

Doing what you love, loving what you do

This edition of *Let's Talk* holds particular importance to me, as we are devoting the entire issue to Correctional Service Canada's (CSC's) efforts to become a Top 10 employer of choice – that is, an organization where you start working, and don't want to stop.

And that is the story of my career with the Service. When I joined as one of the first female Correctional Officers at Kingston Penitentiary (KP) 27 years ago, I knew very shortly thereafter that this was not just a job for me; it was a career. This is due in large part to the fact that CSC offers so many unique opportunities for its employees to work in institutions or in the community, at our regional offices, at NHQ...or even around the world. In this regard, I invite you to pay special attention to the article on Terry Hackett from the Pacific Region, who returned from a tour of duty at Sarpoza Prison in Afghanistan this past year.

Continuing on a personal note, while I knew that CSC would be my employer of choice, I had no idea of the wide range of jobs I would eventually hold throughout my career, which have taught me so much and helped to land me where I am today. From my time at KP, I was fortunate to work in other institutions in the Ontario Region, and I then accepted a job at RHQ – as a prelude to what the future would hold for me – working in Communications and Executive Services. In the years that followed, I relocated from Kingston to Ottawa to benefit from the learning and growth opportunities at NHQ, and entered the executive cadre in 2001 as Director of Community Operations. Since then, I have occupied a number of positions – all different, and all of which expanded my horizons in one way or another – and today I have the privilege of leading our communications and citizen engagement function on a national level.

My current position affords me the opportunity to contribute to publications such as this one, which is an important means of reaching out to our employees and our many partners. The compilation of this issue was in itself a catalyst for positive change, as it gave us an opportunity to look across the organization at what makes us a great place to work. As a result, we are re-invigorated to seek new and better ways to reach out to our current roster of staff, partners, and volunteers, and to look at how we can engage those who may be interested in joining the CSC family.

I will leave you with a quote from Gandhi that sums up how we can all work together to affect positive change within the organization. He famously said: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." To this end, I invite you to take some time to think about what inspires you in your place of work, and how you can contribute to our overall efforts to become a Top 10 employer of choice. I hope you enjoy the articles in this edition of *Let's Talk* as much as we enjoyed researching and writing them.



Elizabeth Van Allen
Editor-in chief



Let's Talk: Tell us your stories!

This edition marks the first step in a new approach to telling the stories that define who we are and what we do. Instead of focussing on policies and programs, we're looking at the real-life experiences of the people that make this organization such a rich and vibrant place to work.

A raging forest fire kills 37 correctional officers in Israel and colleagues from around the world –including Canada – spring into action to help their families. A bomb blasts through the front gates of the Sarpoza prison in Afghanistan, and a CSC employee on the scene helps restore order. A young recruit is initiated into life on the inside

of one of Canada's largest correctional facilities, and discovers both comradeship and compassion. And a young woman meets a male young offender who changes the course of her life, for the better.

These are the stories we tell. These are the lives we live.

If you have a story that illustrates the beauty and grit of life at CSC, please let us know. We can help you broadcast your story to a large and receptive audience.

And that's not all. In the future there will be video clips hosted on YouTube, embedded on our own Facebook page with alerts sent to you via Twitter.

But first, tell me your stories.

Michael Geisterfer,
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Don Head
Commissioner

Commissioner's message

Five-year plan: Get into the Top 10

RESULTS FROM THE LAST Public Service Employee Survey show that the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has some room for improvement when comparing itself with the highest-ranked places to work in the federal government. So I made it a priority to put us on the path to improving our workplace, and while it's an ambitious plan, I believe it is completely possible for us to become a Top 10 employer of choice within the next five years.

I started my career on the front line as a correctional officer, which showed me first-hand that it is difficult to compare CSC to other federal departments and agencies, because much of the work we do is completely unique to any other job in the public service. I know exactly how challenging some of the positions in the Service are.

That being said, I believe that these unique positions should be part of the reason why CSC is a great place to work – because, while our tasks can be difficult and demanding, the importance of our work is immeasurable. Changing lives and protecting Canadians is what we do on a daily basis, but now we also need to find a way to attract new, and retain current, CSC employees.

One of the clearest ways to make this happen is simply by improving how the Service highlights, recognizes, and supports the exceptional work you do. This needs to happen on every level, from direct supervisors all the way up to senior executives.

I've had the opportunity to speak with many staff members over the past year about what needs to be done to improve our standing as an employer, and it has become apparent to me that solving one or two of the issues addressed in the survey – while helpful – wouldn't be enough.

As such, I've created a working group that is inclusive and reflective of the Service, to tackle this big issue. This group has already taken on some early initiatives, such as talking to staff members about what improvements they'd like to see in the workplace. The results from these consultations have been compiled, and we now have a benchmark and a vision as we move forward.

We are also relying on the Clerk of the Privy Council's Public Service Renewal Action Plan as a guide to improving our employer status. The plan provides valuable information and recommendations in many areas CSC has been working to improve upon, such as employee development, retention and recruitment.

Alongside the Action Plan, we are consulting with experts in the area of employee retention and well-being, as well as conducting research and tapping into other resources to find out what works and how we can get results.

I am well aware that becoming a Top 10 employer of choice is no easy task, nor will it happen overnight. We've got a lot of work to do, but I believe we can live up to the incredible potential we have. We already have so many amazing people working as members of CSC to better public safety, and I look forward to providing each and every one of you with the work environment you expect and deserve.

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SARPOZA PRISON



**KANDAHAR CITY
AFGHANISTAN**

FROM KILLING FIELDS TO HEALING VILLAGES

Terry Hackett's remarkable journey through corrections

If a Top 10 employer of choice were defined by its ability to provide staff with adventure, challenge and purpose, then the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) would be at the top of the list, and Terry Hackett can attest to that. From the battlefields of Afghanistan to the pastoral confines of a healing village in the Fraser Valley, Terry has had the unique opportunity of experiencing CSC at its most poignant, and its most dangerous. Over his 15-year career he has been a correctional officer, parole officer, unit manager, national audits and investigations manager, regional administrator and warden of a healing lodge in Agassiz, B.C.

The following is just one snapshot of the latest adventure in his fascinating career with CSC.

By Michael Geisterfer

IN THE EARLY EVENING of March 13, 2010, Terry Hackett and two other Correctional Service Canada (CSC) employees were quietly working on a presentation with the Warden of Sarpoza Prison in Kandahar City, Afghanistan when a suicide bomber detonated a dump truck filled with explosives at the front gate just 150 metres away. The blast sent shrapnel flying through the dilapidated prison, destroying the Warden's office and killing approximately 30 people.

"I heard a deafening roar and saw a ball of fire coming down the corridor," said the 36-year-old CSC employee. "It blew out the window and a jagged piece of glass became embedded in my head."

In the ensuing chaos, with small arms fire erupting around him, the unassuming father of three found himself at the centre of an impromptu crisis management exercise. "We turned it into the ultimate mentoring moment," said Terry. "We mentored the warden on how to secure the perimeter, conduct casualty management and do an emergency count."

When it was over, medics sutured his head wound with 'combat glue' and Terry put his helmet back on. As traumatic as the incident was, it proved to be the catalyst for a profound change in the way



Terry Hackett *I heard a deafening roar and saw a ball of fire coming down the corridor. It blew out the window and a jagged piece of glass became embedded in my head.*

Sarpoza Prison staff conducted business from that point on.

"They began to engage with the community around them," Terry said. "Sarpoza Prison is located right in the heart of Kandahar City and the surrounding community was more affected than any other community in the world by a prison being there. It is under constant attack."

This was a grisly case in point, with a number of the 30 fatalities belonging to the local village. "The community clearly had a vested interest in the prison being there," Terry recounts. "In July I began foot patrols with the prison warden and our military and civilian partners – both Canadian and U.S. – to engage the elders, to start speaking to them about ownership of the problem and to provide them with assistance."

With CSC's help, the Sarpoza Prison Warden became the face of constructive change in the community. Roads were built, wells dug and other partners engaged to improve the standard of living for those most affected by the prison's presence at the heart of their village. "The progress over the next six months was phenomenal," said Terry. "We held community meetings inside the prison with the mayor and other village members, and for them it was a safe place to meet."

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It was a chance for the community to connect with their government and to take ownership and responsibility.”

Ironically, the seeds for this radical approach to community engagement were sown a few years earlier and half a world away when Terry was the Warden of Kwikw̓exwelhp Healing Lodge, a minimum-security institution on traditional Chehalis First Nation land near the peaceful town of Harrison, British Columbia.

“Working at Kwikw̓exwelhp was probably one of the most rewarding experiences of my career,” he said. “In most communities people would say, ‘Not in my back yard do we want a penitentiary,’ but in the Chehalis First Nation

For this tiny Aboriginal enclave, the notion of community extends far beyond its own limited boundaries. Of the thousands of Aboriginal offenders who have passed through the doors of Kwikw̓exwelhp Healing Lodge, only a tiny fraction – maybe one – actually came from Chehalis, according to Terry. And yet they treat all of the offenders as extended family.

“They invited all of the inmates to attend the feast of the first salmon coming up the Harrison River,” said Terry, “and to their longhouse ceremonies.”

It was often a reciprocal relationship, with offenders giving back to the community in a variety of ways. “They would be out there chopping wood for elders or helping build a longhouse in the community,” said Terry. “It

them. The residents of the Healing Village are no different.”

If the experience of community engagement that Terry Hackett garnered firsthand as Warden of the Kwikw̓exwelhp Healing Lodge helped prepare him for his work in Afghanistan, it also gave him a deep respect for the notion of Aboriginal healing.

“Healing doesn’t necessarily refer just to a person,” he said. “It can also refer to a healing in a relationship to the community. It is about not just restoring the self, but restoring the relationships that were harmed.

“Penitentiaries are a microcosm of society, and when a crime is committed, harm is done. Healing in this context may mean being held accountable and serving time. Sometimes it

Terry Hackett:

“Healing doesn’t necessarily refer just to a person. It can also refer to a healing in a relationship to the community. It is about not just restoring the self, but restoring the relationships that were harmed.”



they not only welcomed the penitentiary, but also took an active role. They had the inmates in their community every day doing work projects or attending their ceremonies and being part of their community.

“And this is a small community of about 500 people. It was quite amazing to see a community extend their arms to such an extent. They clearly illustrated that the problems we deal with in the penitentiary are not just penitentiary problems. They are societal problems. At some point we all have to take responsibility for what happens in penitentiaries.”

For Terry, this means ensuring that the links between inmates and their families and other community supports remain intact. “When offenders are sentenced to time in a correctional facility, they are removed from the community, and rightly so,” he said. “But we are fooling ourselves if we think that they will be able to successfully go back to that community if some links aren’t maintained.”

was really what community was about, giving and receiving.”

The Chehalis First Nation offered one of the most poignant and spontaneous expressions of community engagement that Terry had ever witnessed. “One elder became like a grandmother to many of the offenders,” he said. “She identified their need to learn a traditional Aboriginal trade, like blanket-making or carving, and connected them to artisans in the community.”

This type of community support was no surprise to Chehalis First Nation Chief Willie Charlie, who summed up the spirit of the community quite eloquently: “We are the ones who are here to help our brothers. It is our responsibility.

“If you look back on our history as a people, we have always been hospitable,” said the former Vice-President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “Anytime anyone has come into our territory, we have helped take care of

involves the victim sitting down and talking to the offender. Whether in Afghanistan or Chehalis First Nation, each time a crime occurs it creates a minute tear in the fabric of society, and it’s those little tears that we need to sew together.”

For Terry, the link between a tiny village nestled in the mountains of the most peaceful country in the world and the unmitigated chaos and violence of Kandahar City is clear: “People are people. They want safety, they want certainty for their families, and they want to be prosperous. It doesn’t matter where you are in the world.”

To achieve those things requires a concerted effort on the part of everyone, not just to address crime, but also to rebuild communities, according to Terry.

“Community engagement is one of the great strengths of CSC,” he said. “It is one of the things we do best and we should be really proud of it.”

ESTABLISHING STREET CRED

From frightening cellblock encounters and classroom ‘incarcerations’ to flying food trays, veteran correctional employee Michel Savard reflects on lessons gained from over a quarter century in the Service.



THE OFFENDER WAS screaming at me at the top of his lungs.

I had been conducting a security patrol in the virtually empty cell block after the offenders had left for work. It was October 1984 and I was a young entry level correctional officer at Saskatchewan Penitentiary, a maximum-security facility in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. He was an offender who was normally well mannered and respected prison rules.

On that day though, something was wrong. He was surly from the outset and snapped at me

when I asked him to head down to work with the others. “Leave me alone,” he cried, and soon we were nose to nose, his fists clenched, his eyes blazing with fury. A torrent of obscenities hurtled at me like shrapnel.

A tinge of fear went down my spine.

Being thrown into closed quarters with inmates convicted of serious crimes like armed robbery, drug dealing and murder can be a bit of a culture shock at the best of times. I was 23 years old and had just finished college and university in both Montreal and Ottawa.

“This ain’t either of those places,” a local said to me in the sporting goods store shortly after I arrived, and he wasn’t kidding. They joked that a dog could take off running across the flat Prairie landscape and still be seen running hours later. I wondered what would happen if that were an inmate.

I had been taught that two things had to be in place to feel job satisfaction on any given day: that the count was in and certified correct at the end of my shift, and that we had addressed any security concerns that we came upon.

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If we could do that, then it was a good shift and I was a happy man.

On that particular day things didn't seem to be turning out quite that way. The offender was becoming increasingly agitated. He had a lawyer's envelope in his hand, and I heard later that it contained news about his two children. His wife had gone to court and been awarded full custody, and they wouldn't be coming to see him anymore.

I didn't know that at the time, and our 'conversation' escalated. Whereas he had been engaged in a running commentary on the despicable quality of my character, he now started to threaten me, and I was getting nervous. We were alone. Everyone else had gone off to work and it was just him and me.

Then I saw his eyes flicker past me and instinctively I turned. Ten correctional officers stood silently behind me, prepared to spring into action if necessary. They had been alerted to my situation by the officer who had been monitoring my security patrol from the far end of the range. Now they had my back. On other days, I would have theirs.

They were men and women with whom over the years I have forged a powerful bond.

No one got hurt that day and there was no use of force. My colleagues and I talked him down. We listened to his story, and we acknowledged his sorrow at not being able to see his children. Apart from the verbal missives that had come flying my way I went home that night satisfied that things had unfolded as they should.

Experienced trainer

At a certain point in any successful career, you start passing on the experience you've gained to a new generation. For me, that took the form of becoming a trainer with the Staff College.

I can't begin to count the number of times I've observed and supervised as half my recruits were placed in full-body restraints and "escorted" out of my classroom. What better way for them to see what it's like on the other side of the handcuffs?

Just like it would go down in real life when preparing an inmate for an external escort, I would make half the class kneel on their chairs, and the other half apply the leg irons and hand-

cuffs. I would always try to mimic reality.

"Get up!" I would instruct the now-shackled recruits. "Walk around! Jog! Go climb some stairs!"

This served two purposes. One, the recruits who were acting as the escorting officers would learn their positioning and how to walk around with a restrained offender.

"Now try to run away!"

Secondly, it would show them that re-



Michel Savard: *This poor guy has been sitting in his cell all day worried about his wife and kid...*

straint equipment was only an aide to good security. They had to understand that just because you've placed an offender in handcuffs and leg irons doesn't mean he can't get away from you... because he can.

But learning about restraints and escorts was just one part of the 11-week Correctional Training Program. Aside from the other physical aspects of the training - the weapons range and chemical agents - I would teach the recruits about all aspects of security, anything from searches to suicide intervention to family violence.

One of the hard and fast rules that I would

try to impart to the recruits was to be careful about how you say things: "All you have is your word. And once you've lost that, you've lost it all."

For example, a Correctional Officer 1 (CX-1) doesn't have the authority to admit an inmate into segregation on his own. So, let's say you're a CX-1 and you're in a dialogue with an offender that isn't going so well. He's supposed to be in his cell for a count, but he's standing at the toaster, buttering his bread.

You say, "Let's go. I need you to be in your cell." He's not listening, and things start to get a bit heated.

You decide to up the ante. "If you don't get in your cell right now, you're going to segregation!"

He calls your bluff. "Really? You can make that stick?"

One of the most critical elements of correctional officer and inmate interaction is clear communication. If you clearly identify something as a natural consequence of a certain behaviour, you better be sure you can follow up on it.

That goes for non-confrontational situations as well. What may seem trivial to you could be a huge deal to the offender... like getting a visit from his wife and child.

Let's say they are taking a two-day bus trip to come visit him and the province gets pummelled by a snowstorm. With no way of knowing where they are in the journey or how they are doing, he seeks your assistance.

"Can you please check with Visits and Correspondence to see if my wife called to say if she is ok and if she's going to be late?" he asks you.

"Sure," you say, with a cavalier tone.

Three hours later you still haven't gotten back to him and now you're headed out the front gate and on your way home. Not a big deal, right?

Wrong.

This poor guy has been sitting in his cell all day worried about his wife and kid and now the CX that came on to replace you has to deal with a man who's been stressing all day and may not be asking politely this time.

When it comes right down to it, corrections is about the integrity of your relationship with the offenders. Developing relationships based on basic respect can be the difference between a safe and stable environment, and utter chaos.

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IT'S A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

*Michael Geisterfer takes a tour of Grand Valley Institution and discovers **compassion** at the heart of our correctional system*

“PEOPLE DON’T LIKE to think about penitentiaries,” says Warden Dave Dick.

We are standing in his office within the barbed wire perimeter of the Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI) in Kitchener, Ontario. A bald



Dave Dick, Warden

man with bright eyes that sparkle with passion as he talks, he peers at me through square wire-rimmed glasses. On the wall behind him is a photograph of a bald Buddha, his gaze serene and contemplative.

“Canadians are very concerned about crime and crime prevention,” the Warden says, “but once the court process is finished they tend not to think about what goes next.”

His comments resonate with my own experience. As a new employee with the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), I have been invited to tour this federal correctional facility and I come with my fair share of preconceived notions. Prior to signing on with CSC I never spent much time thinking about penitentiaries, and if I did, I viewed them as a destination of sorts, a place where you end up if you get caught committing a serious crime. Today that ingrained notion will be turned on its head, and from the unlikely of sources.

My guide for the day is Tanius Cidade, a

passionate and dynamic parole officer with 12 years of experience both on the inside and in the community. She also comes from a long tradition of law enforcement. “My father was a police officer and my uncles are lawyers,” she tells me as we wander through the labyrinthine corridors of the multi-use facility. “I decided when I was 14 that I wanted to go to law school. The dream was to become a Supreme Court judge and I was going to change the world.”

It wasn’t until a chance friendship with a boy in high school that her actual career path began to emerge. “He was a close friend and part of my social circle,” she says, “and he disclosed to me he was in an open custody youth facility and had been convicted of manslaughter.” He and his friends were involved in a drunken spree that resulted in the vicious beating and death of a middle-aged man.

“He had already proven to me as a friend that he had changed his life,” she says. “Although he made a very significant mistake, he had changed. He wasn’t the same individual that had committed the crime three years earlier. I got inspired by thinking that maybe if I was in corrections, I could inspire somebody down the road, or at least assist them to make a change for themselves.”

She leads me into the heavily guarded maximum security area of the facility where our every movement is captured on a battery of hidden surveillance cameras. The central foyer of this area is precisely as I expected: heavy steel doors separating secure units where higher-risk offenders spend most of their time. I peer through a thick glass porthole and see two young women walking from one end of the short unit to the other, and back again, over and

over, not missing a step.

“Our goal is to get them out of here,” Tanius says, “to give them the tools that will allow them to live safely in medium security, then minimum and then in the community. We don’t want them going straight from maximum back out into the community at the end of their sentence.”

It’s a sentiment echoed by the Warden: “The reality is that somebody who is convicted of a crime and sentenced to a federal correctional facility is going to be coming back out into the community, with very few exceptions,” he says. “They are going to be coming back out and living next door to you or me. Our challenge is to make sure that happens as safely for the community as possible.”

As the steel doors of the maximum-security unit slam shut behind us, Tanius tells me that whereas most federal correctional facilities are



Tanius Cidade, Parole Officer

either maximum, medium or minimum security, GVI is all three in one. We head out through a set of plate glass doors and a brisk wind blows at us from across an immense courtyard ringed by townhouse style homes.

“These are where the medium- and minimum-security offenders are housed,” she says.

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Mount Carmel inferno: Honouring our fallen comrades

On December 2, 2010, a bus carrying over 40 correctional personnel was on its way to Damun Prison near Mount Carmel, Israel, to rescue prisoners who were caught in the path of a ferocious forest fire. Initial reports indicated that a fallen tree on the road forced the bus to a halt in the middle of the firestorm. Attempting to do a u-turn, the driver lost control of the vehicle on the narrow road and it ended up flipping over into a ditch.

The ensuing fire claimed the lives of virtually everyone on board, including 37 correctional officers, three police officers, two firefighters, the bus driver and a 16-year old volunteer firefighter. In total, 44 people lost their lives in the incident.



The shock of the accident reverberated through cadres of correctional officers around the world. “It’s not every day you hear about nearly 40 correctional officers getting killed

on the same day, anywhere in the world,” Raymond Labelle says.

Deputy Director of the special investigations unit at Correctional Service Canada, Labelle has seen his fair share of hardship, but never on this scale.

“It’s hard to comprehend something like this happening,” he said. “But when it does, I’m going to do any little bit I can – just like how police officers come together when they lose one of their own.”

His “little bit” involved contributing to a charity motorcycle ride that raised over \$12,000 that will be donated to a scholarship for the families of the fallen correctional officers. (MG)

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Flying Lunch Trays

In 2001, I became a national advisor on health and safety issues.

It was about 2:30 p.m. at NHQ on a snowy February afternoon when the call came in from the Warden of a Prairie region institution. “We’ve got a situation,” he said. “A bunch of lunch trays and soup ladles have gone missing from one of the living unit serveries and the frontline correctional officers are getting antsy and are threatening a 128.”

“Ah yes, a 128,” I said. Section 128 under the Canada Labour Code is the provision that gives employees the right to refuse to work where they feel there is a danger as described in the Labour Code.

I immediately

got the picture. Staff were worried that the inmates had hoarded the materials to make homemade weapons and were requesting an immediate search of the entire institution before operations resumed. And now it was my job to help figure out what to do next.



After discussions with the regional coordinator, along with NHQ’s Security, Legal Services and Labour Relations teams, we came back to the Warden with guidance and advice. Soon after that, I got another phone call from him with the news we were all hoping for – an internal investigation led to an accounting of the missing trays and ladles, and the normal institutional routine resumed. Everyone was healthy and safe, which is paramount.

Hanging up the phone, I let out a sigh of satisfaction. As fast as the world is changing, CSC is still ahead of the curve. The offenders have all been accounted for, and no one has been hurt.

At CSC, that’s a good day.

In the next issue of Let’s Talk:

- When Everlore Dunchie’s husband dies of a brain aneurysm, she ends up on the street and a life of crime. Read the incredible story of her journey through GVI.
- A mother’s son is brutally murdered at the hands of a “young thug.” Is forgiveness even remotely possible?
- Our mission in Haiti: creating the building blocks for corrections

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“We can have 10 women living in a house. The townhouse structure gives a lot of empowerment and decision-making back to the women.

We don’t want them to be re-traumatized by abuse that they’ve possibly experienced in the past. So the penitentiary environment here is very different because of that.”

The issue of abuse comes up frequently during the day. Warden Dick tells me that a number of the

programs offered to women coming through GVI are designed specifically for survivors of abuse and trauma.

“A significant number of the women have been through fairly serious situations of physical, psychological and sexual abuse as they grew up as kids and as young women and they are recovering from that in large measure. Often it is directly related to why they are here.”



NEW RECRUITS BRING PASSION, INNOVATION TO FRONTLINE JOBS

As CSC gears up for major expansion, Laura Cummings talks to students and personnel at one of Canada's oldest staff colleges

For Jason McGowan, a new graduate of Correctional Service Canada's (CSC's) correctional officer training program, there are a few choice adjectives that describe his journey towards a career in corrections so far.

"Perseverance," he explains. "You need a lot of it. Courage. Basically don't give up, and fulfill your dreams. If that's what you want to do, go for it."

McGowan, who graduated at CSC's Quebec Staff College in July, is part of a new generation of correctional workers being recruited to meet the needs of a growing offender population.

"It's a great career," McGowan says. "It's an area that I find really interesting. With all the members of the team it's like a big family."

Approximately 150 new correctional officers are trained onsite at the Quebec Staff College each year, says manager Isabelle Morin. The correctional officer training program attracts the highest number of recruits to the college, she explains, which also trains future parole officers and offers courses to current CSC staff and management.

Currently, each recruit receives training using the updated Correctional Training Program

2008, regardless of which staff college they attend across Canada.

This program has been updated to respond to



the changing institutional environment to deal with an increasing number of inmates who have gang affiliations, mental health issues and serious substance abuse problems.

That training incorporates an approach involving social reintegration and building positive, respectful and professional relationships with offenders alongside maintaining

security and public safety, says Johanne Leonard, a staff training officer at the college.

"It's having a positive impact," she says. "We help them develop the capability to resolve problems, to identify problems and situations and to solve them as well as possible."

Rolande Bilodeau, a staff training officer at Quebec Staff College, says it's also crucial to find new recruits who understand the values guiding CSC's mission, and the important role they play as correctional workers in the justice system.

"There has to be pride, because they have to understand the important impact of a system like ours," she explains. "From a certain point we're the protection of society, we work in public safety, so (recruits) absolutely have to be animated, to be motivated, because they have a big mandate. I'm proud of what I do, but I'm especially happy to see people in our courses who say, 'yes, this is it – that passion, that's what I want to do.'"

That passion is exactly what Jason McGowan, who's now working at Leclerc Institution in Laval, says he's found by training as a correctional officer.

"I hope to do a full 33 years (in this career)," he says. "I'd really love to."

Did you know?

CSC has five staff colleges, one in each region (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie and Pacific), including Memramcook, N.B., Laval, QC, Kingston, ON, Saskatoon, SK, and Abbotsford, B.C. CSC staff colleges deliver a wide range of learning programs and services to all staff within their region, including training for new parole and correctional officers, orientation for incoming staff and management courses.

Staff colleges also instruct local trainers on how to deliver programs and create Regional Training Plans to help meet the needs of sites and facilities in their areas.

Staff colleges are run by over 150 CSC employees, including training officers, institutional training coordinators and instructors.

A RACER TO THE FINISH

One of CSC's most active drug detectors gets set for a retirement chasing dreams... and squirrels

By Laura Cummings

After nearly a decade of service, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) will lose one of its most dedicated and enthusiastic employees to retirement next year.

His post-career plan? Chasing squirrels and eating acorns.

Racer, a 10 year old Golden Retriever, has worked as a drug detector dog for CSC since December 2002. After training with the Canada Border Service Agency, seven-month-old Racer and his CSC handler, Dave Morris, began working at Fenbrook Institution in Gravenhurst, Ontario.

Alongside Morris, Racer has sniffed out dozens of drug busts during his career, working in numerous Ontario Region institutions and assisting with large-scale searches.

"Racer is a very confident and independent dog," Morris says of the pooch, who loves swimming and chasing Kong dog toys, and has the kind of "explosive energy" and high-intensity drive that he says is crucial for a good detector dog. "When I had him at six months (old), I would take him out of the kennel and he would spin like a top so fast I wouldn't know which end was his head and which was his tail."



Racer: Moving from doghouse to penthouse

Looking back on Racer's long career, Morris points to a number of highlights including a vehicle search at Fenbrook and Beaver Creek institutions where the intrepid detector

dog led CSC officials to three drug seizures in two hours. Another memorable milestone was Racer's role in helping to find over \$5,000 worth of drugs in a seizure during his first year at Fenbrook.

One of the most invaluable assets to detector teams is a sense of cohesion between handlers and their dogs. It's something that comes naturally when the dogs work with their handlers onsite at the institution and are kennelled at their homes as well, according to Morris.

"We gel so much," Morris says of the bond between him and Racer. "We're exactly the same in that sense. At almost the nine-year mark, I can tell when he's not feeling well, I see so many subtle things (in him) that no one else can see. It's vice versa too – if I have a cold and I'm not feeling well, he knows. We know each others' little traits."

With Racer's retirement on the horizon, Morris says that if he could speak, Racer would thank Craig Farrish, a Millhaven Institution dog handler, former Warkworth Institution handler Gary Pringle and Beaver Creek Institution's Elaine Mikklestrup for their help. Otherwise, Racer is looking forward to retiring at Morris' home in the near future to enjoy his twilight years in peace.

"He's moving from the dog house to the penthouse," Morris adds with a laugh. "He thinks, at least."

Detector Dog Details:

- Detector dogs help stop illicit drugs from entering CSC institutions. Teams are placed at the principal entrances of institutions during inmate visits. They also work in the admissions and discharge areas of institutions.
- All CSC dog and handler teams are trained and certified through the Canada Border Services Agency. Teams are re-certified on a regular basis.
- The number of CSC detector dog teams has increased from 46 in 2008 to 90 in 2011.
- CSC is expected to have 126 teams (including six training teams) working at institutions across the country by 2013.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

*In an environment where the only constant is change,
Justine Lewis peers into the future*

Improving the way the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) does business is hard work, and the pace of change doesn't appear to be slowing down any time soon.

The future of CSC will depend on our ability to continue to evolve and adapt – to improve upon our already world-leading correctional system.

This is no small task, so I talked to some of the key people in the organization about a few areas where we are moving forward.

Here are some of the important initiatives I learned about:

Technology

One of the most exciting initiatives involves the manner in which we all share information.

The Government of Canada is moving into social media on a number of fronts, and this form of communication is now being looked at in terms of its potential impact on government productivity. Examples are Facebook, Twitter, podcasts, YouTube, and blogs. These are exciting times for CSC!

Commissioner Don Head is an avid proponent of social media. In fact, he set up his own Twitter account under the CSC banner back in April 2011. You can follow him under the handle @Don_Head_CSC.

"I love it," he says. "It allows me to communicate directly with staff at all levels. Just recently there was an impressive drug seizure at one of our institutions and I was able to 'tweet' my congratulations immediately."

Asked if there isn't a danger that social media such as Twitter might open the door to



Justine Lewis: *The future of CSC will depend on our ability to evolve and improve upon our world-class status*

staff openly criticizing management practices, the Commissioner simply smiled.

"I actually welcome honest feedback from staff on how we are doing. It acts as a barometer for me."

Recently, CSC launched its own corporate Twitter account. This is the first in a series of social media initiatives by the Service. CSC employees are strongly encouraged to use the corporate account by making suggestions on what could be included in our 'Tweets.'

So start submitting your Tweets! Send your suggestions to: socialmedia@csc-scc.gc.ca.

Currently, CSC uses this Twitter account to keep Canadians informed about what is going on in the Service. It offers news on CSC jobs, events of interest and recent developments, including local, regional and national news.

CSC is on the cusp of embracing a wide range of other new technologies and even has a team dedicated to "Service Offerings" that is responsible for assessing new technologies and business requirements and to develop new services that could be offered.

(Continued on page 14...)

(Continued from page 13...)

Growth and Renewal

Another big change is the Service’s response to an increasing offender population. While already more diverse a population than a decade ago, recent legislative changes have created further impact in the area for federal corrections.

Between March 2010 and July 1, 2011, the inmate population increased by more than 850. CSC’s Transformation and Renewal Team is working with operational sites, regions and sectors at National Headquarters to review staff levels, accommodation space and other resources to allow for effective case management, program delivery, and community supervision as the population increases.

Through the hiring of additional staff across the country, CSC is also expanding the delivery of correctional, education and work programs to assist offenders in their rehabilitation. CSC is also developing plans to review future capacity needs in communities.

An obvious change that goes along with the increasing offender population is the construction of new living units at some of CSC’s existing federal correctional facilities. You can check out which institutions are undergoing

Infrastructure Renewal: Work has already begun at a number of institutions across Canada



construction on CSC’s web site in the ‘Our Organization’ section.

Recruitment

In order to keep up with an increasing offender population, CSC is hiring additional staff over the next several years. The Service has already been actively recruiting prospective applicants through job fairs and other events in Canadian communities, universities and colleges.

But it’s not just about targeting the younger populations as they consider their career goals. CSC is looking to boost the amount of employees who fall under any of the four designated employment equity groups (Aboriginal

peoples, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, women) at all levels of the organization for a wide variety of jobs. The more diverse our workforce, the better our ability as an organization to help rehabilitate a more diverse group of offenders.

New Corporate Priority

In an effort to expand our vision of who we are, CSC has adopted a sixth corporate priority. This priority recognizes the need to foster “productive relationships with increasingly diverse partners, stakeholders and others involved in public safety.”



Recruitment: CSC is looking to reflect diversity at all levels of the organization

Augmenting the five existing priorities, this priority acknowledges the fact that we are a rich and multi-faceted organization that stretches deep into the community where it is supported by numerous other organizations.

The common element of this complex matrix of partnerships is to ensure the safety of Canadian communities through the successful reintegration of offenders into society. This is not something that CSC can do alone. We need the support of partners and stakeholders at all levels.

Collaboration

While implementing new projects and changing the way we work can be challenging at times, staff’s efforts have contributed to CSC being a great place to make a career. We must continue to work together to continue to achieve our priorities. We have more roadblocks to move, but with open lines of communication and an integrated and collaborative teamwork approach, CSC is already on its way to becoming one of the Federal Public Service’s Top 10 employers of choice.

“I just want to learn how to cook. I hear you are a pretty good teacher.”

Kirk Ward reflects on the life and trials of a determined student

The following is the first in a series of vignettes that illustrate how Correctional Service Canada (CSC) employees across Canada and at all levels in the organization are manifesting our corporate values in their daily lives. Professionalism and respect are two of our most highly held values, and they are reflected in this first person account by Kirk Ward, as he helps a student find his way step-by-step on the path to success.

David Prince was a plump, little man in his early 50’s with a balding head, small tufts of light greying hair just above his ears, an infectious grin and a deep yearning to hear the one thing that had always eluded him: an encouraging word from his dad. I am the Culinary Arts Instructor at the Mission Institution in the Pacific Region. One day a few years ago, David approached me about taking my course: “I want to learn how to cook. I hear you are a pretty good teacher.”

At first I wasn’t sure he could do it. His right leg quivered uncontrollably from early onset of Parkinson’s disease, and yet when I looked into his eyes I could see that he was driven by something deep within. I’d never seen anything like it before.

“Alright” I said. “Let’s get you started.” He smiled in delight, signed his application with a Zorro-like flourish and flashed me a glance. “I won’t let you down.”

Thus began our journey. In order to pass the course, he would have to complete 11 written tests. As the fifth one approached several months later, I could see the toll it was all taking on him.

Several months into our training program, his energy and enthusiasm seemed depleted. “I’m not sure if I can do this anymore,” he told me one morning.

I suggested we meet after lunch to discuss options. After listening to his mounting sense of frustration and disappointment with himself, I offered a few suggestions on study habits and assured him that I wasn’t prepared to let him give up that easily.

After our discussion we came up with a study plan that met his needs and social activities within the institution in which he had spent many years.

The day of test five arrived with some apprehension on the part of David. He took the test paper into his hands, sat down, took a deep breath and with pen in hand began to circle the answers.

Then he waited for me to mark his test. To everyone’s delight, he was successful, and when I returned his paper he looked up at me with



Kirk Ward: Culinary Arts Instructor, Mission Institution

child-like eyes and said, “Can I make some cookies to celebrate?”

As the months passed, his condition continued to deteriorate, until one day, he was beginning his morning prep work, cutting carrots for the soup with a 10” chef knife, when I noticed his leg start to shake. He tried to control it, but a strained look flashed across his face. Then the hand holding the knife began to shake and beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead. One of the other students brought him a cloth, and soon everyone stopped what they were doing to observe and offer encouragement.

“Did you take your meds today?” I quietly asked him.

His head dropped slightly. “No, and I didn’t sleep very good last night either.”

“Why don’t you go back to your cell and get some rest,” I suggested.

He nodded his head, put the knife down on the counter, and shuffled off with an air of dejection. I thought he might have given up at that point, but he never did. He struggled even harder to succeed, driven by a desire that at times seemed stronger than him.

Several weeks later, he arrived to write his final test. Under the best of circumstances it would have been difficult for him, but now it seemed nearly impossible. Yet he gave it everything he had, mustering all of his energy question by question to circle the answers. To my genuine surprise, he passed.

Tears welled up in his eyes when I told him the news. “My dad said I would never do well at anything,” he said. “I sure showed him didn’t I?”

A few days later his father came to visit him and they celebrated his success together. He told me that his dad said he was proud of him. There was a visible sign of contentment on his face.

The last time I spoke with David, he was hobbling down the roadway of the institution, out of breath, perspiring and frantically shaking. I called out to him, “Do you need help?”

He shot me a stern look. “Nope. I’ll make it.” David Prince died about a year later and I attended his memorial with many other staff, family, several inmate students that had been released and were working in the community, and numerous other offenders from the institution. Together we celebrated his life and the fondness we all shared for this unique person who never gave up and overcame great obstacles to achieve his simple dreams.

Pilates, “Health’s Angels,” and Baseball Pennants

CSC does what it takes to stay healthy physically and emotionally

By Scot MacLean

CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS are doing Pilates in Stony Mountain, studying the art of yoga in Warkworth and eating pancakes at regional headquarters in the Prairies. In Kingston Penitentiary, a group of “Health’s Angels” are trading recipes and pushing the notion of a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise, while munching on lunchtime goodies. And in Pittsburgh and Joyceville institutions it is all about baseball and who is going to win this year’s intramural pennant.

All across Canada, Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) employees are engaging in creative and dynamic displays of well-being in an effort to not just stay physically healthy, but to survive emotionally in what are often high-risk environments. But what does this really mean when you break it down to a local effort?

In an attempt to answer this question, I contacted people in every region to find out about what kind of employee wellness initiatives take place where they work. Here’s what I found:

Yoga and Pilates

A recurring theme in every region was health and fitness. From sharing recipes to working out together to taking part in health challenges, CSC employees are supporting each other’s active lifestyles.

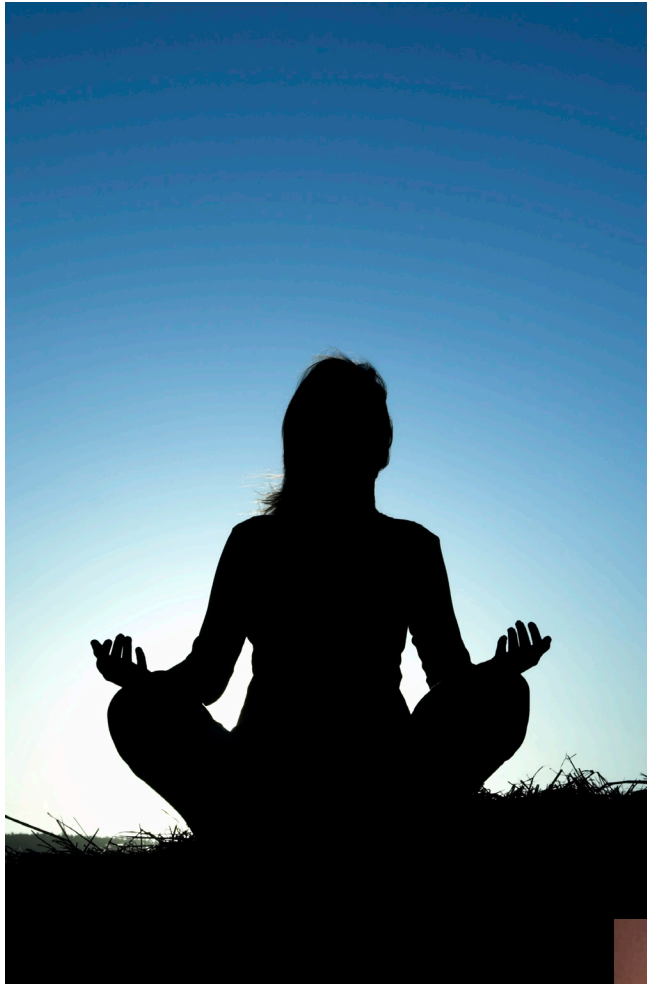
Overwhelmingly, the most popular activity is lunchtime yoga and pilates. So much so, that in some locations a professional instructor is brought in a few times per week. Team sports aren’t overlooked either, with baseball and hockey teams coming together to forge bonds and get in shape.

Furthermore, some CSC facilities are fortunate enough to be in locations that are at one with nature, so employees also get the chance to join a walking or running club and enjoy the great outdoors.

Learning opportunities

There is no shortage of educational opportunities in CSC facilities across the country.

But, a learning opportunity at CSC doesn’t always mean sitting in a classroom studying policies and proce-



dures. The Service is lucky to have such diversity in the work we do, and this is reflected in our educational component as well. Employees are given the opportunity to learn about crisis management, infectious diseases, multicultural issues, suicide prevention, and leadership development just to name a few.

Giving back

Every fall in locations across Canada, the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC) is a rallying point for CSC staff.

Upon returning from summer holidays, CSC employees take the time to participate in a variety of organized activities, and, most importantly, open their wallets to give back to the community. From raffles, to BBQs, to dunk tanks, to cook-offs... every form of fundraising idea imaginable is used to solicit donations, with all proceeds going to United Way and health partner agencies. Smaller-scale fundraising initiatives pop up throughout the year as well. Whether it be a charity hockey game or a campaign to support the Make-a-Wish Foundation, CSC employees never seem to let down a charity in need.

This combination of health, education, and community is an important aspect of working at CSC that often gets lost in the hustle and bustle of the challenging work done in institutions, communities, and headquarters on a daily basis. With fitness, leisure, and charitable activities being organized at many of our facilities and offices, CSC demonstrates every day that the well-being of employees and the communities in which we live and work is a Top 10 priority for the organization.

