

The Propeller



Indianapolis Re-entry Educational Facility Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2016

IREF Dads and Kids Enjoy Christmas Celebration at IREF

Christmastime is to be spent giving to others and enjoying family and love ones. Residents at the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility (IREF), a low-level, minimum security prison, had the opportunity to share in the spirit of the season.

On December 3, 2016, more than 30 children and their fathers, grandfathers, or uncles ushered in the Holiday Season with a Christmas celebration of singing, storytelling, painting, making gingerbread houses, arts & crafts, and games. After a pizza feast, completed with veggies, dip, chips, cookies, and drinks, the fathers presented each child with gifts as they awaited the arrival of Santa Clause (Officer Wm. Rogers). Each child took advantage of the opportunity to tell Santa about their Christmas wishes and to memorialize the joyful moment by taking a photograph with Santa.

Residents that participated in the Christmas event have completed Inside Outside Dads, an evidence-based program that focuses on bridging the gap between incarcerated fathers and their children while the father is still incarcerated. Inside Outside Dads teaches residents new communication skills and offers the perspectives of fathers who are facing similar challenges.

The CVC provides an ideal atmosphere in which residents can visit with their children on a one-on-one basis outside the presence of the custodial parents or other custodians. The CVC is a child-friendly environment where the fathers and their children can spend quality time talking, reading, playing games, and strengthening their relationships.



IREF Christmas & Kids





IREF, IWP, PD1, & Fuel Church Give Big for WISH TV 8 Toys for Tots Toy Drive

Last month, WISH-TV launched its annual WISH Tree toy collection drive to benefit local children via the Indy Public Safety Foundation, which collects and distributes toys to children in need in the Central Indiana community.

Last year, Indianapolis Re-entry Educational Facility gave big! Collecting funds and purchasing \$1,800 worth of toys and gifts for WISH-TV's toy drive for the US Marines' Toys for Tots program. IREF donated an additional \$500 to the IREF's Family Education Department to purchase toys for the department's Christmas celebration for IREF fathers and their children, bringing donation totals for the Christmas season to \$2,300!

This year, with a donation from IREF departments, \$1,000 was added to a tally that grossed more than \$2,000 in donations when factoring in donations in money and toys from IREF staff, volunteers, and residents; the new toys purchased by IREF partners: Indiana Women's Prison (IWP), Parole District 1, and Kokomo-based Fuel Church.

In great anticipation, along with IREF residents and staff, representatives from most of our partners were on hand when WISH-TV 8 Daybreak news anchors Lauren Lowrey and Kylie Conway, and Public Safety representatives Rita Reith, Indianapolis Firefighter, and Aaron Hamer, IMPD Police Officer arrived to pick up the toys. From there, it was fun, fun, fun!

All hands on deck assisted in loading the toys into police and fire vehicles, and two of WISH TV's Jeep SUVs.

The Propeller thanks everyone who lent a hand in supplying funds and toys to help ensure Indianapolis children in need receive toys and gifts this holiday season.



IU Occupational Therapy Group Hosts December Birthday Celebration

IREF is fortunate to have a list of wonderful individual and group volunteers who come in to facilitate many life skills classes and meet with and mentor residents on a one-on-one basis.

These groups and individuals not only provide a service that is appreciated by IREF Superintendent Laurie Johnson and IREF staff, in most cases, they also volunteer their time to ensure that IREF residents do not miss out on celebrating their birthdays.

On Dec. 3rd, Indiana University Occupational Therapy group sponsored a birthday celebration for 29 resident whose birthdays fall in the month of December.



Dr. Jeffrey Crabtree and IU Occupational Therapy students and facilitators provided a feast comprised of Sloppy Joes, chili, ham, turkey, cupcakes, cookies, and a variety of dips, desserts, drinks, and more. After dinner, the celebrants played board games, cards, and Pictionary.

Many thanks to the IU Occupational Therapy Group. The residents thoroughly appreciated your time, effort, and fellowship.

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Over the last 6 months, 300 residents celebrated their birthdays, thanks to our sponsors.

Jun: Corizon Health

July: He-Men Group

August: He-Men Group

September: Oasis of Life Church

October: RRRP

November: He-Men Group

December: IU Occupational Therapy

For volunteer opportunities, or to sponsor a birthday celebration, contact Community Involvement & Volunteer Services Coordinator Gaylie Cotton at:

Gcotton@idoc.in.gov
(317) 639-2671 ext. 214



IU Occupational Therapy Program

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy



Being in prison for any amount of time can cause the average person to lose touch with the world, and all that the world produces in his absence. A person in prison can get so far behind with the world after doing time that he may feel incompetent or childlike upon his or her release. Technology has increased, and a person releasing from long stints of incarceration could become lost and find themselves unable to function in today's technological world. Residents at the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility (IREF) have the opportunity to get in tune with and catch up with the times, and return home to a somewhat even playing field. On October 14, 2016 thirteen residents completed the Indiana University Occupational Therapy Program at IREF, catching up to many functions that have passed them by over the years.

IU Occupational Therapy Program is a five week program created by Indiana University Purdue University (IUPUI) Professor, Dr. Jeffrey L. Crabtree, and facilitated by IUPUI Occupational Therapy Masters Diploma student candidates.

The program provides residents with the latest information concerning job trends, electronic resumes, internet services, transportation services, housing, and in other areas residents will need to navigate upon release.

Resident Rick Green has been incarcerated for over twenty-five years, and believes he has benefited from the information and material received in the IU Occupational Therapy Program. He, like other residents who have been incarcerated for many years, is the ideal candidate for the program. "I've been away for so long. I have no clue about computers, smart phones, and the internet, but with this program's assistance, and this crash course in understanding technology, I think I have a fighting chance."

The Propeller would like to give thanks to IUPUI volunteers Dr. Crabtree and Kelsey, and Master Students Oksana, Rebecca, Savannah, and Danielle for all their time and dedication to assisting residents in this class.



**IU Occupational Therapy
Program Graduates:**

Jerry Futrell
Roderick Lee

Donald Wilson
Rick Green

Latwan Jackson
Walter Burroughs

Rodney Harris
Byron Murphy

Adrian Riggs
John Eversole

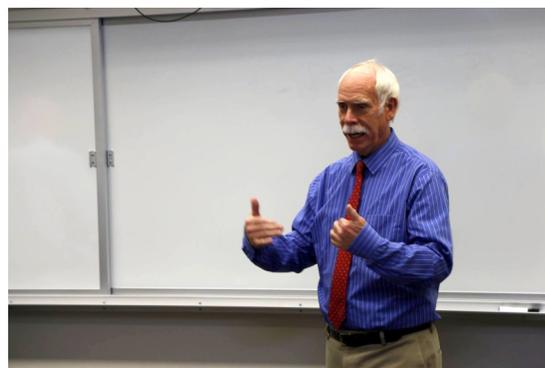
James Roberson

William Lacey



IREF Toastmasters Speak Up

IREF Resident Toastmasters Michael Daprile and Lem Travillian, Community Involvement & Volunteer Services Coordinator Gaylie Cotton, and Rick Rosales, Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) Director of Community and Mentor Engagement participated in a class discussion with students in IUPUI Professor Eric Grommon's School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) Introduction to Criminal Justice Class.



The panel discussed different career paths within the Department of Correction, offender programs and leisure, what life is like for both inmates and staff living and working within the IDOC, and prison culture.

RRRP Donates to Local Community Center



They say that it is always better to give than to receive. That giving out of the kindness of your heart without the expectation of getting something in return is how you receive your blessings from God. On November 16, 2016, residents and staff got the chance to give to a worthy cause and receive a few blessings in the process. Remus Woods of the Haughville-based Municipal Gardens Community Center located in Indianapolis visited IREF to receive a donation on behalf of the Reformatory Residential Re-Entry Program. (RRRP).

The Indy Parks Municipal Gardens Community Center is a community based program that caters to local Indianapolis Hoosiers. Municipal Gardens has a junior basketball program that provide Indianapolis children a constructive environment where they can learn and play as opposed to the grueling atmosphere of the streets that ripe with violence and negativity. "We try to use the sport if basketball to reach the children, and get them in the habit of doing the right thing and the desire to reach for a better life." Woods said. Woods is the basketball coach at the center.

The center has ten boys and girls AAU basketball teams that compete on a national level. A few well-known local celebs such as National Basketball Association (NBA) players Jeff Teague, Courtney Lee, Mike Conley Jr. and George Hill were all once members of Municipal Gardens Community Center.

Basketball is not Municipal Garden's only focus. Staff encourages its members to excel through education, offering tutoring and mentoring sessions. Eligible children can receive a meal at the center, thanks to its lunch program.

Funding for Municipal Gardens is composed of funds received from fundraisers facilitated throughout the community. RRRP donated \$750 to the center.

IREF News to Celebrate



IREF Public Information Officer & Community Involvement Coordinator Gaylie Cotton with Martin Center SCI President & CEO Gary Gibson.

Thanks to the generosity of staff and resident participation in fundraiser events, the Community Outreach & Volunteer Services Office at IREF was able to donate \$1,500 to the Martin Center Sickle Cell Initiative program on November 22, 2016.

Martin Center, Inc. is a human services agency dedicated to aiding and enhancing the lives of those affected by Sickle Cell Disease and Sickle Cell Trait in Central and Southern Indiana. Their programs include support and education for Sickle Cell and other abnormal hemoglobin conditions. Through education, outreach, school partnerships, medical provider collaborations and advocacy, we endeavor to provide holistic services for those affected by Sickle Cell.



Reformative Residential Re-entry Program Specialists L. Williams and residents present Municipal Gardens representative Remus Woods with a donation check.

Martin Center assists the entire Sickle Cell community by providing solutions that address today's needs and reduce tomorrow's barriers for individuals and their families.

The Municipal Gardens, part of Indy Parks & Recreation, received a check in the amount of \$750 from the residents of the Reformative Residential Re-entry Program (RRRP) to help sustain their programs for Indianapolis children. RRRP Specialist Leah Williams and residents held a number of food sales throughout the year to raise monies for the program's donation.



Resident Ellington enjoying the Veterans' Day meal.

On November 11, in honor of Veterans' Day, American Legion Post at IREF purchased a meal for each IREF veteran, resident and staff in attendance at work that day. The meal was prepared by Oakland City University students.



Shout out to Oakland City University Supervisor & Instructor Dennis Brady. Along with Indiana Women's Prison staff and inmates, Mr. Brady prepared and cooked more than 300 turkeys at IWP for the Watkins Community Center Annual Thanksgiving Tradition, which fed more than 7,000 Indianapolis residents seeking a meal on Thanksgiving

#IREfatWork—Community Services Volunteer Work Crew Details



PREP October 2016



On Saturday, October 15, 2016, facilitators taught lessons of love and relationships to the couples participating in the Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) seminar. The couples learned lessons of communication, trust, and honesty— tools necessary to maintain an enduring relationship. Chaplain Keith Blackburn and Specialist III Treddia Crouch both facilitated this year's seminar, which took place in IREF's education building.

Of the many exercises facilitators asked the couples to participate in, some seemed to have a more noticeable impact. One was the interpretive drawings, where couples were instructed to give their own definition of love through art. Another was when the couples were asked to give one to three reasons why they loved one another; this seemed easy enough, but in a room full of strangers it proved challenging. The day was filled with many other exercises and presentations geared towards strengthening relational bonds.

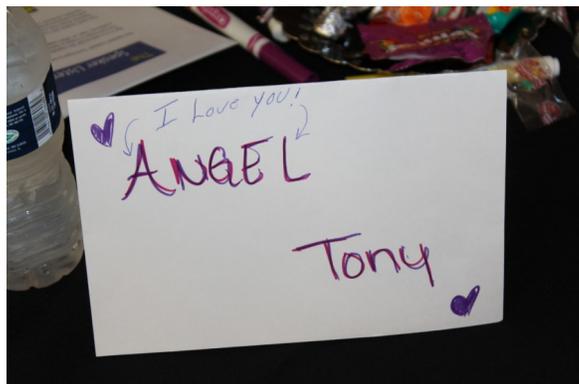
IREF's Family Education Department (FED) funded the all day workshop, which is designed to teach residents and their spouses, or significant others, to build trust, find solutions, and develop healthy communication skills. The facility's Religious Services Department teaches a variety of courses, which must be completed, for a resident to attend the PREP seminar. For residents and their significant others wishing to marry at IREF, the seminar along with other marriage skills education classes facilitated by specially trained Department staff, FED and Religious Services, is required.

When asked what she thought of the training for the PREP seminar, Specialist III Mrs. Crouch an-

swered, “The course of training for the staff was very therapeutic and humbling. It also teaches you to manage your own relationship in a more appropriate manner.” When asked what his hopes for future PREP events were, Chaplain Keith Blackburn answered, “Our goal is to use the skills presented in our PREP classes to strengthen relationships and equip the residents here at IREF for a successful re-entry, because family and relationships are important.”

“Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does not brag. It is not proud. It is not rude. It does not look out for its own interest. It does not become easily angry. It does not keep track of other people’s wrongs. Love is not happy with evil. But is full of joy when the truth is spoken. It always hopes. It never gives up. Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8 NIV.

Reprint Article by Richard Jordan, April 2014 Propeller





FED'S Halloween Party

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy



The room was filled with Ninja Turtles, princes', and various super heroes eager to eat candy and spend quality time with their fathers. Painted faces scattered the room joyfully, sticky from candy corn, pop corn balls and various other sweet treats that were unlimited for their enjoyment. On October 29, 2016 the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility, (IREF) and the Family Education Department (FED) hosted the annual Halloween Party for residents and their children on the grounds of the low level, minimum security facility.

Residents, and their children were treated to a fearfully, scary haunted house created by Chaplin Blackburn and various residents that included a haunted barber shop, scary clown room, and a haunted graveyard. The education building was completely transformed into a scene straight out of a horror movie for the delight and fright of the children.

The haunted house commenced with the children being treated to a viewing of the old classic carton "Casper the Friendly Ghost" minutes before the spooky tour began. While the children were enthralled in the hilarious antics of Casper, laughing and cheerful, a frightening figure appeared from behind a door, scaring their laughter away as the haunting tour began.



The children and their fathers were lead from room to room in the education building, witnessing a different unearthly experience with each room they ventured into. Screams could be heard from outside of the education building as the residents children, big and small were fearful of the spooky clowns, crazy barber, and chain-saw wielding Jerome Voorhees that did their best to give them a scare that they would remember for the rest of their lives.

The Halloween Party was not only about scaring the children. Later in the day the children were relocated to the Children's Visitation Center (CVC) where they were treated to a tasty Nacho dish that Chaplin Blackburn called "Vampire Nachos", gooey popcorn balls, gram crackers with cake frosting, fruity, cold drinks and all the bite size candy their little tummies could handle.

The children had a great time with their fathers as they had full reign of the recreation building, playing video games, basketball or just simply sitting and talking with their fathers. The look of joy was etched all over their faces the entire time, proving that the presence of their absent fathers means the world to them. That these children enjoy every moment they get to spend with their fathers no matter where they may be. "This is great that I get to spend Halloween with my sons and enjoy those moments I would not have gotten in another prison," resident Marco Gonzalez said of the Halloween party.



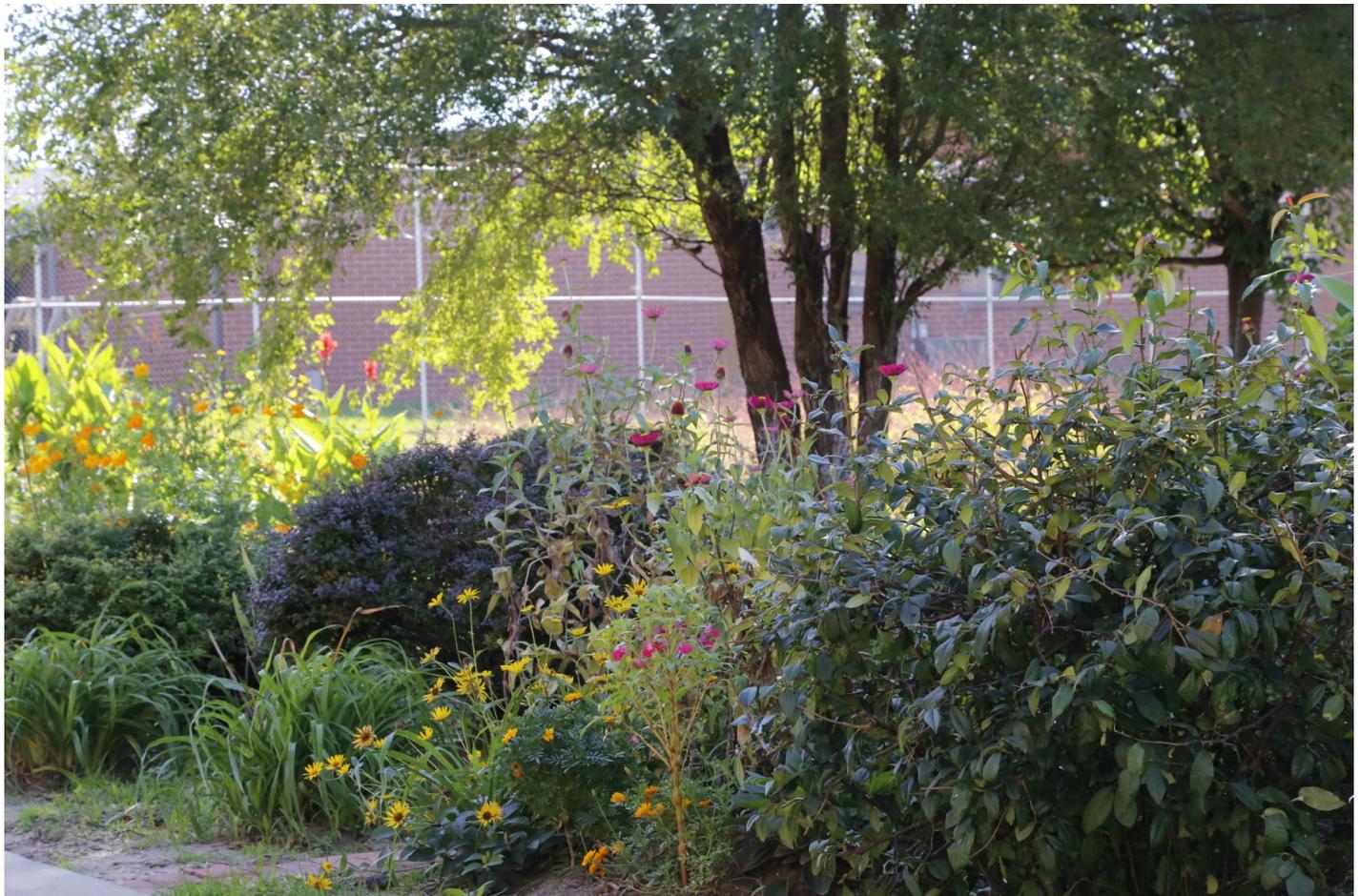
IREF plays a big part in bringing the children joy and keeping them apart of their fathers lives. Here they get the chance to know their fathers, to grow with them and to keep their bonds and relationships strong for their return back into their lives outside of incarceration.

The Propeller would like to thank all of the residents that took time out of their days to help create the haunted house, and participate in performing for the children. You guys did a great job! At the end of the day it is all about the children and their happiness. Thanks for all your work and dedication.

Residents Complete DOL Programs

Over the past four months, several residents have completed Department of Labor (DOL) Apprenticeship programs. The DOL program is a partnership between the Indiana Department of Corrections and the United States Department of Labor to bring Indiana offenders programming that focuses on specific job related skills. Residents completing DOL programs have an advantage over nonskilled population seeking employment.

Resident	DOL Completed
Aldon Webb	Housekeeping
Timothy Sims	Housekeeping
Gregory Ousley	Database Technician
Aric Shinkle	Housekeeping
Anthony Boyer	Landscaping
Brandon Bryant	Landscaping
David Hatfield	Housekeeping
Derrick Odom	Housekeeping
Mickey Robinson	Recovery Operator
William Lewellen	Housekeeping
Timothy Jefferies	Recovery Operator
Kenneth Macken	Housekeeping



Corizon News

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy

With the flu season upon us, it is advised that residents take advantage of the flu shots offered by Corizon at medical. A dose of the flu vaccine is needed every flu season. Every year thousands of people in the United States die from the flu, and many more are hospitalized.

There is a myth that if you get a flu shot that you will become sick with the virus. That's not fully the truth. The flu vaccine usually protects your body from contracting the virus. There are some instances where some people have gotten sick after getting the shot, but by having the shot, their symptoms were not as bad as they would have been had they not gotten the vaccine.

The flu, better known as influenza, is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year. The flu is spread mainly through direct contact with others effected with the virus, or various objects and surfaces that affected persons may have touched, such as door knobs, microwaves, the kiosk machine, and water fountains. The most common way of contracting the flu is by rubbing your eyes, or putting your hands in your face or mouth after touching affected areas.

The virus usually last anywhere from two to three days, but there have been cases where the symptoms last longer. The flu virus can lead to you catching pneumonia, blood infections and diarrhea. The flu vaccine gives your body a fighting chance to ward off the effects of sickness and function as normal. So, if you have not gotten your vaccine by now, put in a health care request for a medical appointment and protect yourself. The flu virus usually lingers from October thru May. Don't procrastinate. Hurry to medical and get your flu shot.

If you have any questions about the flu shot, or just wondering if you should get one, talk to the medical staff about your options and to get a better understanding of it. Medical staff has printed information that you can read and learn the advantages of the flu vaccine. Remember, staying in open dorm settings, and sharing various objects with others can lead to your getting ill. Combat illness with the flu vaccination. It doesn't hurt. Note: Residents that initially refused the flu shot can request one free of charge.



Resident Spotlight: Daryl Barton



My name is Daryl Barton. I've been incarcerated since 2006. I'm a certified Literary Braille Transcriber through the U.S. Library of Congress. I'm the lead braille transcriber in the IREF-Accessible Media Project (AMP) Braille program, which is also a D.O.L. Apprenticeship program. There are currently 33 known prison braille programs nationwide, with a combined total of approximately 800 men and 200 women transcribing braille.

It is estimated that there are about 10 million blind and visually impaired people in the United States today. Unfortunately, this number is growing. Medical advances at both ends of the age spectrum have resulted in an increased incidence of blindness. Premature babies are being saved but can be faced with lifelong disabilities. Older adults are living longer and can develop degenerative eye diseases.

According to a report by the National Eye Institute of the National Institutes for Health and Prevent Blindness America, many more Americans are facing blindness than ever before. The number of blind people in the U.S. is expected to double over the next 30 years as the Baby Boomer generation ages.

I started learning braille, which is actually like learning a new language, in 2012 in the Miami Accessible Media Project (MAMP) at Miami Correctional Facility, part of the Indiana Educational Resource Center (IERC), through the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Along with learning braille, I have become very computer savvy, understanding and applying programming to transform text and codes into braille formats. I have transcribed numerous books for the State of Indiana (Indiana School for the Blind), as well as numerous agencies for blind and visually impaired students across the country.

Braille is necessary for children who are blind because it can mean literacy. It is often the key to their success—both in school and in their adult lives—especially if they are to live independently and realize their full potential. According to *No Child Left Behind*, the education law passed by Congress in 2001, the federal government will "ensure that all children have the opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and their assessments." Blind students are entitled to—and required to—learn the same information as their sighted peers, so this information must all be transformed into an accessible format.

Producing textbooks in braille is time-consuming and expensive. There are two settings in which most braille transcribers work:

Employment with a braille production company, and
"Cottage industry" contract braille production.

Since there are few large braille production companies across the U.S., the vast majority of braille transcribers work on a contractual basis.

According to the AFB survey, the range of annual salary for full time, certified transcribers is \$20,000 to \$60,000, plus benefits. When paid by the hour, the range of payment is \$10 to \$20. Fees commanded by braille transcribers depend upon their level of certification, previous experience, and the difficulty of the work assignment, e.g. a reading book may gross \$7500, a geography book with maps may gross \$25,000, and a math book may gross \$60,000 by itself.

For me, Braille has become my passion because it allows me to do something I enjoy, while giving back to society. Even more, my skill-set allows me to be immediately employable without the worry of working at a particular job site, as I can secure and complete work (book orders) from home. Overall, my experience with braille has provided job skills training and resources for me to transition directly into a career in Braille Transcription upon my release from prison. As a result, I'm very excited and confident about the opportunities that await me and I look forward to being an example of making a positive impact out of a negative situation (incarceration), and becoming a working, productive member of society.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Kelly Durm

by Community Volunteer Services Clerk Ridale White



In the summer of 1980 Kelly Durm was employed with the Marion County Sheriff's Department. During her time with the Sheriff's Department, her responsibilities included the security of inmates, as well as completing other administrative tasks as assigned to her. Shortly after joining law enforcement, Ms. Durm, earned a Licensed Practical Nursing license from the Indiana Vocational Technical College. Afterwards, she promoted to the rank of Deputy Medial Officer and was assigned to the medical department. Ms. Durm promoted to Sergeant, then Lieutenant, and retired from the Marion County Sheriff's Department after 24 years of service. As the Re-

gional Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator, Ms. Durm oversaw more than 28 sites in the state of Florida, and 26 sites throughout the state of Indiana. Currently, she serves as the Health Service Administrator for Corizon Health, and supervises medical departments at Edinburgh Correctional Facility and IREF.

Working in the medical field is Ms. Durm's passion and ministry. She especially likes working with the Indiana Department of Correction. "I have some of the best co-workers, and I enjoy coming to work each day," she said. "It is an incredible experience where I get to meet new people all the time and learn different departments. At Edinburgh and IREF, I get the opportunity to see residents try to better themselves. I want to ensure that residents leave incarceration and re-entry society as healthy as they can possibly be."

Ms. Durm has worked to improve healthcare at both facilities. "When a resident comes to medical as a patient, it is important that my staff and I do our best to treat each and every resident with the utmost respect. Of course, I am available to discuss any problems a resident may have concerning their medical treatment, prescriptions, or questions. The doctors, nurses, and specialists all work together to increase medical correctness and patient satisfaction."

Straight forward yet polite, easy-going, and an awesome communicator, Ms. Durm is the epitome of professionalism, and her positive attitude and willingness to assist anyone are just a few of the reasons residents are comfortable to seek advice or ask her questions. "I am doing the best job I can do to ensure the residents remain in the best of health, physically and mentally. When my job here is done, I will feel as though I made a difference."

Propeller Highlight

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy



Resident Andrews cutting grass.



Resident Travillian planting flowers.



Resident Robinson shoveling mulch.

Usually, The Propeller focuses the spotlight articles on one particular resident. This month, we decided to shine the spotlight on the grounds crew for the hard work and dedication they put in to keep IREF looking good. Thanks for all your hard work guys.

The Indianapolis Re-entry Educational Facility looks so much different than other prisons located in the state of Indiana. The atmosphere, grounds, and landscaping are likened to that of a college campus, a beautiful park where runners go to jog every morning, a place where mothers may take their children to play on hot summer days.

There is no outside landscaping crew that comes in to keep the grounds intact. All of the work is done by IREF residents who enjoy landscaping, and take pride in the work they do to keep the grounds looking flawless.

Lead by Maintenance staff Gregory Curd, the grounds crew does an outstanding job keeping the facility with a well-manicured and clean landscape. This employs countless hours of cutting grass, trimming hedges and bushes, raking leaves, and picking up trash around the facility.



Residents Health and Fitness by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy

At a time when diabetes, high cholesterol, and obesity are at all-time highs, it is vital that we get as much physical activity in our lives as we can. Most people may think that to be healthy and in shape one has to purchase a membership in high-priced gyms, and work out relentlessly until their body gets beaten into shape. The truth of the matter is that it doesn't take much to get in shape and to maintain a healthy life-style.

Activities such as walking, bike riding, or participating in sports can increase your heart rate and burn unwanted fat. Even playing with your children for a few hours each week can raise your heart rate and help jump start the slimming down process, and being a healthier you. As time goes on, these small activities can lead to more intense workouts as your body builds up stamina and endurance to accommodate a more vigorous workout.

At the Indianapolis Re-Entry Education Facility, residents are doing their part in trying to be fit and live healthier lives. With the help of the Recreation Department, and the heart-healthy menu provided by Aramark, residents have the tools needed to build a healthy foundation towards their re-entry into society; a foundation that they can take home with them and share with their families so they too may live better lives.



There are various activities that residents can participate in to raise their heart-rates and stay in shape. The Recreation Department provides weight lifting, basketball, running exercises, and various elliptical machines that can be used throughout the day. The Recreation Building is always open to residents wanting to work out and keep themselves in shape, and take full advantage of other opportunities and exercises offered by the department. IREF is all about educating residents, providing them with the tools they need to return home better mentally and physically.



What I miss about home

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy



One day I was asked the question, what do I miss the most about home and being free? It took me all of one second to answer the question. I miss my family. I miss the things we would do as a family, the way life was before all the arguing, my going to prison, and my parents' divorce. Most of all, I miss my childhood. I came to prison at the age of 17. Most of my memories are comprised of those made during my incarceration. However, deep in the back of my mind, my childhood plays in my memories and dreams.

My fondest memory of my childhood is going to the drive-in with my family. We would all go to the YWCA Drive-In located in Gary, Indiana. Every other week, on my father's payday, we would go and see the latest movie. Before going to the movie, my dad would load the family into the car and drive to the Village Shopping Center to buy us all new outfits. I can remember those Fridays like they were just yesterday. My siblings and I would sit around the house all day, and impatiently wait on my father to come home so that we could climb into his long, two-door Fleetwood Cadillac and head for our destination with much exuberance, bumping to Oldies-but-Goodies bumping

through six by nine inch speakers and sound system. I can remember sitting in the back seat, singing along with Freddie Jackson or The O'Jays, full of excitement and joy, debating on what type of outfit I'd get, hoping that my father was not in one of his cheap moods, as he swore everything I'd want was too expensive.

My mom and my sisters would always get their outfits from JC Penny's, while my brother and I would get ours from the Lark, choosing fly outfits so that we could be like the rappers in the music videos. After shopping, we'd cruise to our favorite restaurant and eat dinner. Because our Friday outings were special, my father would allow each of us to pick the restaurant we most liked, and buy something off the menus, instead of dining at one family restaurant.

Just like little kids of different ages, with different tastes, we would all pick different places. My sisters would always pick Mc Donald's so that they could get the "Happy Meals" that they loved so much. My little brother would always try to be like me and choose Nikki's King Gyros, and order my favorite: a gyro plate with French fries, and coleslaw. He was always my shadow, my tag along and just a smaller version of me growing up. My parents would always eat at the local Chinese restaurant, The Golden Wok. Egg-Foo-Yung and shrimp fried rice were the dishes they loved eating. Like I said, I remember those days like they were just yesterday. After dinner, we would go to the drive-in and watch movies. Of course, my parents would pick the movies. My siblings and I never minded; we were just glad to be out having fun and staying up late. We'd sit on the front of the bumper of my father's car and during the movie my siblings and I would always sit on the front bumper of my father's car and watch the movies, until the mosquitos and bugs started to bite. My little sisters would always fall asleep before the movies ended. Me, I'd watch them in their entirety. Stay up so that I can get squeeze in all the time with my parents that I could get, and enjoy my one late night of the week.

Now that I am grown, I miss those Friday night outings with my family. I miss them more than words can ex-

plain. Not a day goes by that I don't think about those days, and long to have them back. I listen to the oldies on WTLC at night, and I always think about my youth. Luther Vandross, Freddie Jackson, Teddy Pendergrass, and The Stylistics all make me miss home. For those songs are the soundtracks to my late nights at the movies with my family. They are the soundtracks to my childhood, and to my life.

Now that my time is nearing an end in prison, I wonder what life will be like once I am out and back home. I am not worried about most things that most ex-convicts worry about prior to being released from prison. I have a strong support system comprised of people who have my back. No, my worries are far from my re-entering society. My fears are of what life will be like with my family. My parents have since separated and divorced and rarely speak to each other. There are no more family outings. Given how life was when I left home, I don't know how to deal with that, how to split my life up between the two people that I love more than life itself. Sometimes, I wish that life could go back to the way it used to be, that we could all still be one big happy family, and go to the movies like we use to. I guess those days will have to exist only in my memories and deep inside of my heart.



My IREF Experience

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy

When I woke up this morning and looked at myself in the mirror after getting dressed, I felt motivated and driven. I felt as if a huge, twenty-ton weight had been lifted off of my shoulders. Most of all I felt alive and rejuvenated. For years I donned the unsightly prison garments; you know the khaki jumpsuit and the unpleasant, arch-killing state boots. Looking at my appearance in the mirror this morning in my civilian clothing and Jordan tennis shoes, life felt somewhat normal. I felt more like a man. Like a person. Like some one who had meaning and purpose to his life. Life has not always felt that way for me, though. I have seen many dark days in my young thirty-seven years of life.

For the past twenty years, I have been in prisons that were filled with inmates who advocated violence and corruption. Coming to prison at the age of seventeen, I was one of the youngest people at the Indiana State Prison (ISP). During my time there, I witness violence and anger to a degree that I had never seen in my life. I witnessed young men being swallowed up by the system, swallowed up by the older men who preyed upon their youth and weakness, instead of guiding them to rehabilitate themselves. Seeing these acts of cruelty take place, I learned early on that I had to be hard, that I had to adapt to my new surroundings and become like the majority around me, if I wanted to survive.

Not wanting to fall prey to a cage full of hungry, deranged lions, I conformed and adapted the "if I can't beat them, join them" mentality. That way of thinking always led me to trouble that I did not want, or need. Most

of all, growing up in a maximum security prisonful of the most dangerous men the state of Indiana had to offer, I developed a cold, hardened personality and character, and a negative attitude to match. I was no longer the shy, kind-hearted, fun-loving, sensitive child my mother raised me to be. My life was one big facade that was spiraling out of control, and there was nothing I could do to stop it. I had to keep up with the Joneses in order to remain on top of the food chain. Staying on top of the food chain, however, made my life miserable. I desperately needed a change.

When my security level finally dropped, I felt optimistic about leaving ISP. I was finally going to a better place, leaving the madness behind, and feeling some what normal again. My heart dropped when I learned that the lower level prisons were just as bad as ISP, if not worse. I was shipped to various level-two facilities that were filled with young, temperamental boys who knew nothing about doing time, or how to conduct themselves in a prison setting, let alone in society. The respect level among the younger men was none existent in the lower level prisons. They knew nothing about being men, or how to respect each other as men. My hope for peace was crushed the minute I reached population. At that moment, I gave up. Sitting on my bunk at the Westville Correctional Facility, I thought to my self that prison was prison, and that inmates will be inmates no matter what prison I am in. Coming to that conclusion, I decided to become anti-social, and not talk to the people around me. I felt that these men were not on the positive level that I was trying to exhibit in my everyday life, so there was no need to talk to any of them at all. I'd rather live an anti-social life, and stick to myself, than go back to the fantasy world I lived in for years at ISP. So, for the past nine years of my life, I had been a quiet, reserve person who only spoke when I was spoken to. My distaste with the prison environment lead me to become one of those bitter old men in prison who blamed all that is wrong with prison on the younger generation. Behaving as such lead to me being alone and lonely all the time. Something had to give.

Life for me has changed dramatically since coming to the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility. I am no longer that quiet, reserved, antisocial, bitter old man I was at the level two facilities. Nor am I that hardened criminal that I was pretending to be at ISP. I had heard about IREF and its laid back atmosphere for many years. I would meet guys in other facilities, who had been to IREF, and they would tell me about how it is so different from other prisons, but I couldn't fathom the idea that an actual prison could be so laid back and calm, that there was a prison that actually cared about inmates' re-entry. I was convinced the minute I walked into intake. Sgt. Lowery was so polite and calm, so much different than many of the officers who I had encountered at other facilities. The moment I walked out onto the yard, I was taken aback at how much IREF looked like a college campus than a prison. All of the inmates wore civilian clothes, and were referred to as residents and not inmates or offenders. For years I was referred to as Inmate Murphy, or Offender Murphy, which felt demeaning and degrading. Here at IREF, I feel as though I am an actual person again.

My IREF experience has been nothing but positive. The staff and residents are polite and respectful. Most everyone here is eager to greet you with a smile, a hello, or a simple "What's up?" everyday. No one walks around mean-mugging or acting as if they are the hardest person in the world. Besides the great atmosphere, I love the re-entry programs that are offered here. The facility here gives us a chance to better ourselves and prepare for the world beyond the prison gates. For me, that is all I've ever wanted; a chance to better myself for my family, myself, and my community. Most of all, I am grateful for Mrs. Cotton trusting me with the job of Public Information Officer Clerk. I could have never done this kind of work at the other prisons. I really love my job, and my IREF experience. Because of this, I feel ready for the world that awaits me.

A Change of Setting

by Resident Christopher Harris



When I first arrived at IREF, I was surprised at how much it did not resemble a prison. In fact, the whole setting was reminiscent of a college campus. Everywhere I looked, individuals were dressed in civilian clothing. They moved about the facility freely, without officers escorting them. They had more privileges than those in a more traditional-like facility. Most residents seemed happy to be here, and had something positive to do throughout the day; something that guys such as myself had only dreamed about after being incarcerated for so long. IREF is the vision of peace I could not fathom at other facilities.

Considering the fact that I was still incarcerated physically, mentally, I was experiencing incarceration from a different perspective. IREF's atmosphere and fostering environment put me in the mind frame to really get prepared to re-enter my community. There are many positive events that take place at IREF. Some of those include the Father Son Car Show, and the Father Daughter Dance. During these events, residents who are fathers and participate in the Family Education Department's (FED) Children's Visitation Center (CVC), are given the opportunity to spend real quality time with their children, and foster a positive relationship with them rather than just thrusting them back into their children's lives without getting to know each other. I believe that those events, the FED, and CVC provide a healthy transition for both fathers and their children.

IREF staff and Administration treat you with respect, like you are a true person, rather than an offender number they must keep an eye on for twelve hours a day. Staff here do not use the term "offender," or any other word that has negative connotations associated with them. Staff actually address residents' needs, which, hopefully, will help reduce the chances of one recidivating once they are released. Staff nor the programs offered here will not work if one is not receptive to changing criminal thinking, and putting forth the effort to be the driving force behind their own re-entry.

I have more responsibilities, now. I have grown accustomed to the expectations from both staff and myself. It puts me in a place mentally where everything is business. There is no time for playing games. I've been given the privilege to be a mentor on the RRRP Unit. RRRP classes gives me the chance to improve my cognitive and communication skills, which are important in dealing with others. I also work as a warehouse clerk. My position gives me experience in the field I'm interested in, and the ability to interact with others on a daily basis. IREF is giving me and others many chances to grow and change.

The ambiance here is somewhat tranquil. There are no thirty or forty foot walls; I now have the ability to look out at my surroundings and visualize just how close I am to my future in the community. My advice to other residents is to focus on what IREF has to offer, and to take advantage them and be the best person you can be.

What the sunset means to me by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy

Being in prison, it can be hard to appreciate a good sunset. The sight of different hues of burnt oranges, reds, and purples meshed and tangled together like a kaleidoscope lose their meaning and beauty due to the trials and tribulations of prison life. My time spent in various high-level prisons robbed me of my ability to enjoy a beautiful sunset. Of the ability to sit in one place long enough to appreciate the euphoric and therapeutic sense one can receive from watching the sun slowly set.

In other facilities there are controlled movements, the hustle of hurried chow, recreation and work lines. There is never a moment when you can sit and watch the sun set, let alone enjoy it. The environment is even harder, so you have to be aware of your surroundings at all times. Staring at the sun too long could cause you to lose focus and end up getting hurt for not paying attention. You don't want to get hurt, so you tend to not focus on the sun; you focus on the people around you and all that they are doing. In certain prisons, watching the sunset is secondary to keeping yourself safe and out of harm's way. To be exact, it is non-existent.

Being away from your family, children, and that special female who holds your heart makes it hard to enjoy the sunset. You would think that missing your family would cause you to want to sit and watch the sunset, but the pain in your heart will not allow for the beautiful things in life. Life is hard, dark, and gloomy. Nothing beautiful matters. At least, that is how I felt. Serving a fifty-year sentence in prison does not feel happy, is not a thing of beauty, nor is it enjoyable, so, I could not care less about



a sunset. All I thought about was my son, my family, and the woman who held my heart. I was longing to be home with them, and a part of the world in which they lived.

My thoughts have changed drastically since coming to IREF. From the moment I got here and started exploring the facility and all it had to offer, I finally felt like I had time to sit still and take in life. I now had time to sit with my own thoughts and feel a sense of peace and tranquility. That peace came to me at the pond area located just off the chapel basement.

The sight of the ducks swimming and waddling around the campus, and the pond teeming with flocks of gold fish brightened my heart and my soul. On my first evening here, I sat at the pond and watched the sunset alone. The sight of the sun tip-toeing on the sky was beautiful! I felt at peace, real, full of glee, and humbled. Sitting there watching the sunset, I thought about my family, my son, and the life I had before prison. I thought about how happy I was back in those days, and how my family was so close then. The colorful sky made me think of the special lady I had lost years prior and how I longed to have her back in my life. It made me wonder if she was thinking about me, and watching the sunset at that very same moment.

I believe that our situations in life, the emotions we deal with, whether good or bad, can alter our ability to appreciate the beautiful things in life. That our environment, our missing our families, or that person you love more than life itself, can hinder us from enjoying the beautiful wonders that God has bestowed upon us. Being here at IREF has caused me to appreciate the beauty of sunsets. It has given me back the ability to feel, love, and strive for happiness. When I watch a sunset now, I am flooded with peace and tranquility. Life seems so serene. My prison journey is nearing its end. I see the beauty in life. I see my life as a free man, a father, a son, a brother, an uncle, and a husband and family man to the most beautiful woman God has ever created. She is my sunset, my guiding light, and more.



Turkey Enchiladas

by PIO Clerk Byron Murphy

I am a big fan of Mexican dishes. Being part Puerto Rican, I love spicy foods and just the different flavors that Mexican dishes have meshed all together, either wrapped in a warm tortilla shell or draped over some crunchy tortilla chips drenched in cheese and salsa. Since I have been in prison the world famous “Chipotle” authentic Mexican food restaurant has been established. So I am looking forward to going there and sitting down with my favorite Mexican dish-enchiladas. In this issue of The Propeller, I would like to share with you a tasty Enchilada dish that I made in Culinary Arts Class that I know you all will enjoy.

Ingredients: 1/2 -cup chopped onion, 1/2- cup of an 8oz packaged cream cheese soften, 1 - tablespoon of water, 1- teaspoon of ground cumin, 1/4-teaspoon of black pepper, 1/8- teaspoon of salt, 4 -cups chopped cooked turkey, 1/4 -cup chopped pecans toasted, 12- 8 inch flour tortilla wraps. 1- 10, 3/4 oz. can condensed cream of chicken soup, 1- 8oz carton light dairy sour cream, 1-cup skim milk, 2 to 4 tablespoons finely chopped jalapeno peppers, 1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese *** more for topping***

Preparation and Cooking : 1. In a small covered sauce pan, cook onion in a small amount of boiling water over medium heat until tender and drain and sit aside. For enchiladas, spray a three quart rectangular baking dish with nonstick coating. In a medium mixing bowl, stir together the cream cheese, water, cumin, black pepper and salt. Stir in cooked onion, turkey and toasted pecans.

2. Meanwhile wrap tortillas in foil. Heat at 350 degrees in oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until soft. Spoon about 1/4 cup of turkey mixture onto each tortilla, and roll up. Place seam sides down in the baking dish.

3. For sauce, in a medium mixing bowl, combine the condensed soup, sour cream, milk, jalapeno peppers, and pour over enchiladas. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes, or until heated through. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake uncovered for 4 to 5 minutes more until cheese is melted. Let cool and serve.

To me, Mexican dishes are the best! I swear that I could eat a variation of Mexican dishes every day for the rest of my life! To be honest, I could eat enchiladas everyday for the rest of my life. That is how great I think they are. Turkey enchiladas is a great dish with a healthy twist by using turkey instead of the usual pork or beef. I advise you all to try enchiladas this way. I guarantee that you and you family will love them. Plus they are jam packed with cheddar cheese, and who does not love cheese? I know that I do. Until next time. Enjoy!

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The Propeller looks forward to hearing from you!!!