

# You did it!



## NCEC AWARDS OVER 1200 DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF NEVADA

Most people don't think of education, let alone graduation when they think of prison. However, the education of inmates is implicit in the Nevada Department of Corrections, (NDOC) new mission statement released by recently appointed NDOC Director, James Dzurenda, which reads: ***The Nevada Department of Corrections will improve public safety by ensuring a safe and humane environment that incorporates proven rehabilitation initiatives that prepare individuals for successful reintegration into our communities.***

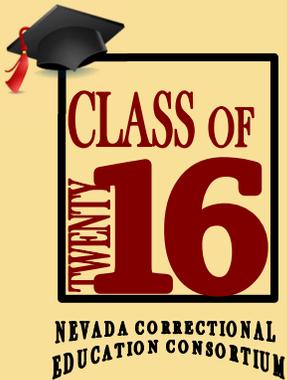
The Nevada Correctional Education Consortium (NCEC) made up of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), NDOC, Carson City School District, Clark County School District, Elko County School District, Humboldt County School District, Lincoln County School District, Nye County School District, Pershing County School District, and White Pine County School District applauds NDOC Director Dzurenda's departmental shift to more rehabilitation. Established in 2012, NCEC has always been a staunch advocate of rehabilitation through education. Its mission is "to prepare NDOC inmates for successful community reintegration by engaging school districts and state departments in best practice models, thereby promoting secondary education excellence and innovation."

Prisons and correctional centers maybe unusual places for graduation ceremonies for some, but that was not the case for the NCEC class of 2016 with over 1200 recipients earning degrees, diplomas and certificates; for many it was a dream come true.



**DR. LINDA YOUNG, CCSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES PRESIDENT, CONGRATULATES GRADUATES ON THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMENDS THEM FOR TAKING STEPS TO TURN THEIR LIVES AROUND.**

Clark County School District (CCSD) kicked off the graduation season at the Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center (FMWCC), on Wednesday, May 25, 2016 and Carson City School District concluded the season at Warm Springs Correctional Center (WSCC) on Thursday, June 16, 2016. In many ways NCEC graduation ceremonies were similar to ones held at local high schools.



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## NDOC Graduation 2016

However, a few details like the correctional officers standing at the exits and the prison uniforms under their gowns suggested a long and difficult journey to the stage for each graduate.

There was much joy, as the opening chords of "Pomp and Circumstance" played and graduates walked to their seats. In southern Nevada, ceremonies began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by the graduating class speakers. At Lovelock Correctional Center, the honor guard opened the ceremonies and at Warm Spring Correctional Center an inmate quintet sang the Star Spangled Banner with pride and perfection.

Family and friends were welcomed by both Directors/Principals of school districts and Director/Wardens from NDOC. Keynote speakers and dignitaries including congressmen, superintendents, district trustee members, and state department administrators addressed the graduates and one common theme prevailed, graduation is not an end goal it is just the beginning of many future accomplishments.



L-R- MICHAEL ROLANDS, CCSD PRINCIPAL, PATRICE TEW, CCSD TRUSTEE, DR. LINDA YOUNG, CCSD TRUSTEE PRESIDENT.

### WHY DO WE WEAR CAPS AND GOWNS?

IN THE OFTEN UNHEATED BUILDINGS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, LONG GOWNS WERE NECESSARY FOR SCHOLARS TO WARD OFF THE COLD. ACADEMIC DRESS FOR GRADUATIONS STARTED IN THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES WHEN UNIVERSITIES FIRST BEGAN FORMING. BY THE TIME OF ENGLAND'S HENRY VIII, OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE BEGAN USING A STANDARD FORM OF ACADEMIC DRESS, WHICH WAS CONTROLLED TO THE TINIEST DETAIL BY THE UNIVERSITY.



**JAMES DZURENDA, NDOC DIRECTOR, WELCOMES FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS, THANKS THE FACULTY AND APPLAUDS THE GRADUATES FOR THEIR PERSEVERANCE.**



**DR. ROBERT HENRY, CCSD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR URGES THE STUDENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION AS HE EQUATED ANNUAL EARNING TO EDUCATIONAL CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMA AND**



**L-R-JON PONDER, CEO HOPE FOR PRISONERS, MICHAEL ROLANDS CCSD PRINCIPAL, PATRICE TEW, CCSD TRUSTEE, DAN TAFOYA, DIRECTOR, CCSD OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS, DR. ROBERT HENRY, CCSD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JAMES DZURENDA, NDOC DIRECTOR, HARVEY J. MUNFORD, ASSEMBLYMAN.**



**HDSP KEYNOTE SPEAKER, DAN TAFOYA, DIRECTOR, CCSD OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS, SHARES HIS PERSONAL STORY OF HIS FATHER'S INCARCERATION AND THE IMPACT IT HAD ON HIS LIFE.**

NDOC Graduation 2016

".....THAT EVERYONE IS EQUAL WITHIN THESE WALLS AND THAT EVERYONE POSSESSES THE SAME POTENTIAL OF SPIRIT. THAT ALL WITHIN THESE WALLS HAVE LIVES TO LIVE, CHOICES TO MAKE, LOVE TO GIVE AND LOVE TO RECEIVE. THAT BEYOND THE TRANSGRESSIONS AND OPPRESSION OF THE INCARCERATED LIFE THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY OF LIBERATION, OF FREEDOM..... YOU HAVE THE POWER TO INSPIRE OTHERS, TO GUIDE OTHERS, TO TEACH, TO NURTURE, TO LOVE WITH COMPASSION. THAT PIECE OF PAPER HOLDS A LOT OF POTENTIAL IN IT. BELIEVE IN IT, LIVE IT, CELEBRATE ITS IMPORTANCE AND CELEBRATE YOUR SIGNIFICANCE."- ACTOR TIM ROBBINS SING SING GRADUATION 1999

Student speakers spoke as well and thanked faculty for an opportunity to take part in a life changing experience and reminded their classmates, "what we have earned no one can ever take it away, empower yourself and become roles models for other inmates."

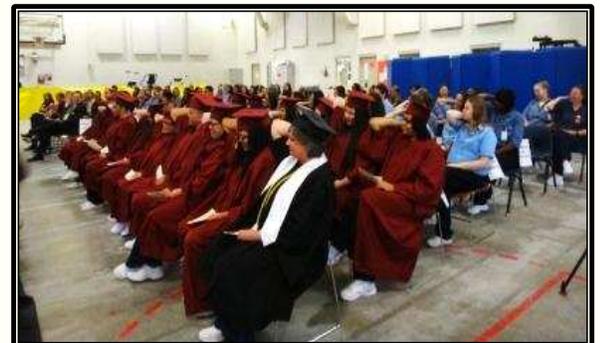
At last, the presentation of the diplomas.....



Class of 2016, raise your hands.....



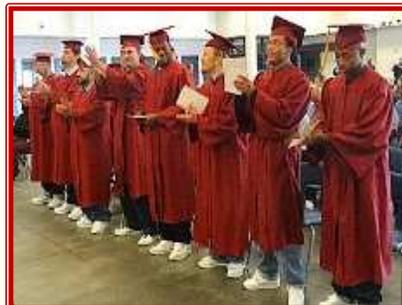
Pat yourself on the back.....



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2016.....



CLASS OF 2016 NCEC COMMENDS YOU FOR YOUR DRIVE AND DETERMINATION, URGES EACH OF YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION AND CHEERS YOUR SUCCESS UPON RELEASE.



HE WHO OPENS A SCHOOL DOOR, CLOSES A PRISON. -VICTOR HUGO

EDUCATION HELPS CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES, REDUCES TAX DOLLARS SPENT ON INCARCERATION, AND ALLOWS INMATES TO OBTAIN THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO REJOIN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES UPON RELEASE.

"RE-ENTRY BEGINS THE MOMENT AN INMATE ARRIVES AT OUR DOOR. WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT WILL GIVE INMATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE WHILE IN CUSTODY. THE MAJORITY OF INMATES WILL BE RELEASED INTO THE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE AND WITH THE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES WE CAN ENABLE THEM TO BE SUCCESSFUL." - NDOC DIRECTOR, JAMES DZURENDA

## WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

- The importance of education cannot be stated enough. Every year approximately 1.3 million students –that is 7,000 every school day – do not graduate from high school as scheduled.
- About 75 percent of America's state prison inmates, almost 59 percent of federal inmates, and 69 percent of jail inmates did not complete high school. Dropouts are more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as high school graduates.
- A male high school graduate with a D average is fourteen times more likely to become incarcerated than a graduate with an A average.
- About 47 percent of drug offenders do not have a high school diploma.
- Dropouts from the class of 2004, alone; will cost the nation more than \$325 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity over their lifetimes.
- The difference in lifetime earnings between a person with a high school diploma and a person without a diploma is estimated to be at least \$260,000 and about one million less than a college graduate.
- A ten percent increase in the male graduation rate would reduce murder and assault arrest rates by about 20 percent, motor vehicle theft by 13 percent, and arson by 8 percent.
- A one percent increase in high school graduation rates would save approximately \$1.4 billion in costs associated with incarceration costs, or about \$2,100 for each male high school graduate. *(This research brief is online at <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/hiddenbenefits.pdf>)*

## WHY DO SO MANY RELEASED OFFENDERS RETURN TO PRISON?

In 2011, a study by the Pew Center on the States concluded there was only marginal improvement in the nation's recidivism rate even as spending on corrections departments has increased to about \$52 billion annually from around \$30 billion a decade ago. More than 40 percent of ex-offenders commit crimes within three years of their release and wind up back in prison. The following excerpts were compiled by Greg Bluestein | April 13, 2011 | 5:35 AM EDT Source: Pew Study: [Prison Recidivism Rates Remain High](#):

"The stubborn recidivism rates are a sign the programs and policies designed to deter re-offenders were falling short, and lawmakers should consider alternative sentences for nonviolent offenders, said Adam Gelb of the center's Public Safety Performance Project.

"We know so much more today than we did 30 years ago when prisons became the weapon of choice in the fight against crime," he said. "There are new technologies and new strategies that research has shown can make a significant dent in return to prison rates. There are fewer and fewer policymakers who think that spending more taxpayer money to build more prisons is the best way to reduce crime."

Others were skeptical of sentencing reform efforts. The president of the National District Attorneys Association said legislators shouldn't be too quick to abandon tough-on-crime policies in favor of alternative sentencing. Those initiatives only save money in the short-term, New Hampshire prosecutor Jim Reams said,

"The assumption is that these are all choir boys at the prison and if we let them out, all will be well. And it doesn't work that way," Reams said. "We're getting exactly what we deserve when we do this -- we're getting more crime."

However, it may be time to re-examine alternative sentencing. On April 3, 2016, 60 minutes broadcasted a comparison of American and German prisons. They found sentencing laws in Germany differ significantly than those in the U.S., with a preference for alternative sanctions like fines and community service over incarceration—only 5 percent of those convicted in Germany spend time behind bars. When incarceration is used, sentences are much shorter, and German prisons are set up to approximate life in the community as much as possible, with a central focus on rehabilitation and resocialization rather than retribution. The article in its entirety follows:

### **What We Learned By Touring German Prisons**

New York, NY—On Sunday, April 3, 2016, *60 Minutes* broadcasted a comparison of American and German prison systems that featured American and German political and correctional leaders, along with others, who were part of a bipartisan delegation to Germany led last summer by the Vera Institute of Justice and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

As the bipartisan consensus for the need to reform the United States' overburdened criminal justice system becomes stronger, many leaders in the field have begun to seek out models of what a future system could look like—and what shift in values would be required to emulate them. With more than 700 per 100,000 people behind bars, the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world—more than ten times as high as some European countries like Germany.

Sentencing laws in Germany differ significantly than those in the U.S., with a preference for alternative sanctions like fines and community service over incarceration—only 5 percent of those convicted in Germany spend time behind bars. When incarceration is used, sentences are much shorter, and German prisons are set up to approximate life in the community as much as possible, with a central focus on rehabilitation and resocialization rather than retribution.

The week-long tour brought an American delegation of criminal justice leaders—including Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy; corrections officials from Washington State, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Connecticut; district attorneys John Chisholm and Jeff Rosen; the formerly incarcerated advocate Shaka Senghor, author of the recent memoir *Writing My Wrongs*; researchers and historians; and representatives from advocacy groups and philanthropy, including Right on Crime, the Charles Koch Institute, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Anti-Recidivism Coalition—to learn from a justice system rooted in the preservation of human dignity. It built on a previous tour in 2013 that brought delegations from Colorado, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. Some of the changes led by Pennsylvania Corrections Secretary John Wetzel that ensued from that trip are also featured in the broadcast. "In Germany, we saw what a system with the goal of rehabilitation looks like in action," said Nicholas Turner, president of Vera. "Since then, we've seen leaders like Governor Malloy and Secretary Wetzel put into place reforms designed to shift the purpose of incarceration from retribution to rehabilitation.

In an era that recognizes that America's experiment with mass incarceration must end, it is imperative that we revisit what the goals of incarceration are. We have proof that changing the way America incarcerates is possible, and can lead to better outcomes for those living and working in prisons, as well as those 95 percent who will return home from prison."

Vera President Nicholas Turner and John Jay College President Jeremy Travis subsequently published a *New York Times* op-ed, "What We Learned From German Prisons," describing a prison system where solitary confinement is used sparingly and with limitations, corrections officials are hired competitively and trained rigorously, and inmates have considerable freedom in how they use their time. They described the results: "In one prison we visited, there were no recorded assaults between inmates or on staff members from 2013 to 2014."

Vera has been engaged in a national conversation about safety and conditions in our nation's prisons since convening the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons, which released the landmark report *Confronting Confinement* on June 8, 2006. Vera will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year by embarking on an 18-month long initiative, *Reimagining Prison*. By placing human dignity as the philosophical and operational core of how American jails and prisons are designed, staffed, and managed, this initiative aims to shift the goal and culture of incarceration from retribution to rehabilitation. *Reimagining Prison* includes a series of public engagement, research, and program events and activities that will culminate in a compelling and actionable new vision and plan for safer, smaller-scale, and more humane prisons that ultimately yield stronger communities, and, overall, a safer United States. Details about the initiative are forthcoming.-Contact: Scarlet Neath Communications Department [sneath@vera.org](mailto:sneath@vera.org)

**"Crime and Punishment"** *The following script excerpt is from "Crime and Punishment" which aired on 60 minutes April 3, 2016. Bill Whitaker is the correspondent. Marc Lieberman, producer.*

Not many issues can unite Democrats and Republicans. But criminal justice reform is one of them. After 30 years of being Tough on Crime in the U.S., no other nation incarcerates more of its citizens than we do. We have five percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of its prisoners. The cost of housing all those inmates: \$80 billion a year.

We found that American politicians and prison supervisors are looking for new ideas -- in Germany. The main objective of German prisons is rehabilitation, not retribution. Germany spends less money on prisons, but gets better results. Their recidivism rate is about half the U.S. rate. We wondered if Germany had found a key to prison reform.

We visited several German prisons and were amazed how laid back everybody seemed at each of them -- prisoners and guards. Heidering Prison outside Berlin is as clean and bright as a Google campus. The prison is surrounded by fences, not walls, so inmates can see the outside world. The prison uniform? Street clothes. For the inmate who finds this too stressful, there's yoga.

So life inside prison mirrors life outside as much as possible. Germans call it "normalization." It starts with small prison populations. Low-level offenders get fines or probation. Prison is reserved for the worst of the worst -- murderers, rapists, career criminals. We were surprised how quiet and peaceful it was inside Waldeck. We wondered where all the inmates were. It turns out they were relaxing outside on this sunny day.

Cells have doors, not bars. It's for privacy. Inmates can decorate as they please. Compared to cells in the United States this is quite luxurious. He has a private bathroom and things that would give American prison guards the jitters. John Wetzel: I think more now than any time in the history of our country we have the right and left agree that we've-- frankly screwed up the corrections system for 30 years and it's time to do something different. It really starts with understanding that, you know, a human being's value isn't diminished by being incarcerated.

Bill Whitaker: What you're talking about requires a huge mind shift on the part of all of us.

John Wetzel: It's crossing the Grand Canyon is what we're talking about.-*Bill Whitaker's entire script* <https://60minutes.com/news/60-minutes-germany-prisons-crime-and-punishment>

***"IT'S TIME FOR PRISONS AND COUNTY JAILS TO TAKE A COMMON SENSE PROGRESSIVE TURN AND GET PAST THIS NATION'S OBSESSION WITH A FAILED AND BLOATED CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM BUILT ON THE OPERATING PRINCIPLE OF RETRIBUTION WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF REDEMPTION. IF WE ALL WANT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY THEN WE MUST IMPROVE THE STAGGERINGLY ABYSMAL RECIDIVISM RATES THAT PROPEL THE MACHINERY OF MASS INCARCERATION." -SAN FRANCISCO SHERIFF ROSS MIRKARIMI, 2015***