



DEDICATED
TO OUR
EVERY DAY
HEROES!

Happy
Holidays

THE STATE OF NEVADA
CORRECTIONAL
EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
(NCEC) EXTENDS A
SINCERE THANK YOU TO
ALL WHO ARE COMMITTED
TO WORKING WITH
OFFENDERS AND
MAINTAINING THE SAFETY
AND SECURITY OF NDOC
FACILITIES AND OUR
LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

HOLIDAYS: A TIME FOR GIVING THANKS

This special holiday edition of the newsletter is to honor and recognize the amazing NDOC officers and staff serving during the holidays. The holidays are about coming together in celebration of a common purpose, reconciling differences, overcoming struggles and building strength toward common goals. For many of us, this time of year is about gathering family and loved ones, to share and spread love along with holiday cheer. However, becoming a correctional officer, symbolizes becoming part of something bigger. In a way, it means becoming part of an entirely new family — a very large, diverse one. Correctional officers and staff realize holidays and time with loved ones might be put on hold to ensure the safety of our communities. As one officer stated:

"I deal with working over the holidays by reminding myself that we do what we do so that others may enjoy the freedom to celebrate their holidays in safety."



HOW CORRECTIONAL OFFICER FAMILIES DEAL WITH THE HOLIDAYS

Brandy Aldridge, December 24, 2014

The holiday season is stressful for every family. Coordinating all the obligatory family visits, meals and expensive exchanging of gifts can leave any person cranky and feeling like a bit of a Scrooge. Add to that the joy of being a CO family and the holidays can feel daunting and lonely.

Thanksgiving is already gone this year, thank goodness. Joining my family for the traditional turkey and all the fixings meant days of cooking in advance, traveling the day before and day after, wrangling the kids in and out of stores and relatives' houses by myself and spending hours explaining:

"Where's your husband? Oh, he had to work, I see. That's too bad; he should have taken the day off."



If only it were that easy.

For my CO to get time off around the holidays is nearly impossible, as it may be for yours. It usually requires a certain amount of seniority and/or rank. Some years we are lucky and his regular weekend days happen to be on the holiday we choose to celebrate. This still leaves a feeling of discontent because other families get additional days off including their regular weekend. For CO families, not only do you have to squeeze in your regular weekend chores and errands, you have to plan and execute a holiday celebration too! It leaves me feeling like I just ran a marathon.

But usually, what I see happening in my CO family and others' is that our family celebrations become smaller; we focus on just "us," and move our celebrations to fit our crazy schedules the best we can. It reminds me of the year my brother was in the Army and stationed in Afghanistan. His R&R fell in February that year, so none of us put up Christmas trees and we waited to get our presents from our parents until February when he could be home to join us. Thankfully that year there were no small children in the family yet to explain why Santa wasn't coming on December 24.

In years past, we have done the same thing as a CO family. We move our celebrations a day here, or a day there to match his days off. When the kids are little enough, they don't notice the difference. You wake up on December 28 and say "Santa came last night!" and they're equally as excited.

As they get older, it's harder to explain "We have to wait for Daddy to be home to open presents together." They understand, but on some level there is always disappointment. Remember, we are the ones who chose this life, our spouses truly made the choice, to answer the call working in essential services that require 24/7/365 staffing – our kids didn't.

And even though you know your turn is coming to celebrate with your loved ones, the actual day of a holiday can still tend to be a lonely place while you're waiting. You get phone calls:

"Hey, what did you get for Christmas?"

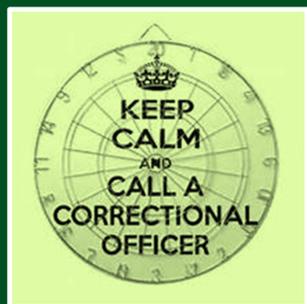
"I don't know yet."

"Oh. Sorry."

Sometimes the holidays can be downright infuriating. Your CO spouse dons the uniform and boots and walks behind those walls and wire by choice, leaving their family behind.

Meanwhile, the facility is bursting at the seams full of inmate families getting together for holidays and sometimes having special celebrations and meals. Even the inmates in solitary get milk and cookies on Christmas Eve, but your kids didn't because they have to wait for your CO spouse another day.

If your CO is lucky, they may get a special meal while working a holiday or you have to cook for a potluck. But that doesn't mean that during working hours they will get adequate break time to enjoy that meal. One year my CO came home with a can of soda in his pocket and laughed, saying "Look what I got today!"



FEW PEOPLE TRULY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTIES CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS FACE ON A REGULAR BASIS, OFTEN TIMES AT GREAT PERSONAL RISK. DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, YOU RISE TO THE OCCASION DAILY AND WORK TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE A BETTER CHANCE FOR SUCCESSFUL RE-INTEGRATION FOR OFFENDERS - IN TURN IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY.

"THANK YOU!" –
TWO SIMPLE WORDS
WRAPPED IN ONE
HEARTFELT GESTURE
OF APPRECIATION.

There have even been years when my CO was called for mandatory OT on a holiday. We had to be thankful for the multiples of pay he was going to receive for that shift, because otherwise I would cry. Add insult to injury. Of course, with taxes and such afterwards it never seemed worth it, but what choice do you have? None. Except to accept what you are given in this CO life. But every once in a while, there is a glimmer of a silver lining. Seniority comes. Rank comes. Shift bid comes. Look ahead at the calendar, if you get a choice in your facility, and choose a post and/or a shift where your days off fall on the holiday. And have yourselves a Merry Little Christmas! You are not alone.

About the author-Brandy Aldridge is the wife of a Corrections Officer in Vermont. Her spouse has been a CO for 5 years. Brandy has previously been a Research Assistant in Biochemistry and has a B.A. in International Business. She is dedicated to strengthening communities and families through her work with the Neighborhood Watch Program and Not In Our Town initiative. She is concerned about the health and well-being of Corrections Officers and their families. She wishes to bring more positive attention to the field of corrections and is working to develop a support network for COs and CO spouses similar to those of other uniformed personnel.



Safety, Security and Everything in Between

Rusty Ringler, May 5, 2015

The corrections field is a vital component of the law enforcement and criminal justice communities. Unfortunately, the contribution that corrections staff make toward public safety is often overlooked or forgotten about.

Still, each day men and women all around the country courageously walk into prisons and jails surrounded by individuals that society has often discarded. The contributions made by corrections officers and corrections staff across this country are rarely seen by the public. Acts of bravery, acts of sacrifice and acts of kindness go unnoticed as these professionals walk their beats, simply doing the right thing each day. This is a time to remember and reflect on those corrections professionals who bring light to those dark places where others fear to go.

For those that have worked in corrections for many years and those who have come before them, your service is appreciated and your bravery admired. For those just entering the profession, we look to you as the new energy that will steer our departments and our profession into the future.

Corrections staff have long had an incredibly difficult and daunting task. Not only do they work in a career that many do not want to do, but they voluntarily work around people that are often feared by society. A day in the life of a corrections officer may mean seeing the worst that humankind has to offer.

As the POLICE OF THE PRISON SYSTEM, THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST THANKLESS AND DANGEROUS JOBS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

Violence, conflict, mental illness and those disturbing scenes that are usually reserved for television and the movies are a reality for those working in our facilities each day and serve as a daily reminder of the dangers that exist within our communities. They see, hear and experience those things that many people would prefer to ignore.

One thing that corrections staff sometimes forget is that what they do matters. Whether working in a security capacity or in a support services role, your job is important and what you do is important. You fulfill the mission of corrections departments all over the country by protecting the public, staff and even offenders and are on the front lines of the war on crime. At the same time, you are charged with helping individuals effectively reenter society. Again, what you do matters.

“EDUCATION IS THE MOST
POWERFUL WEAPON
WHICH YOU CAN USE TO
CHANGE THE WORLD”

- NELSON MANDELA -

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“Historically, correctional officers have been viewed as “guards,” occupying isolated and misunderstood positions in prisons and jails. In recent years, the duties of these officers have become increasingly complex and demanding. They are called upon to fill, simultaneously, custodial, supervisory and counseling roles. The professionalism, dedication and courage exhibited by these officers throughout the performance of these demanding and often conflicting roles deserve our utmost respect. The important work of correctional officers often does not receive the recognition from the public it deserves. It is appropriate that we honor the many contributions and accomplishments of these men and women who are a vital component of the field of corrections.” - President Ronald Reagan, Corrections Week Proclamation 5187, May 5, 1984



Season's Greetings

**FROM NDOC EDUCATION SERVICES DIVISION
HAVE A SAFE AND WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON.**