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WELCOME 2020

2020 began with the promise and rejuvenation every New Year brings. No one could have predicted what the next 365 days would bring to Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail (VPRJ), the United States, or the world. The global COVID-19 pandemic presented several challenges to all professions; Corrections was no exception. From gathering restrictions to mask mandates, increased attention to hygiene, and physical distancing, 2020 was a year that marked a temporary new way of life for the entire world. VPRJ's 2020 Annual Report will show how our jail staff responded to the pandemic in a variety of ways, from jail operations to support services, and everything in between while maintaining our mission of providing for the security and wellbeing of each individual in our custody.

New Year, New Superintendent

After two years of service, Tony H. Pham resigned his position as Superintendent of VPRJ after accepting a position with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In his place, the VPRJ Board Authority selected Colonel Roy C. Witham to lead VPRJ as the new Superintendent. Colonel Witham had served as VPRJ's Assistant Superintendent since December of 2017, and prior to that as the Chief of Operations at the Richmond City Sheriff's Office. A veteran of the United States Navy, Colonel Witham brought with him twenty years of correctional experience, starting as a deputy and working his way through several positions, all of which prepared him well for assuming command and of VPRJ.



On January 16, 2020, Colonel Roy C. Witham was appointed by the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail Board Authority as the Superintendent of Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail.



Colonel Witham was a known commodity among staff and inmates at VPRJ, which made his transition into the role of Superintendent that much easier in January of 2020.

Colonel Witham is the third Superintendent in VPRJ's 20 plus year history, and was well positioned to lead the jail's staff of 120 full time and part time employees. Having served in correctional settings which offered both direct and indirect supervision, as well as beginning his career in corrections at the old Richmond City Jail, later named the Richmond City Justice Center, which boasted an inmate population at one point of more than 1500, Colonel Witham was ready on 'Day One' to perform all of the duties of Superintendent. As he was a known commodity by the employees, as well as the inmates and our local and regional law enforcement partners for the past two years, the transition was quick, amiable, and without issue.

No one could've predicted that in just two short months, the world would be in the grips of a global pandemic and the normal, operational process of corrections would be challenged to do all it could to 'Stop the Spread'. With Colonel Witham at the helm, VPRJ weathered several storms, and we are grateful for his leadership.

IN MEMORIUM

VPRJ lost a colleague, friend, and mentor in Major Angelanette Moore, who died in the line of duty on January 23, 2020. Major Moore had dedicated more than 20 years of her career at VPRJ, serving as the jail's Director of Security, and prior to that as the Assistant Director of Security. She oversaw all aspects of security operations within the facility, and mentored young officers as they started out their careers in Corrections. Major Moore was well respected by her colleagues, as well as the inmate population she was charged with. She had a reputation for being firm but fair, no matter if she was providing redirection to an officer or mediating a dispute with an inmate.

Major Moore was well respected and admired, not just by those with whom she served at VPRJ, but by law enforcement professionals across the Hampton Roads/Peninsula regions, as evidenced by the many offerings of assistance the Moore family received from surrounding law enforcement agencies. Many of these agencies provided in-person condolences at Major Moore's funeral service on January 30, 2020, as well as a traditional 'Bag Piper' and police escorts from the funeral home to Major Moore's final resting place. As they are well known to do when officers pass away in the line of duty, a local Mission BBQ provided a full catered meal for the family of Major Moore and guests at the reception following the funeral. Additionally, prior to the first commemoration of her death, the same Mission BBQ sponsored a meal for VPRJ employees to recognize that one year had gone by since Major Moore's passing.

VPRJ and the Moore family received hundreds of letters of condolence for Major Moore's passing, as well as tributes to her life and service. Three such tributes – a portrait of Major Moore, a carving of her badge, and a posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor from the National Police Hall of Fame, framed with an accompanying certificate – are included in a memorial wall dedicated to Major Moore's memory. VPRJ staff, as well as Major Moore's husband and son participated in the painting of a 'Thin Blue Line' on memorial wall, located in the Administrative hallway just outside the entrance to the secure portion of the jail. From her portrait, Major Moore looks on as members of our staff begin their shifts, and welcome them when they finish their duty and depart.



MAJOR ANGELANETTE MOORE
END OF WATCH
JANUARY 23, 2020

Major Angelanette Moore

VPRJ received so many letters and tributes to Major Moore that a 'Condolence Campaign' was created. Utilizing the Officer Down Memorial Page (ODMP), a well-known webpage among law enforcement agencies which reports and categorizes line of duty deaths of local, state, and federal law enforcement and corrections officers, VPRJ began sending letters of condolence to agencies which had lost members in the line of duty. This was done in an effort to keep the memory of Major Moore present, and to return the kindness and support shown to us by so many agencies across the United States; VPRJ even received letters from Canada and other countries. Over 190 law enforcement agencies received letters of condolence from VPRJ. Regretfully, those agencies represented over 250 line of duty deaths in 2020.

Major Angelanette Moore left an indelible mark upon every person she met while working at VPRJ, so much so that a challenge coin was created for VPRJ which memorializes her and her service. She will never be forgotten, and VPRJ will continue to provide support to the Moore family while honoring her memory.

SARS-CoV-2 aka The Novel Coronavirus aka COVID-19

COVID-19 Arrives

In early 2020, a severe respiratory virus originating from overseas began to make its way through Asia and Europe. By early March of 2020, Sars_Cov_2 (COVID-19, The Novel Coronavirus) had entered the United States. On March 12, 2020, Commonwealth of Virginia Governor Ralph Northam declared a Public Health Emergency. From that point on, correctional facilities across the nation were faced with an unprecedented crisis which led to safety measures which had only ever been implemented on a targeted basis. From mask mandates to the fevered purchase of personal protective equipment to suspension of normal operations and everything in between, 2020 will go down as the year when VPRJ staff faced incredible challenges and met them all with dedication and professionalism.

As 2020 continued, more and more became known about COVID-19. Corona viruses have been a part of the known illnesses for hundreds of years, but this particular virus affected the human body in ways complicated the normal treatment options available for respiratory viruses. While some who tested positive for COVID-19 never developed any of the recognized symptoms, others experienced severe respiratory distress. By the end of 2020, an estimated 300,000 people died due to COVID-19 or from complications of the virus.

So far, at least 75 members of correctional staff across the United States have died from COVID-19. Among the inmate population, the number is harder to ascertain, but according to The Marshall Project, in U.S. prisons, more than 1700 inmates have died due to COVID-19. That number does not account for local jail inmates. The Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) reports that among its inmate population, there have been nearly 6,000 positive COVID-19 cases to date among the offender population. Of that number, thirty five have died from COVID-19; over half of those deaths occurred at Deerfield Correctional Center, which houses some of the most medically vulnerable offenders in DOC.

Throughout 2020, VPRJ held four mass testing events, two of which saw all inmates and staff tested by the Virginia Army National Guard in coordination with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the third, a testing of all staff members by a private medical lab, also through coordination with VDH. A fourth test was conducted after the mass test on December 22, 2020, which tested all those inmates and staff who tested negative initially. As of the final week of December, VPRJ had tested 949 inmates and 436 staff tests for a total of 1385 COVID-19 tests performed in 2020. While most cases among inmates and staff were asymptomatic, those who showed symptoms recovered, and, thankfully, no deaths occurred due to COVID-19 at VPRJ – a reality that other correctional facilities sadly faced.



A VPRJ officer fills out paperwork prior to receiving a COVID-19 test.



A VPRJ officer receives a COVID-19 test from a Virginia Army National Guardsman.



Colonel Witham with members of the Virginia Army National Guard after testing concluded.

VPRJ COVID-19 Response

Two-A-Days

From the day the Governor declared a state-wide health emergency, Superintendent Colonel Roy Witham instituted two-a-day meetings with his Command Staff. The meetings were created as a way for members of the Command Staff to share information, advise on any possible COVID-19 infections among staff and/or the inmate population, provide updates from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and other agencies and organizations on the front lines battling COVID-19.

When the positivity rate began to recede during the summer months, the amount of meetings were adjusted to once a day, then every other day, and finally to twice a week. Additional meetings were scheduled as needed, as in the case of the three mass testing events which took place at VPRJ over the course of the pandemic or when a high number of staff reported positive testing results in a short period of time in December of 2020.

Protecting VPRJ Personnel

Early on in the pandemic, masks became one way to stave off COVID-19. In order to protect staff and to promote a sense of unity in fighting the pandemic, VPRJ purchased navy blue face coverings imprinted with our patch and provided each employee with two masks, as well as filters to install inside them. Wearing a mask was made mandatory for all employees when outside their own work space, and will continue to be mandatory in the early months of 2021.

Masks weren't the only tools used to protect VPRJ employees. VPRJ's Finance Department launched a research and purchase effort for multiple forms of personal protective equipment, including gloves, smocks, shoe slippers, and face shields. VPRJ also procured hand sanitizer, anti-bacterial soap, and other cleaning supplies in abundance. Hand sanitizing stations were placed throughout the facility, allowing employees to easily continue good hygiene practices, and VPRJ's Work Force Team moved throughout the entire facility cleaning and wiping down often touched surfaces and frequently used spaces.



A VPRJ officer with full PPE.



VPRJ Officers observed physical distancing whenever possible, including in Staff Dining.

Communication was also a tool that was used heavily throughout the year to protect members of Team VPRJ from contracting COVID-19. Staff were directed to contact their supervisors if they were feeling ill and told to stay home and seek medical attention; a note from a physician was required for the employee to return to work, along with a corresponding negative COVID-19 test if the physician or the agency ordered a test to be performed. Prior to beginning their shift, staff members had their temperatures screened and logged. If their temperature was elevated, they were not permitted to stay for their shift, and the employee was directed to go home and seek medical guidance. If employees reported feeling ill at work, they were sent home immediately, and also told to see a physician.

Protecting VPRJ Personnel (Continued)

VPRJ also utilized and shared guidance from the VDH and the CDC regularly with employees, creating a space on VPRJ's notice board, located at the staff entrance, for updated information on symptoms of COVID-19, insurance information, and quarantine/isolation notices could be placed. Additionally, Colonel Witham kept employees updated via memos and emails on new information provided by the CDC and VDH, as well as amended executive orders from the Governor, some of which required specific behaviors to be followed in hopes that it would reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as maintaining good hygiene practices and observing physical distancing.

Protecting VPRJ Inmates

Safeguarding the health and welfare of the inmates committed to the custody of VPRJ is a top priority for VPRJ staff. Early on in the pandemic it became clear that indoor, congregate environments without adequate ventilation dramatically increased the spread of COVID-19. Environments such as nursing homes and correctional facilities became hotspots for COVID-19 outbreaks throughout 2020. In response, VPRJ took several measures in order to protect both inmates and staff from the virus entering and spreading throughout the facility.

In March, shortly after Governor Northam declared a Statewide Health Emergency, Colonel Witham suspended in-person Friends and Family visitation, volunteer/WAITT programming, and Weekender Programming indefinitely. Restricting movement and the number of persons allowed to enter the jail greatly reduced the possibility that inmates would become exposed to COVID-19. This suspension remained in place throughout 2020, and into the early part of 2021.

Shortly after the beginning of the pandemic, Colonel Witham directed that all newly committed inmates be quarantined for a period of 14 days. Two separate housing units were designated as a quarantine area for new male commits. A housing unit was designated as a quarantine unit for new female commits as well. New commits assigned to these new units had their temperatures regularly checked and were monitored closely by VPRJ medical staff for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. Once they completed their quarantine period, those inmates were then transferred to a general population housing unit.

Correctional grade masks were also provided to inmates for them to wear while they were outside of their cells. Inmates were required to have a face covering on anytime they were in the common area of their housing unit. Additional cleaning supplies were also made available to housing units so that inmates could wipe down and sanitize frequently touched surfaces like tables, phones, and tablets.

For those inmates who served in the kitchen or who were a part of the VPRJ Work Force program, steps were also taken to ensure their health for the safety of both inmates and staff. Inmate kitchen workers and Work Force participants had their temperatures tested daily and were also monitored closely for any signs of illness. Those inmates who worked in the kitchen or who participated in the Work Force program were also housed separate and apart from each other, as well as from the general population, to further reduce the potential of contracting COVID-19.

Another inmate program which was affected was the VPRJ Work Release program, which allowed certain, eligible inmates to report to their place of employment while serving out their sentence. When the pandemic began, the Work Release program was suspended for the safety of the inmates reporting to outside employment, and for those staff and inmates they would interact with upon their return to VPRJ. As the pandemic continued, VPRJ was able to ease the restrictions on those inmates participating in the Work Release program based on the status of the jail at that time. As with inmates who served in the kitchen and in the Work Force program, Work Release participants were segregated into a separate unit, and had their temperatures checked prior to leaving VPRJ and upon their return from their place of employment.

In the early days of the pandemic, it became clear that those individuals who were aged 60 years or older, and those who were a high medical risk, had a greater risk of developing serious illness or dying if they contracted COVID-19. On March 19 and March 20, Colonel Witham sent notification to the Commonwealth's Attorneys for the localities of James City County and City of Williamsburg, as well as the County of York and City of Poquoson and provided them with a list of these high risk inmates, as well as their Court status and charges. The intent was to provide the Commonwealth with the opportunity to provide sentence relief to those individuals who met the criteria above.

Communication with the Public

No one could watch the news, look at their smart phone, or read a newspaper without seeing the latest update in COVID-19 figures. With coverage of the novel Coronavirus dominating the airwaves, communication with members of the public who had loved ones incarcerated at VPRJ was an important step to easing the concerns of family members and friends. Colonel Witham provided regular updates to members of the public regarding visitation policies, weekend suspension extensions, approved business reasons to enter the VPRJ lobby, and any outbreaks or mass testing which occurred at the jail. Additionally, VPRJ sent multiple media advisories out to members of the press to inform the public of the status of VPRJ and utilized social media for updates as well.

Federal Assistance

The pandemic forced the purchase of tens of thousands of dollars-worth of PPE, the prices of which increased substantially due to the high demand and increasingly low supply. Several orders of gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, and yes, toilet paper, were back ordered for weeks, or out of stock for months. Thankfully, VPRJ's Finance Department launched a research and purchase mission to procure several needed items before PPE stock was depleted. Working with our vendors, the Finance Department purchased many thousands of pieces of PPE, at the lowest rate possible, ensuring responsible use of taxpayer dollars and adhering to VPRJ's own budget requirements.

Understanding that the pandemic was fluid and supply could change at a moment's notice, VPRJ created two sets of inventory: inventory which would be used in the normal course of duty, and an inventory set aside for emergencies. This 'war chest' consisted of cleaning supplies, masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and other items which were difficult to find and procure during the onset of the pandemic. VPRJ is well prepared in the event of any future depletion in the supply line of PPE. Later in the year, the federal government made grants available for agencies to recoup some of the cost of preparing for the pandemic. VPRJ applied for and was awarded nearly \$50,000.00 in grant funds to cover the cost of the PPE purchased to protect VPRJ employees and inmates.

In April of 2020, the United States Congress passed and President Trump signed into law legislation to grant paid leave to employees who had to undergo COVID-19 isolation precautions or who contracted COVID-19.

External Agency Response to COVID-19

Department of Corrections

Early on in the pandemic, DOC placed a halt on intake of any new prisoners from regional or local correctional facilities. This meant that state responsible inmates (inmates with more than one year to serve for their sentence) remained incarcerated in VPRJ rather than being transferred to a DOC facility as they would have normally. In an effort to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 within the state prison system, Governor Northam introduced a budget amendment in April 2020 that would grant the Director of DOC, Harold Clarke, the authority to release inmates from DOC custody who had less than one year left to serve on their sentence and who met strict criteria for release; the General Assembly passed that budget amendment. Later, when members of the public and local and regional jail officials inquired as to whether or not the amendment also applied to state responsible inmates serving their sentence in local or regional jail facilities, the Virginia Attorney General's office determined that state responsible inmates serving time in regional and local jails were eligible under the amendment's language as well.

On September 4, 2020, DOC announced that they were resuming intake of offenders into state prison system. As of January 2021, VPRJ had 108 state responsible inmates in its custody. Only seven inmates had been transferred to DOC since March 15, 2020. The last transfer took place on October 23, 2020.

Local Courts

Immediately following Governor Northam's emergency declaration, the Supreme Court of Virginia issued an Order declaring a judicial emergency in all district and circuit courts on March 16, 2020. The Order declared that "non-essential, non-emergency court proceedings in all district and circuit courts be suspended, and all deadlines are hereby tolled and extended". The original Order was to be active for a period of 21 days, but was extended numerous times afterwards as the pandemic wore on.

Local Courts (Continued)

The Order suspended traditional ceremonies like juvenile licensing proceedings, and limited courtroom attendance to essential personnel such as attorneys, judges, and necessary witnesses. Additionally, signage was placed in all Court buildings providing guidance to members of the public regarding who could enter a Court building, along with express business reasons for doing so.

Law Enforcement

Inmate traffic in many jails slowed almost immediately once the Governor issued the State of Emergency declaration. This was due in large part to a recommendation from the Governor's administration which suggested allowing those individuals apprehended by law enforcement to be issued summonses by the arresting officer, instead of being transported to a correctional facility for booking and likely release. This was in an effort by the administration to reduce the population within jails, thereby reducing the potential spread of a highly contagious virus throughout a congregate, at-risk population. Police departments in the member jurisdictions of VPRJ were encouraged to use their judgement and issue summonses to eligible alleged offenders they came into contact with, keeping themselves, members of jail staff, the inmate population, and the alleged offender safe.

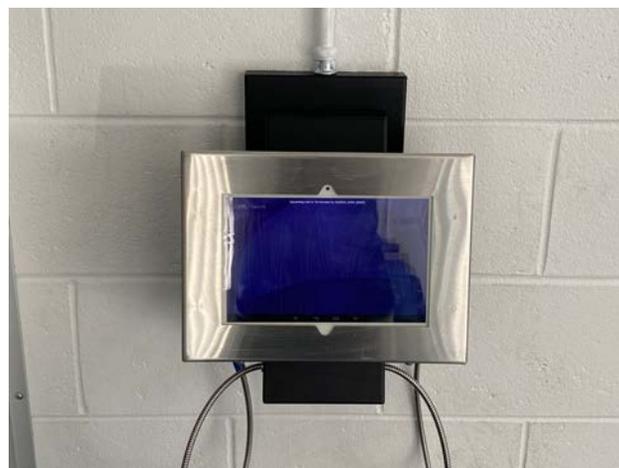
Looking Forward

As VPRJ moves into 2021, we do so with light at the end of the tunnel. In November of 2020, the news came that at least two vaccines would be available on a tiered basis beginning in December. Vaccines from Pfizer began rolling out in mid-December, followed by Moderna's vaccine shortly after. The Oxford/Astrazeneca vaccine was released in the United Kingdom on January 4, 2021. As of January 2021, there are over 50 vaccines in development, with two being utilized to vaccinate essential workers and at risk-populations in the United States. Early guidance indicated that corrections officers and medical staff would be a part of Phase One of the vaccination distribution. During the first full week of January, members of VPRJ medical staff received the first vaccine dose. We look forward to when vaccine opportunities are available for everyone, including correctional staff and inmates.

I.T.

Video Visitation

Throughout the year, VPRJ worked with Global Tel Link (GTL) to install video stations in the lobby, as well as Intake and Release, which would allow for members of the public to participate in on-site video visitation with their incarcerated loved ones. In October of 2020, VPRJ's video visitation became a reality. Members of the public who wished to visit with their loved ones could do so electronically by scheduling a session online. Each session allowed for 20 minutes of audio and visual visitation and automatically disconnected when the time expired. All sessions were scheduled 30 minutes apart so that once the 20 minute session expired, VPRJ's lobby officer could utilize the final ten minutes allotted in the slot to sanitize the video station and equipment.



A video visitation station located in the VPRJ Lobby.

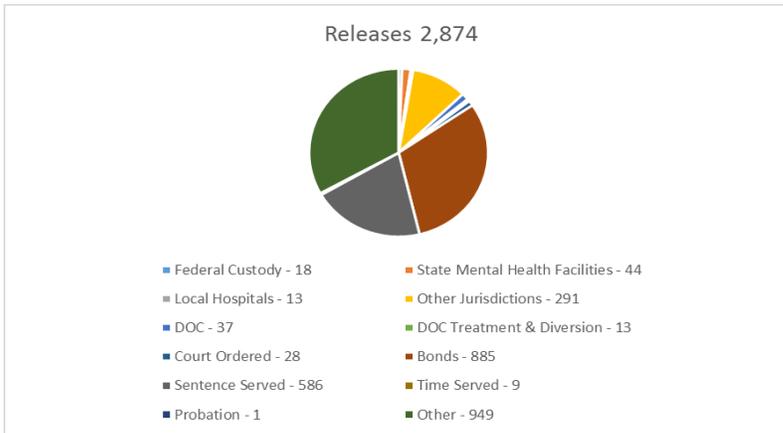
In accordance with the Governor's mandate and guidance from the CDC and VDH, all members of the public who came to VPRJ to participate in a video visitation were required to have their temperatures screened and to wear a mask at all times. If the visitor had an elevated temperature, or he or she refused to have their temperature checked or to wear a mask, that individual was not allowed to proceed with the visitation. Additionally, only one adult was able to take part in a video visit with an inmate at a time, and once the visitation session expired, the visitor was expected to depart the facility.

In 2020, from October to December 31, 2020, over 300 visitations were completed utilizing the video visitation technology.

BY THE NUMBERS

Records

The comparison to the 2019 numbers in many cases is stark. In 2019, VPRJ transferred 121 inmates to DOC. In 2020, that number was just 37, a reflection of DOC's nearly six month long restriction on the intake of prisoners from regional and local jails. Similarly, the amount of inmates who were able to participate in Work Release in 2020 was curtailed due to COVID-19; just 12 inmates were a part of the Work Release program this year, while in 2019 that number was 49. Weekender Program bookings were also down significantly this year due to the suspension of the Weekender Program implemented in March. In 2020, 343 bookings for weekenders occurred, compared to 1821 in 2019 – nearly five times the amount of this year.



Other Measures	
ADP	352
Bookings	2,787
Unique Individuals	2,120
Unique Males	1,569
Unique Females	551
Total Offenses	7,884
Weekend Bookings	343
Work Release Inmates	12
Sex Offender Registrations	156
Average Length of Stay	41 Days
Inmate Notary Services	88

Training

In 2020, VPRJ performed a total of 11,859 man hours of training which included instruction on everything from CPR/ First Aid to Blood Borne Pathogens and Universal Precautions, to the annual firearms and Taser qualifications which must be met by each sworn staff member.

Below is a chart of detailing the amount of training hours performed and individuals sent to various specialized training opportunities:

Certified Instructors in 2020	Number of Officers
General Instructor	14
Driving	4
Taser	2
Firearms Instructor	3
CPR	2
Wrap Restraint System	8
Crisis Intervention Team	1
Field Training Officer	7
Defensive Tactics	4
OC Spray Deployment	2

Training Topic	Total Training Hours
CPR	388
AED	118
First Aid	118
Taser	72
OC Spray Deployment	42
Pre-Academy Training	68
Post-Academy Training	40
Orientation	5600

VPRJ certified 2 and re-certified 9 officers for the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN), and certified 1 officer as a Master Jail Officer for 2020.

Human Resources

Even during a pandemic, VPRJ hired an impressive amount of talent during 2020. A total of 36 joined Team VPRJ, including 20 officers, five civilians, nine nurses, and two part time staff. During the pandemic, following the path many agencies were forced to take, VPRJ furloughed several of its part time staff at the height of the pandemic before re-engaging and welcome them back to VPRJ towards the end of the year.

Programs

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the difficult decision was made to suspend volunteer programming for inmates, including participants in VPRJ's flag ship female recovery and rehabilitation program, WAITT. This action was taken out of an abundance of caution, and to further prevent the possibility of COVID-19 entering the facility. Regular programming schedules were suspended in March, and only one GED graduation ceremony took place, with five males graduating in February of 2020; a total of 459 inmates have earned their GED since VPRJ opened in 1997. The final (and only) WAITT graduation was held on April 8, 2020, in which five women graduated. In October of 2020, VPRJ's recovery and rehabilitation curriculum provider, REAL LIFE, offered a virtual, self-paced option that allowed WAITT participants to watch DVD modules and complete assignments in a workbook. Both the DVD modules and the workbooks were provided by REAL LIFE, and REAL LIFE staff conducted 'check ins' every few weeks to monitor the progress of the program participants and answer questions.

In January and February, prior to the pandemic, programming continued as usual for both male and female inmates. Below is a chart showing the number of inmates who participated in programming, and the programming which was available:

Program	Male	Female	Total
Alcoholics Anonymous	11	9	20
Anger Management	8	0	8
Art History Program	0	2	2
Avalon Program	0	4	4
Bible Study	2	7	9
Bible Study (Catholic)	14	0	14
GED Program	5	0	5
HEAL Program	14	0	14
Investing in Dads 24/7	28	0	28
Jumaah	11	0	11
Lifeskills	0	3	3
Minority Aids Support	6	0	6
One Stop Shop	2	2	4
People & Stories Program	8	0	8
Pre-Release Program	16	0	16
Storybook Connection	8	7	15
Walk the Talk	7	0	7
Law Library Requests	10	4	14

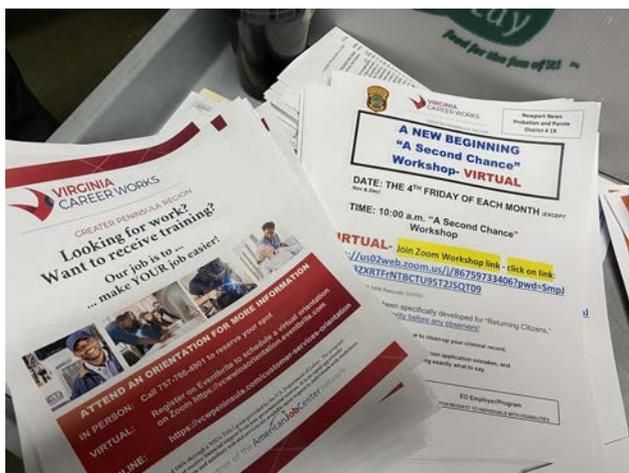
GOING VIRTUAL

2020 Re-Entry Fair

VPRJ had great success during its inaugural 2019 Re-Entry Fair, and looked to repeat that experience for inmates during 2020; unfortunately, the COVID-19 Pandemic had other plans, and the original spring date to host the Re-Entry Fair was postponed. However, in October of 2020, once technological upgrades had been completed by VPRJ's IT Department, the first ever virtual re-entry fair was hosted for all inmates, in partnership with Colonial Community Corrections. With each housing unit already equipped with a television set, various rehabilitation and recovery providers were 'streamed' directly to the inmates in real time, and inmates were able to ask questions related directly to the services each provider offered.



VPRJ Re-Entry Coordinator Ma'Rea Proctor facilitated the Re-Entry Fair for all housing units.



Recovery and rehabilitation information flyers from each organization were provided to the inmates during the fair.

WAITT Goes Virtual

Perhaps one of the most disappointing results of the COVID-19 Pandemic was the suspension of volunteer programming inside the jail. For the ladies of the WAITT program, this meant the suspension of their in-housing unit rehabilitation and recovery programming as well as their behavioral modification programming from REAL LIFE. But luckily for these ladies, REAL LIFE was hard at work developing a virtual, self-paced form of programming. In October, a group of ladies was selected to go through a pilot virtual program, where in they would watch DVD modules created and provided by REAL LIFE and then follow up with assignments in a corresponding work book. To ensure proper understanding and progress, REAL LIFE founder and Executive Director Dr. Sarah Scarbrough performed virtual 'check in's' regularly with the ladies. On January 8, 2021, the first group of ladies graduated, and the next virtual group was formed.



The first group of virtual WAITT program ladies graduated on January 8, 2021. All of these ladies chose to return for the second virtual WAITT program, class 21-1.

ACTS OF KINDNESS

Lunch from Liberty and SnoMania

The COVID-19 Pandemic brought a lot of challenges to frontline health care and public safety workers in 2020. Social distancing, mask mandates, gathering restrictions, lock downs, and supply shortages made life incredibly difficult for private citizens, small businesses, hospitals, and public safety agencies. In response to this, local communities rallied to support these and other entities by donating a variety of items including meals. In April, Liberty Live Church reached out to VPRJ wanting to arrange a donation of meals provided by local Williamsburg favorite, SnoMania Island. Over 120 lunches were provided for all VPRJ staff over a two day period. The meals were delivered by volunteers with Liberty Live and consisted of sandwiches, chips, a dessert, and an additional side item.



Volunteers with Liberty Live Church delivered meals from SnoMania to VPRJ & met with Colonel Witham & VPRJ officers.

Liberty Live Church and SnoMania worked together to provide meals to several local hospitals and first responders throughout the pandemic, and VPRJ remains a grateful beneficiary of their kindness and generosity.

Guiding the Next Generation



Dalton West (center) earned his Crime Prevention Merit Badge after receiving a tour from Lieutenant John Meyers (left). Dalton's father, David, (right) accompanied them.

In February, David West, a scout master with the Boy Scouts of America, reached to VPRJ to inquire about a tour that would help his son, Dalton, earn his Crime Prevention Merit badge. This badge is one of many Boy Scouts must earn if they wish to attain the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America: Eagle Scout.

Training Lieutenant John Meyers, an Eagle Scout himself, took Dalton and his father on a tour of the jail which included allowing Dalton into an overlook to view one of the housing units. Lt. Meyers also explained the process of committing individuals to the facility from the time they're arrested to the point of their release. VPRJ was proud to assist this young man in achieving his goal, and we wish him success in his promising future.

THANKS & APPRECIATION

National Correctional Officers & Employees Week & National Nurses Week

This year's National Correctional Officers and Employees Week was a brief but welcome respite from the COVID-19 pandemic. Less than two months earlier, Governor Northam declared a statewide health emergency which caused VPRJ to revamp several of its processes in an effort to reduce the chances of spreading COVID-19. This week of recognition took on new meaning for VPRJ staff, who were truly appreciative of the support our vendors showed them by providing meals for employees and allowing a slight, if temporary, sense of normalcy. Our company partners - CGL, Diamond Pharmacy, Global Tel Link (GTL), Qualis, and Trinity Services Group - provided lunch every day for all of our staff members from local restaurants, as they have routinely done for the last few years. We are grateful for their generosity and their support of our hard working and dedicated employees.



At the beginning of National Correctional Officers & Employees Week & National Nurses Week, Colonel Witham offered his thanks & appreciation of VPRJ staff for their dedication to duty.



COVID-19 precautions were maintained, including socially distanced seating & mask wearing prior to & after eating. Meals included local favorites like Pierce's BBQ & Jimmy's Oven & Grill.

Annual Holiday Breakfast

VPRJ ended 2020 with its annual Holiday Breakfast, a time for staff to come together before the Christmas Holiday to eat and enjoy each others company before the start of the work day. Eggs, pancakes, bacon, sausage, and other breakfast favorites were prepared by our amazing kitchen staff. In the photo below, one of VPRJ's recent recruits is being served by a VPRJ inmate worker.



Holiday Raffle

VPRJ hosted its annual Holiday Raffle in December. Prizes were donated by VPRJ's vendor partners and staff increased their chances to win by bringing in non-perishable food items to donate to FISH, Inc., a local aide center serving the Greater Williamsburg area. Most employees won prizes and had their photo taken with Colonel Witham (below), all while helping to those in need.



WELCOMING DIGNITARIES

A Visit from Presidential Precinct

In early February, Superintendent Colonel Roy Witham welcomed visiting dignitaries from various countries in the Middle East to the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail. This distinguished group was part of a trip sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program focusing on judicial discipline in the U.S. legal system, and the judiciary system's role in preserving democratic practices such as due process, trial by jury, and the right to representation and a fair trial, among other staples of democratic processes. Their visit to Williamsburg was organized by the Reves Center for International Studies and the Presidential Precinct, a consortium of two universities and three presidential sites, William & Mary, the University of Virginia, Morven, Highland, and Montpelier, which engages and inspires emerging leaders from every region of the world. The visiting delegation, made up of judges, professors, and magistrates, along with representatives from the Reves Center were given a tour by Colonel Witham which included a visit to the Intake/Release and Medical departments.



Colonel Witham gave the delegation a tour of the Medical Department & explained the standard of care inmates receive at VPRJ

Delegation members were also taken into a depopulated housing unit where they could freely explore the environment, inspect the cells, and ask questions regarding the housing of inmates directly to Colonel Witham. The tour lasted for just over an hour. Dignitaries were personally escorted through the facility by Colonel Witham, enabling him to directly answer any questions the delegation had. Delegation members represented the countries of Chad, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, as well as the Palestinian Territories. The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. With an 80 year legacy and over 225,000 alumni, the program has a proven track record of cultivating lasting relationships for a future marked by collaborative foreign policy.



Dignitaries were able to visit an empty housing unit, enter individual cells, & see the outdoor recreation area for inmates. Colonel Witham fielded a variety of questions related to securing individuals while respecting their rights.



Dignitaries received a tour of the facility, including a housing unit, the Intake/Release Department, and the Medical Department. Afterwards, they had the opportunity to ask further questions of Colonel Witham about the American criminal justice system.

HELLO 2021

It's safe to say that we were all glad to flip the calendar over to a New Year and say goodbye to 2020. With vaccines now available and opportunities for employees, inmates, and the general public to receive vaccinations, we hope that 2021 will be the year that sees the United States and the world return to a sense of normalcy.

2020 brought challenges that we at VPRJ never imagined we would have to face. While we will never be able to replace our fallen colleague, Major Angelanette Moore, or the hundreds of thousands of lives taken by COVID-19, we will continue to do our part in serving our community. We remain committed to our mission of operating a correctional facility which provides for the safety and security of those placed in our custody, and protecting the community we are proud to serve.

We welcome 2021, and all of the challenges and adventures it has in store for us.