1984 and was the director of administrative services at the Diocese of Brooklyn from 1978 to 1982. She received her bachelor's degree in education from St. Joseph's College, her master's in education from Brooklyn College and her JD from the City University of New York.

Before joining the Board of Parole, Mr. Crangle was an assistant court analyst with the New York State Office of Court

Administration since 2000. In this role, Mr. Crangle was assigned to the Domestic Violence Part of the Buffalo City Court where he monitored defendant's compliance with court orders. From 1998 to 2000, Mr. Crangle was a probation officer with the Genesee County Probation Department, where he oversaw the Pretrial Release Under Supervision program. Mr. Crangle received his bachelor's degree from Canisius College and his JD from the City University of New York.

Parole's Partners

Community Health Action of Staten Island

Congratulations to Community Health Action of Staten Island, on being named the grand prize winner in the overall management excellence category at the New York Times Non-profit Excellence Awards in June.

Community Health Action is described as Staten Island's premier re-entry partner. Their outreach workers bring a mobile health unit to the office on the first report day of each month and work with our parole officers at

Queensboro Correctional facility to complete pre-release assessments. Since January, Community Health Action has placed 32 parolees in full-time employment or vocational training. Their executive director, Diane Arneith is fully committed to re-entry and the mission of the Division of Parole.

Harlem Community Justice Center

The Harlem parole re-entry court was profiled on NY1 Television as the New Yorker of the Week over the Fourth of July holiday week-

end. Since 2001, the Harlem Community Justice Center's parole re-entry court has assisted over 500 men and women to complete the first phase of their parole obligation.

The re-entry court is a model collaboration with the Division of Parole. A team of on-site parole officers works closely with the Justice Center's case managers and a network of partners to monitor re-entrants in the community by connecting them to housing, employment and treatment services. Currently 85% of participants successfully complete the program.

New Faces at Central Office

The Division of Parole is pleased to welcome Cecelia (Celia) A. Hamblin as she takes the reigns of policy analysis and information as chief information officer (CIO). As the new director of policy analysis, quality control and the office of information services, Celia has plans to integrate new technologies and systems to help the Division of Parole meet its mission.

Celia has more than 25 years experience in the technology sector and joins us following past experience as CIO at the Department of Labor and director of information services at the Department of Transportation. In addition Celia is currently a member of the NY State CIO Council Workforce Development and Procurement Sourcing and Vendor Relationships Teams and is a member of the Civil Service/CIO Workforce Initiative Committee. Celia holds a bachelor's

degree in economics from the University of Maine at Orono.



Celia Hamblin gets right to work as the new director of policy and chief information officer.

Another new addition to the Division is Heather Groll. Heather takes over as director of media relations and public affairs. Heather's goal is to increase positive press about our work in parole, so if you have any great stories to tell please give her a call or an email!

Prior to joining the Division, Heather was vice president at Corning Place Consulting in Albany. Before Corning Place, Heather served as communications director and spokesperson for the public school system in Buffalo. In addition, she has over ten years of public relations and public affairs experience working with clients in a number of industry sectors including energy, healthcare, telecommunications, commercial development, manufacturing, retail and education. Heather graduated from the State University College at Buffalo.

Re-Entry Update

The Vera Institute of Justice has been working with the NYS Division of Parole on methods to help us improve the ways we work with people under parole supervision. Vera is nationally recognized for combining expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

Vera is currently looking at our internal reported data about parole supervision to get a true snapshot of who is violating parole, why they are violating parole and what happens to these individuals based on the kind of violation they commit. This is the first phase of the project and we expect to have some interesting information to talk about once they submit their report in early 2009.

"This is the first step in changing the way we work with people under parole supervision," George Alexander, chairman and CEO of the NYS Division of Parole said. "We'll have a better understanding of the cause and effects of our supervision decisions so that we can be more effective."

Tracy Velázquez, the senior program associate

at Vera in charge of the policy development part of the project puts it this way: "We can never predict human behavior with 100% accuracy. However, if we look at data over time, strong patterns emerge that let us make

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better decisions on individual cases." These include those things that increase the likelihood of violations and those that are related to parolee success. "Once we see the patterns of behavior, we can then assess how best to address them in ways that protect public safety and make the best use of resources," Velázquez continued. "For example, we know that other states have found that homelessness or frequent residential moves often lead to violations. Knowing something is a red flag can help the Division look at ways to handle the issue."

Next up for Vera is looking beyond the raw numbers, into the processes and circumstances linked to both violation behaviors and parole responses. After conducting a test-run in Manhattan, Vera will interview a sample of parole cases, parole officers and senior parole officers in four offices to understand what leads to violation behaviors and how response decisions are made.

Vera staff will spend time in the offices of Manhattan II, Bronx V, Albany, and Utica. They will take a look at cases that have been concluded without incident, those that result in a parolee being returned to prison, and those cases where the individual is revoked and restored to parole. All of this will be conducted with an eye towards learning what types of programs and supervision models will lead to success among parole cases across a range of circumstances.

"We have been in the parole supervision business for almost eighty years and we know that every violation should initiate some kind of response so that our officers have the best chance of protecting the public," Alexander concluded. "By working with Vera, we will be able to respond in a more systematic way that will reduce the risk to public safety and increase the chances for success for parole officers and parolees alike."

Vera anticipates completion of their project in early 2009 with recommendations for policy and practice adjustments. At this point, Chairman Alexander will create a statewide advisory board made up of representatives from parole staff at the officer and supervisor levels, legislative advisors, community groups, advocates, victims, and the judiciary to help fine tune and implement the recommendations.

Parole Week Activities Held Around the State



Governor Paterson issued a proclamation making July 13-19th 2008, Probation, Parole and Community Supervision Week across New York State. "This is a time for New York State to recognize the professionalism of probation officers, parole officers, and other community corrections professionals who tirelessly work to promote offender accountability and community safety throughout New York State," Governor Paterson said. "I applaud the daily efforts of these professionals in assisting at-risk youth and adult offenders in leading law abiding lives, as well as their instrumental role in helping achieve positive change and successful reintegration into society, by promoting prevention, intervention, and advocacy."

Events were held around the state including a touching ceremony at the Parole Officers Memorial attended by Chairman Alexander; Michael Balboni, secretary for criminal justice; Robert Maccaroni, director of probation and correctional alternatives; Brian Fischer, commissioner of the Department of Corrections; Manuelita Clemente, council leader, PEF Division 236 and H. Susan Jeffords, president of Parole Officers Association. The ceremony honored those who lost their lives in the line of duty and recognize the exceptional work of those who currently serve.

Other events included:

Metro I and Metro II

The New York City team put together a week of activities that spanned the spectrum from charity events that benefitted local organizations to an evening at the theater and spirited sporting competitions.

A commemorative tree adoption in Prospect Park kicked off the week by honoring local parole officers who passed away in the last year, followed by an entrepreneurial workshop on Tuesday aimed at parolees and community members. Staff also participated in a clothing drive to collect business attire for women re-entering the workforce.

Wednesday evening a gala reception at New World Stages was capped off with a special performance of "The Castle", a play written and performed by parolees about their lives. The standing-room-only crowd was wowed by their stories and the special tribute paid to their Parole Officer, Charlie Bellamy. Chairman Alexander was on-hand to take in the show with members of the Division and their families.

On Thursday the big charity basketball game that featured a team comprised of parolees and parole officers versus a team from District Attorney Hynes office that also included parolees was a slam dunk. Cheered on by a large contingent from Metro I and II, the team from parole was victorious. A raffle during half-time contributed to the "Make A Smile" playground project that has raised over \$6,000 statewide from parole staff contributions.



The week concluded with a family picnic and softball tournament on Friday.

Region III

It was a smorgasbord of activities in Region III, with morning and mid-day recognition ceremonies held across multiple offices.

A Monday morning breakfast in Peekskill honored staff and members of the Orange County and Rockland County re-entry task forces.

On Tuesday, a

luncheon at the New Rochelle office celebrated the accomplishments of the Westchester County district attorney's re-entry task force.

The Region III administration and re-entry staff were honored by region management for their work performance in servicing those assigned to their bureaus on a daily basis. The event was celebrated with a special luncheon.

On Thursday, Chairman Alexander thanked staff and members of the Nassau County re-entry task force at a breakfast in Nassau. In the afternoon, the Chairman joined staff at the central Long Island office for a lunchtime fete honoring their hard work over the last year.

Festivities in region III wrapped up on Friday in the Suffolk office with a breakfast celebration that recognized employees and the Suffolk County re-entry task force.

Region IV

Region IV held a multitude of events throughout eastern and central New York.

After attending the memorial service at Empire State Plaza on Monday, the Albany and northeast offices held a cookout on Russell Road in Albany. The highlight of the lunchtime fete was the presentation of service awards by Chairman Alexander to parole staffers and members of community organizations that work with the Division including the Northeast AIDS Council, Re-entry Opportunities and Orientations Towards Success, Rensselaer County DSS and the Trinity Institute.

It was on to Syracuse on Tuesday, for a luncheon that honored parole officers and community organizations including the Snowden Hotel and Altamont House. At the same time, a recognition celebration was held at the Willard Drug Treatment Center.



The remainder of the week featured lunchtime observances that saluted Division of Parole employees and community partners in Poughkeepsie and Utica. Poughkeepsie's celebration included a special recognition of the work done by the Save Them Now organization. In Utica, the Division received a proclamation from the county executive that recognized the important role parole officers play in public safety.

Region V

In appreciation for the hard work and dedication by all of the employees of Region V, events were held in honor

of staff in all of the offices. Pancake breakfasts were held in three offices – Buffalo, Rochester and Elmira. Flapjacks were flipped and sausages were sizzled by the Regional Administrative staff.

The Niagara Falls office held a picnic lunch together with Niagara Falls Probation. It was a great opportunity for both groups to strengthen contacts and get to know each other better.

The Binghamton office had a delicious homemade spaghetti and meatball luncheon prepared by one of our own. Parole Officer James Pirozzolo handled all of the cooking for the whole office.

These breakfasts and lunches were held in conjunction with Bureau meetings and were enjoyed by all, including award recipients and guest speakers. Awards were given to Tom Gilbert, Senior Case Manager for Prodigal Sons and Daughters and Re-entry Task Force member; Anthony Mauro, Director of Probation for Niagara County and Lt. Tim Williams of the Ithaca Police Department. A Certificate of Appreciation was given to Mr. Allam Affifi, owner of the Dixie 2000. Guest speakers included Yvonne James-Corley of the Division of Substance Abuse Services; Joe Schmitt of the Division of Substance Abuse Services; Tom Gilbert of Prodigal Sons and Daughters; Anthony Mauro of Niagara County Probation; Bob Kent, retired Parole Deputy Director and Michael Dugan of the Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Center.

Clothing drives were held in the Rochester and Buffalo offices to benefit the Buffalo Employment Training Center, Catholic Charities and the Open Door Mission. The clothing drives were so successful that they were extended for several more days.

More photos on pages 6 and 7.

Parole in the Community

Noble Conference

On July 27, Chairman Alexander took part in a panel discussion on prisoner re-entry as part of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) conference in New York City. Joining the chairman on the panel were Charles J. Hynes, Kings County district attorney and Jeremy Travis, president of John Jay College of Criminal Justice.



Nassau Health and Resource Fair

A health and resource fair was held by the Nassau office on April 29. The all-day event provided information for parolees and their families about available community services and offered free health screenings for blood pressure, Hepatitis C and HIV.

More than 75 parolees participated in the fair that featured representatives from job training organizations along with mental health service providers, a local hospital and re-entry programs.

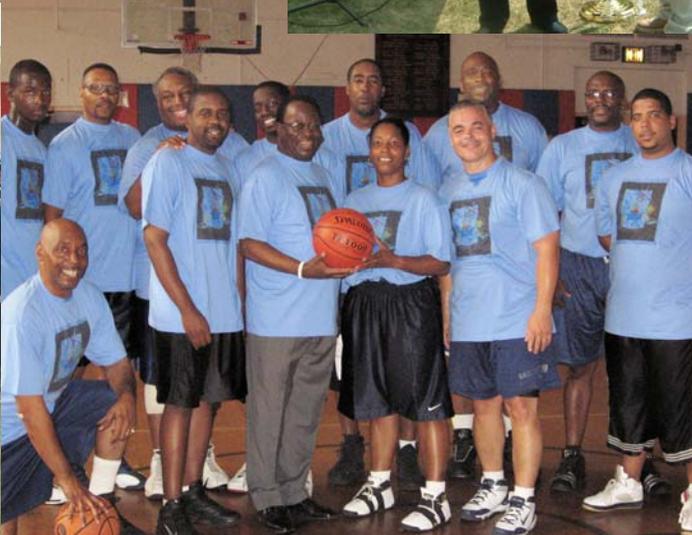
The entire bureau pitched in to make the event a huge success, with a special thank you to Sarah Washington, Deborah Code, Angela and Edward Narcisse, Gayle Walthall, Frederick Bush and William Scott.



Parole Officer's Week

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National Criminal Justice Trends

Arkansas

The US Department of Health and Human Services has ordered the state's Department of Community Corrections to stop all drug testing of people on parole and probation because it says the department and its state offices lack the proper certificate under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), a 1998 law establishing quality standards for labs testing human specimens for diagnosis, prevention or treatment of illnesses.

The state says that the testing is for forensic purposes to check that conditions of supervision are being met by offenders.

Federal regulators say that because some of the state's offices offer counseling and treatment, they would fall under the regulation.

State officials counter that it is the courts and state Parole Board that orders counseling and treatment, not parole and probation officers.

Kentucky

The Kentucky General Assembly endorsed a plan designed to reduce soaring prison costs. The plan involved applying the time served on parole toward the fulfillment of their sentences for some inmates. To date, the plan has benefitted more than 2,400 individuals.

A county judge is currently questioning the legality of the plan and has issued a temporary restraining order blocking the state from applying the provision to a specific three-county area.

Have A Story to Share?

The Parole Report is always looking for items of interest to people at the Division. We are interested in innovative re-entry programs, community activities and other special stories. We especially love digital photos.

Give us a call or send an email, media relations is happy to hear from you!

Office of Media Relations: 518-486-4631

Heather Groll: hgroll@parole.state.ny.us
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Rochester Parolee Succeeds

In 1975, John Hemmers was convicted for his role in a Manhattan murder-for-hire slaying of 46-year old George Hodge. He was sentenced to 20 years to life and released to parole supervision in 1994. While in prison, Mr. Hemmers hit the books and earned his GED and bachelor's degree knowing that if he were ever to leave prison that he would need an education to ease his transition back into civilian life. He also worked hard on helping others, conducting peer counseling sessions. He was recognized as an effective instructor and a role model to other inmates. Additionally, Mr. Hemmers served as a substance abuse program counseling aide and conducted parenting programs for fellow inmates.

Hemmers was paroled to Rochester initially residing in the Corpus Christi Roger's House halfway house while completing required substance abuse programming. He was also a regular participant in AA. At first, Mr. Hemmers was employed in the house restaurant and eventually began working as a residential counselor at Freedom House, a program for recovering substance abusers.

In 1999, Mr. Hemmers moved to the suburb of Penfield with girlfriend and her daughter. The couple married shortly thereafter. They moved to their present home in Fairport in 2002.

John Hemmers is a true success story, meeting all the required directives of parole. He has been granted numerous travel passes in and out of state to attend conferences related to his continuing employment in the substance abuse counseling field and no adverse police contact has been made during his supervision period.

Hemmers remains employed by the Catholic Family Center of Rochester as a therapist and manager. He continues to interact with parolees at his workplace, and is considered to be a valuable employee.



New York State Division of Parole

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