

# PERCEPTIONS REIMAGINED

## WELCOME TO EMCF IN 2023

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the EMCF newsletter, called, "Perceptions Reimagined," an idea conceived by Assistant Commissioner Tomé, a newsletter by the women of EMCF, for the women of EMCF. Her vision was to document and capture the history of EMCF as it develops into a different institution that is trauma-informed moving towards the direction of change of location.

We, the editors, are charged to present diversity and inclusivity as a demonstration of the collaborative efforts of the exceptional talents within EMCF. This inaugural issue is focused on the theme of "firsts." We are excited to memorialize and share them. According to the Merriam Webster's Dictionary

the word first is defined as "preceding all others as in time, order or importance." Over the past two years, many "firsts" have occurred here in EMCF since the appointment of Victoria Kuhn as Commissioner of the Department of Corrections. Her first meeting with the newly formed Advisory Committee of Incarcerated Persons was on September 23, 2021. She presented her short and long term goals based on the im-

provement of conditions, financing for programs, re-entry, and ultimately the construction of a centrally-located new facility, stating that our "voices should be heard" and she listened while taking copious notes. Commissioner Kuhn is innovative and progressive, supporting collective efforts towards improvement. Under her care as commissioner, she has been consistent, hands on and focus driven towards the achievement of goals and her commitment to the change of EMCF



## MEET THE NEWSLETTER PRESSROOM

"Perceptions Reimagined" is composed by women who have excelled in various initiatives at EMCF. The core group are members of Assistant Commissioner Tomé's Focus Group, a group that meets frequently to discuss initiatives and help generate a positive perspective at

Edna Mahan. With the administration of Assistant Commissioner Tomé, the following women using their ingenuity, artistic creativity, and sheer brilliance developed this first issue for your perusal. Collectively, the following women represent the different sectors of EMCF: Crys-

tal Afanador, Chelsea Braunskill, Angela Brown, Jamie Farthing, Dawn Jackson, Phyllis Kocheran, Myrna Diaz, Katy Dorsett, Carline Inginac, Si'Jarae Lindsey, Tina Lunney, Maria Montalvo, Paige Pfefferle, Shaniqua Pierre, Melanie Slate, Antionette Stephen and Natasha White.

September  
2023

# VOLUME ONE

## ISSUE ONE

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *The EMCFBOARD OF TRUSTEES*
- *SPEAKER SERIES*
- *CLUB UPDATES*
- *MAX NEWS*
- *EMCF GROUNDS HIGHLIGHTS*
- *SATELLITE*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SPEAKER SERIES	2
SCHOLASTIC SPOT-LIGHT	4
LEGAL NOTES	7
CLUB UPDATES	8
CALENDER EVENTS	9
CANDID CORNER	14
A WOMAN'S WORD	15
EMCF GROUNDS	18
SATELLITE	21
NEXT ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS	22

## THE MAX COMPOUND

### Meet the Board

By: Melanie Slate

For the first time, EMCF's Board of Trustees is comprised entirely of women. Appointed by NJDOC Commissioner Victoria Kuhn, each woman brings a unique perspective and experience, as well as genuine interest in the welfare of EMCF's population. Let's introduce them—one of whom some of us might remember.

**Dr. Amesika Nyaku** is a physician-scientist and an Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Rutgers Medical School. She is also co-director of the Northern NJ Medication Assisted Treatment Center of Excellence, which assists people with opioid use disorders. She is a graduate of Northwestern University.

**Ms. La'Nae Grant** obtained a Masters Degree from Rutgers Graduate School of Social Work. She is the Director of the Child and Adult Care Food Program for the city of East Orange. A long-time activist in the transgender community, Ms. Grant is the first transgender female to sit on the Board. She has also spoken at EMCF's Empowering Women Speaker Series.

**Dr. Johanna Foster**

is a familiar face at EMCF, having taught here as part of the NJSTEP program. Dr. Foster holds a PhD from Rutgers University and is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Monmouth University. She coordinates the Monmouth University Academic Exchange Program where incarcerated students study with Monmouth University students in combined classes. Her research interests include intersectional feminism and the incarceration of women.

**Ms. Kathleen Witcher** is the President of the Irvington NAACP and a long time active member of the NAACP's Prison Project Committee. She is also a retired school teacher.

**Ms. Bonnie Kerness** serves as Director of American Friends Service Committee's Prison Watch Program. She speaks widely on mass incarceration in the U.S. using the framework of the United Nation's Covenants and Treaties. Ms. Kerness has a special interest in working with imprisoned females, and once served on the Board of Directors of the Women's Lifers. In her decades of work she has worked with every NJDOC Commissioner and often testi-

fies before the legislature. She holds a Masters Degree in Social Work.

*Boss Lady*

Finally, **Tia Ryans**; she is the founder and Executive Director of FORTE House, a referral based support program for formerly incarcerated people. Tia was once under the care of EMCF and is the first formerly incarcerated person to serve on the Board. She is an author, and currently serves on boards of NJSTEP and the Princeton Prison Teaching Initiative. Tia has a Bachelors degree from Rutgers, and has also spoken at the Empowering Women Speaker Series.

This Board, hand-picked by Commissioner Kuhn, brings a diverse collection of practical and academic experience to their positions. Members of the Board are often present at the facility, speaking with focus groups and advisory panels and touring the facility. We are grateful for their investment and their advocacy, and to have a formerly Incarcerated Person on this Board reminds us all what we are capable of, no matter where we begin.

### **From Farm to Facility**

by Maria Montalvo

The reformative ideology concluding the end of the Nineteenth century and beginning the Twentieth paved the way for the establishment of the New Jersey Reformatory for Women: Clinton Farms. The major fundamental ideology of the women's reformatory movement was the indeterminate sentence, which was based on satisfactory proof of reformation, not periods of time. The indeterminate sentences for female offenders were for petty crimes and the breaking of moral and sex laws. The more serious felony offenders were given determinate sentences and confined to Trenton State Prison. The treatment of women there was poor and inadequate, which urged the need for change. The women's reformatory movement recognized that there was a difference in the confinement of female offenders and their male counterparts that called for separate institutions. In 1910, as a result of public pressure, the State Legislature passed "An Act to Establish a State Reformatory for Women, to Provide for the Government Thereof, and the Commitment Thereto of Women Convicted of Crimes and Other Offenses" (17). The Act of 1910 allowed the Appropriations Committee of 1911 to release the monies to purchase a farm in Clinton, part of Hunterdon County, a rural farming community.

The opening of Clinton Farms occurred in January 1913 consisting of, "four staff and three old farmhouses plus some barns and other smaller outbuildings that stood on the property" (17). At first only two of the farmhouses were refurbished-one to house twenty-four inmates plus staff, and the other, the Homestead, for the utility man and his wife until another building could be renovated for them. These buildings were customized with grilling on the win-

dows and doors fitted with locks to ensure security. The focus and goal was on humane correction and reformation. It was a time of change and all of the women that were housed in Trenton State Prison were moved to Clinton Farms by January 1930. The staff grew and so did the addition of cottages to accommodate the growing population which was 230 by 1931.

Edna Mahan was a Berkeley graduate who launched her career in social work, which exposed her to trailblazers in criminology and criminal justice fields that introduced a calling and passion for corrections. She became the Superintendent of the Reformatory for Women: Clinton Farms in August 1928, until her untimely death in 1968. For forty years, Edna Mahan was the leader for the nation pioneering her approaches to rehabilitation. Her belief was to know the offenders under her care, she called them "her girls" (63). She listened to the concerns of the women and believed in second chances. When Mahan began her tenure, Clinton Farms was dedicated to domestic service and the farm as a way of work and educational programming. In 1931, there was a change supported by Mahan to provide the first training in the use of power sewing equipment that would qualify graduates to work in the garment industry. Then, in 1931, a domestic science teacher was hired and cooking school was opened. A beauty culture program accredited by the State, began in 1942, under the supervision of the education department. There was a baby hygiene class that was financed and taught by an outside agency too. The teachers at that time were responsible to help with recreational programming as well as academics. The academic programming focused on literacy, eighth grade certificates and high school classes, highlighting business training.

Edna Mahan was progressive and focused on the well-being and advancement of the women held in her care. In our time of Edna Mahan Correctional Facility, we have had different Superintendents who have shared

her ideology and some that have not. It is during the times of those who did not honor the legacy of Edna Mahan that were the darkest. Presently, we have Commissioner Victoria Kuhn, who is a progressive thinker and a staunch supporter of education and programming. She has put into place an administration that will listen to voices of the women and implement change. Just as Clinton Farms underwent changes as part of growth and progress, so will Edna Mahan Correctional Facility at the behest of Governor Phil Murphy, as a testament to his vision of an era ended while a new trauma-informed ideology emerges. The institution housing those presently confined here is not only going to change, but will be moved to another location. It is not something new in the history of this facility, but change is difficult and anxiety producing based on the unknown factors associated with it. One thing is for sure, Commissioner Kuhn has made it her priority to spearhead the changes and the ultimate move of location with the sensitivity that Edna Mahan carried for "her girls." As a demonstration of her good character, Edna Mahan states: "A good superintendent knows her girls intimately. She does not make rules she cannot enforce; she remembers that prohibitions invite violations; she removes as many causes of friction between the girls and the staff as possible... Try anything. After repeated failures with certain problem cases there may be something that will work." (63) This fact is demonstrated by Commissioner Kuhn's hands on approach via the Advisory Group meetings that she holds and her attendance to the Speaker Series. All of these details must be listed to be remembered as part of "firsts" during the last parts of Edna Mahan Correctional Facility as we know it.

Excerpts: Excellent Effect: The Edna Mahan Story by Mary Q. Hawkes



## SCHOLASTIC SPOTLIGHT

By: Paige Pfefferle

Welcome, Everyone!

In this section you will find everything you need to know about Education and how you can be a part of all of the Scholastic Fun we're having. The Education Department is always looking for more ways to broaden our horizons and set us up with the tools for success. Here is what will be available for sign up:

### Fauver/Satellite:

ABE (Adult Basic Education) classes with Mr. Yuhasz (PM only)  
OSHA30 with Mr. Zadlock for three weeks (AM/PM)

### Grounds:

ABE/GED classes with Mr. Yuhasz (AM only)  
Business Administration with Ms. Scott (PM only)  
Carpentry with Mr. Zadlock (AM/PM)  
Cosmetology with Ms. Fleming (AM/PM)  
Horticulture with Ms. Mahon (PM only)  
Painting with Mr. Fahs (AM/PM)

### MAX

ABE/GED classes with Dr. M. (AM/PM)  
Business Administration/C.L.I.P with Ms. Scott (AM only)  
Cosmetology with Ms. Matthews (AM/PM)  
Horticulture with Ms. Mahon (AM only)



NJSTEP: College classes offered by Raritan Valley Community College and Rutgers University will resume in the Fall Semester.

To sign up for any of these classes, please go onto the kiosk and write an inquiry to our Supervisor of Education, Ms. Lovelace, requesting to be placed in the class(es) you would like or to be placed on the waiting list. To sign up for NJSTEP classes, please write an inquiry to Education under College (attention Ms. Harley), requesting to be in college. On September 13, 2023, we will be honoring our High School/GED, Raritan Valley Community College, and Rutgers University graduates. Congratulations to all of our graduates on their hard work!

Now a spotlight on one of our classes: Business Administration/C.L.I.P with Ms. Scott. Being in the Apprenticeship Program, I have collaborated with Ms. Scott, diligently working to revamp and "liven" up the course and the classroom as well. We have combined Intro and Business I and have added extra projects such as our "Light and Lively", which allow our students to use their creativity and using what they have learned from Microsoft Office Suite to create a "flyer" describing a National Holiday about them or creating a "collage" of what their idea of "professionalism" looks like. These projects allow our students to have fun, be creative, and utilize their knowledge! C.L.I.P (which stands for Computer Literacy and Information Processing) delves deeper into the computer and its hardware. This class is sponsored by NOCTI and is a great intro for anyone looking to work with computers in the future. Ms. Scott also teaches CPR, Green Environment, and a Resume Workshop when available. I encourage everyone to come and be a part of the scholastic fun here at our facility!

### THE EMCF NJ-STEP TUTOR CENTER

by Maria Montalvo

Rutgers University, NJ-STEP, and Edna Mahan Correctional Facility have collaborated on establishing the first Tutoring Center at the facility, an endeavor that will present to all students the opportunity to have a place where they can find the resources they will need to accomplish their academic pursuits. The center will include academic books, law journals, law briefs, student papers, scholarly papers, magazines, and additional materials that will be essential at all phases of research and most beneficial when the time comes to begin the process of compiling data and material for the final THESIS project. The center will provide an area that will be quiet and clean, so that students may be able to write while fully focused. In doing so, students can apply themselves to achieve critical thinking without disturbance or interruptions.

## The Mighty Pen



.....AND THE BRILLIANT AUTHORS WHO WIELD THEM...

Murder mysteries and crime thrillers have long been the most sought after genre for book readers worldwide. Of these esteemed mystery authors, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle stands out for being the creator of the world's foremost private sleuth - Sherlock Holmes. While most view Holmes favorably for his astute observations, cunning analysis, tactical investigative strategies and skilled disguises whose success regularly embarrassed the police constabulary who were stumped by the case, in truth he portrayed an unconventionally antisocial and esoteric hero. Apart from his steadfast companion Dr. Watson, who doubted his odd methodology but remained loyally at his side in many cases, Holmes had no personal friends with the exception of Mycroft, his brother, proving that genius is chromosomal, and with whom he consulted on difficult cases. A voluntarily eccentric bachelor with odd, enigmatic hobbies like bee keeping and an opium addiction, social interactions were limited to his anxious clients or associations with the criminal underworld under various aliases to aid his investigations. During intervals between cases, Holmes' character sinks into melancholy and taciturn withdrawal, and into drugs to occupy his keen mind. Only puzzling and unique cases could stimulate him into action, almost like a game between him and the cunning criminals he brought to justice. No romantic story arcs exist for Holmes apart from the wily Irene Adler who is the

only woman who charms, and even outwits the brilliant sleuth and mysteriously escapes before the law and Holmes can bring her to justice. Every Holmes mystery is uniquely distinct and serially entertaining with the legitimate expectation that they not be read back to back but enjoyed over a period of times. Some notable stories include the 'Speckled Band' where the sinister Dr. Grimesby Roylott plots to kill his step-daughters in a vile and unusual fashion. Or the 'Adventure of the Lion's Mane', where the murderer responsible for some gruesome deaths is a baffling non-human. In the 'The Five Orange Pips', Holmes goes up against a secret organization bent on vengeance for an old betrayal. Sherlock Holmes almost dies in a battle against true evil with his nemesis, the equally cunning and dangerous Professor James Moriarty and his assassin henchman Colonel Sebastian Moran. In 'The Last Bow', Holmes comes out of retirement to rescue England from defeat even before the First World War began. From thwarting villains attempting bank heists, blackmail and extortion of even indiscrete members of the monarchy, to stolen jewelry or government papers with covert submarine plans stolen by spies, Holmes has outwitted them all, much to the chagrin of the sly villains. So check out his brilliant deductive mind and see if you can solve the crime before the mystery ends!



-Antionette Stephen -



Do you have thoughts on a book, series or author you would like to share? Great!! Submit your review to the unit ILC for collection and you may be featured in an upcoming newsletter! You may inspire someone to pick up the book or select the author.

## Let's Give a Shout Out to the Amazing 8

by Tina Lunney

Let's congratulate and celebrate eight wise, empowering women who have shown it is possible to remain charge-free. There was a surprise, infraction-free "You Are Seen" luncheon designed and implemented by the IP Wellness Committee. The IP Wellness Committee was created by the Commissioner's Office which seeks to improve the holistic wellbeing of the incarcerated population. The Wellness IP Committee is an interdisciplinary team of staff that are working together to create and execute goals that can positively impact the lives here. The team is made up of staff from: Administration, Business Office, Social Services, Religious Services, Food Service, OSAPAS, Mental Health, Medical and Custody.

The established criteria was to be charge free from the moment they entered the institution before the year 2010 till the present. For the first time ever the women at EMCF were commended for their dedication towards their rehabilitation. On Friday June 9, 2023 in the max food service Gloria Carter, Kathleen De Michelle, Carmen Matos, Celestine Payne, Melanie Slate, Denise Staples, Olga Valdez, Natasha White. They were also surprised with a spread of special catered food and decorations. Live music was provided by Dr. Skibbe and music therapist Ms. Melendez. Unfortunately, Celestine Payne was unable to attend but she stated she "was so thrilled that they thought enough of her to bring her the wonderful lunch." Each IP received a certificate of acknowledgement for their achievements.



### **Being the first event of its kind, I decided to interview with some of these amazing women and get some insight on their success:**

TL: How did you remain charge free for all those years?

Carmen: "I kept busy going to church, school and all the activities that are available at the institution."

Celestine: "It was not easy to maintain but I ignored any confrontations or just walked away"

Gloria: "I'm no angel I've been in arguments and even wanted to fight a couple of times but I chose to regroup and make a self-evaluation. Is this argument or fighting a person really worth it to go to lock and lose my privileges or any other infractions I may suffer?"

Kathleen "I am a problem solver, have learned how to help people and walked away from any disagreements. One of the best things I learned here was to ask for help and also listen to people when they give advice"

Melanie: For me "meditation, journaling, yoga, and humility".

Natasha: "I did not & do not try to fit in, people please or become what other people expected or expect me to be, just because the environment calls for a certain character"

TL: Why was this recognition so important?

Carmen: "I am leaving the past behind and I am going forward towards positivity".

Celestine: "I wanted to have a good record before the parole board"

Kathleen: "My experience in EMCF has changed my life for the better".

Gloria: "We have demonstrated that characters that are noticed, names and faces that represent qualities to be noticed! And with that a reward comes with a celebration of your character. It's important to me because I did not waste all these years being good for nothing".

Melanie: "It's easy to feel as though bad behavior gets rewarded here; this felt like we are being seen."

Natasha: "We can enjoy the benefits of the incentive food, beauty packages & the ability to attend the newly implemented social clubs".

I want to thank these amazing women for sharing their insight and awareness with me. I look forward to meeting with the next cohort. Maybe the next cohort will be the Amazing 25! We can do it - we are all strong, empowered, amazing women.

I would like to thank Commissioner Kuhn, Assistant Commissioner Tome, and everyone on the IP Wellness Committee for applauding good behavior and the need for second chances.



## **LEGAL NOTES**

by Maria  
Montalvo

Commissioner Victoria Kuhn is the first commissioner to form an Advisory Group of Incarcerated persons who are charged to provide input relating to sentencing schemes of the past and how they affect women in particular. It is known that in the history of the criminal justice system, women have been invisible and that sentencing disparities do exist between male and female offenders. The prison system was neither intended nor designed to accommodate the increasing population of female offenders.

On June 15, 2022, the first Judicial Change Meeting Group convened led by incarcerated persons discussing issues and topics assigned to them during Commissioner Kuhn's Advisory Group. This group was comprised of the original Advisory Group: Myrna Diaz, Katy Dorsett, Carline Inginac, Angela Brown, Si'Jarae Lindsey, Maria Montalvo, Paige Pfefferle, Melanie Slate and An-tonette Stephen. The purpose was

to develop a proposal to be presented to the Sentencing Committee for consideration of ways to change lengthy sentencing outcomes for long timers and to add mitigating factors.

For the incarcerated persons of EMCF to be able to have input into what could be done to ameliorate the treatment of women in the New Jersey Court system and within the Department of Corrections has been invaluable. The ability to have open conversations with Commissioner Kuhn, (who was a prosecutor), allowed for issues to be seen critically from different perspectives. A trauma mitigating factor was presented and accepted for the first time, taking into consideration the factors that contribute to crimes committed by women against their abusive partners and other traumas that they have experienced in mitigation of their offenses.

On March 7, 2023, Commissioner Kuhn's Advisory Group was honored to meet with members of Governor Murphy's staff, his policy advisor, senior counsel, policy analyst and legislative aid. The issues that were raised as hot topics were clemency, parole, NERA, first-time violent offenders and the ever

increasing aging population within EMCF. The ACLU is collaborating with the

Governor's office to develop for the first time "categorical" clemencies which would consider women who fit the criteria to be considered for clemency by the Governor.

On April 13, 2023, two ACLU attorneys, Alex Shalom and Elyla Huertas, met with the Advisory Group to discuss sensitive issues that have transpired in the history of EMCF that are being acknowledged and addressed presently because of Governor Murphy and Commissioner Kuhn that he has charged with the care of the our population here at EMCF.

All of us who are justice impacted must remain optimistic and hopeful that when legislature and the sentencing committees reconvene, there will be positive consideration to the needs of women and that some tangible changes will occur as cases and sentences are reviewed and revisited. This opportunity to be instrumental in generating and submitting proposals would not have been possible without our Commissioner.



## **SATELLITE LEGAL NOTES**

by Maria Montalvo

As part of the "firsts" in EMCF's history, due to the collaboration of Ms. Hill, Educational Programs Specialist, Assistant Administrator Rios and Ms. Lovelace, Supervisor of Education, there is transportation of a paralegal from EMCF to the Satellite as a way for continuity of legal assistance for IP's who have initiated casework prior to moving there or to have initial meetings with those just arriving has been implemented. The COVID 19 pandemic halted the processing of documents, causing some IP's eligible to appeal to be out of time. Thankfully, administration provided a solution to this dilemma, and many IP's have been able to file "as within" time, continuing their fight toward freedom.



## YOU CAN FIND ME IN DA CLUB!



Hey Everybody!

As you all should know by now, “clubs” have been implemented at Edna Mahan, & the first EMCF satellite. Now, when I say “clubs”, I am not talking about the “club-club”. For the first time ever, EMCF has social clubs where we can gather together, do fun activities that allow us to mix & mingle without there being a curriculum or a paper to write. These aren’t your church services, social worker groups or your school affairs. These are clubs that allow us the space to meet up, relax & chill with our friends, be active, & get out of the robotic routine that can be carceral life. Having the ability to unwind & just be in the moment, is a vital part of our self-care & mental health stability.

For almost a year now, we have had the privilege of being able to enjoy these clubs 6 days a week! Yes, there is something to do Monday-Saturday on each compound, thus, getting bored should not be an option. So, on the MAX compound, come & join Lucretia on Mondays for *Book Club*, along with Myrna & Maria for

*Spanish Book Club*. Here you can enjoy good reading, intelligent discussions, & creative book reviews (plus, you get to keep your book!). Katy & Mayra on Tuesdays are teaching the needlework, *crochet*. During this time, you can learn to create gorgeous, colorful shawls & throws (& other things) that you can send home to your loved ones. On Wednesdays, meet me at *Card Club*, where various card games are at your disposal (& the pinochle table is hot!). Thursdays, Sweeney keeps an assortment of colored pencils, crayons, & glitter-filled pens, along with an array of pictures to color at *Zen Coloring*. Or, you can bring your own pictures, if you choose to do so (& she’ll take any pictures you’d like to donate). And, one Friday each month, Antionette holds it down with *Paint & Sip*. Come & paint beautiful pictures & sip.....No! We’re sipping flavored water (for all of you who were wondering). Enjoy the ability to use water colors, & learn what colors complement each other to create striking artwork, with a multi-talented artist whose work speaks for itself (as some

of you may already know). If you’re not painting & sipping, *Aerobics* is every Friday (but, this is not a first-time installment), and *Yoga* every Saturday morning. This is a new era for EMCF, & we are grateful & thankful to Commissioner Kuhn, A.C. Tomé, & Administrator O’Dea for implementing these clubs for us.

And I’d like to personally thank each & every one of you who come out week after week, & support the facilitators at their individual clubs. We thank you for upholding integrity & self-control, while we spend time together enjoying these first editions to our community. Hopefully, due to our stellar behavior thus far, we open it up for additional incentives down the line.

Stay Consistent!

*Natasha*



In our future issues there will be a “Quote of the Quarter” section included in the Empowerment corner. Please feel free to submit your favorite quote & why it resonates with you, and it may be included in up & coming issues.

BE ENCOURAGED!



**Fall  
2023**

# EVENT SCHEDULE

**Beauty Package**  
For the first time ever our Beauty Package from Walkenhorst was a huge success. We have received many creams, lotions, and shampoos with sweet scents that make us feel like women. We received products that were name brand, such as Oil of Olay, Cover Girl and Pantene Shampoo. But you must be one year charge free and it's so worth it.

**Paint & Sip Incentive**  
You do not have to be an artist to go to Paint -n- Sip, you just have to be charge free for 9 months. You can sit with your friends, add a flavor packet to your water, and paint. You will be amazed at your creative abilities once you pick up the paint brush.

**Sweet Treat Incentive**  
If you remain pink sheet free for 30 days you are eligible for an ice cream treat on the first Friday of the each month. Many women have become creative with their treats: they put it on top of their own version of a banging brownie, it is put in-between two cookies, or just add some peanut M&M's on top.

**Bingo**  
Come join your friends for some laughter and fun to play Bingo in your unit on the first Friday of each month. The first ten lucky winners will win a prize, but you have to be charge free for 30 days.

- HIGHLIGHTS**
- ◆ **September 5** Rutgers classes begin
  - ◆ **September 13** Graduation
  - ◆ **September 23** First day of Autumn
  - ◆ **September Incentive Food Package Delivery**

- Coming Soon*
- ◆ October Women's Speaker Series
  - ◆ Guided Meditation with new yoga Instructor Phyllicia Bonanno
  - ◆ Beauty Incentive Package
  - ◆ Journaling & Meditation Club
  - ◆ Drama Club
  - ◆ Craft Supplies Incentive

We would like to thank Commissioner Kuhn and Commissioner Tomé for these incentives. Thank you for seeing us as individuals as well.

*And to Ms. Sferlazzo, thank you for coordinating all our events!*

*And now it's time for...  
Positive Elevations with  
Natasha & friends*

## COMMUNITY UNITY

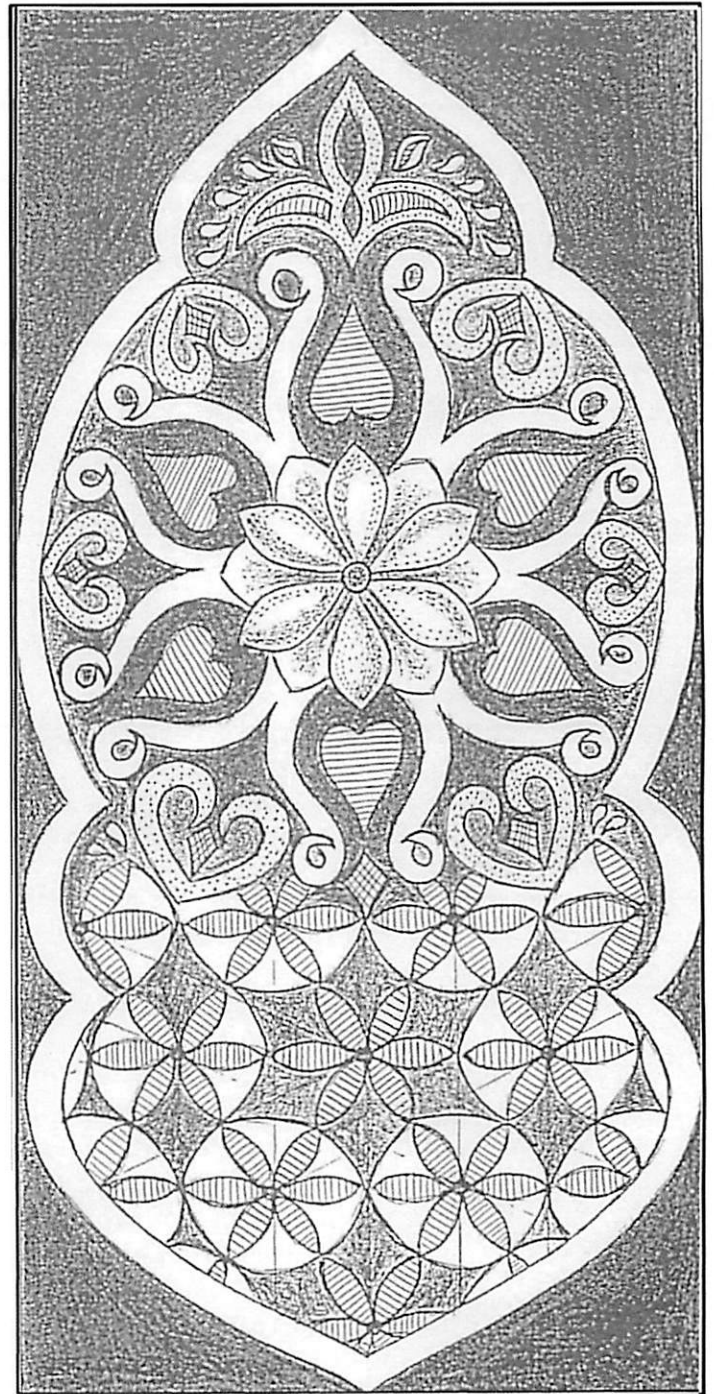
**Quote of the Quarter**  
"When women come together with a collective intention, magic happens."  
-Phyllicia Rashad

*Women really should start working together instead of constantly going against one another. We should have respect for ourselves and each other at all times. Even if a woman happens to be a complete stranger, treat that woman as you would want to be treated. We need to stop bashing one another and start building each other up. If only all women would take the time to understand this, we would be more unified in our social interactions and "ships". Fighting, lying, cheating, envy, jealousy, and betrayal would no longer exist if we had each other's backs, instead of kicking each other's backs in. Start today. Be honest. Be helpful. Be selfless. Be kind. Be careful. Stop making other women your enemies and start showing them the empowerment of sisterhood.*

## Visions in Visuals

Expression through art can be emotionally cathartic, empowering, uplifting, or an introspective process. As such, Art is open to and for interpretation by both artist and audience alike. Limitations of the chosen medium, materials, hues, textures, size and scope of the art project are set by the artist's **Vision** which then coalesces into a **Visual** tapestry open for public **Viewing**. What constitutes excellence in art may be up to experts from various art disciplines but the interpretation of meaning through art remain in the eyes of the beholder. Seen through the eyes of different individuals with varying life experiences, a single work of art can evoke a multitude of responses ranging from inspired, empathetic, and emboldened to confusing, challenging and cerebral. Every artist has a vision which they either begin with, process through or finally arrive at. No vision is subsequently wrong. It simply is – a creation. Art does not exist in a dimension virtuous or dissolute. It simply is. Be it feverish doodling, patiently painted landscapes, and still life or abstract renderings, art is simply an artist's voice expressed visually. Part of the process is embracing who you are and lending your inner voice a channel to flow outward. Every individual has the potential to be an artist. While some may excel through ink, others through paint, there exist those who can work wonders through rough materials. Embrace your vision and let the creativity flow. Just Believe.

-Antionette Stephen -

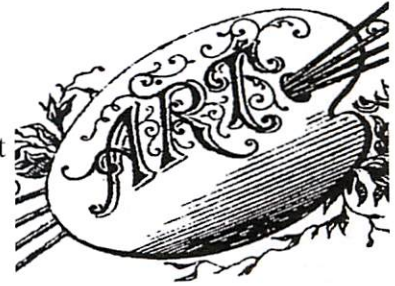


Do you have an artistic vision you would like to share? Submit your piece and any blurb about your art to the unit ILC for collection and you may be featured in upcoming newsletters! Remember, no art is wrong or bad! You never know who you may inspire or uplift!!

## THE EMCF CORNER

by Myrna Diaz

The Max Compound recently presented new initiatives that granted the women innovative experiences in education, health, and holistic well-being. One of the exciting new initiatives was the NJ-STEP Art Class's art show. The Max Compound recently had an art exhibit showcasing the amazing art created in the class. Invited guests were able to mingle with the students and discuss artistic inspiration. One of the students in the class, Chelsea Braunskill, was able to interview a few of the students and document their overall experience:



“Taking this drawing class was such a wonderful experience. It made me explore my creative side and shown me that I’m far more talented than I thought.” -T. Lozada

“What I learned from the art class is that I improved my skills and it’s still a coping skill for my mental health. I really enjoyed it and I expressed myself in many ways.” -Hendrixx Alford



Thank you to all the students who graced us with their talent!



## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

by Tina Lunney

May was Mental Health Awareness Month and July was National Minority Mental Health Month. Mental illness does not have a face; it can be your doctor, lawyer, teacher, a movie actor and even your neighbor. Across the nation, mental health has been becoming a topic of conversation, and the stigma associated with it is slowly diminishing, but there's still a lot of work to be done especially in the courts and institutions.

According to Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, the most common mental health conditions are anxiety disorder (including post-traumatic stress disorder) or PTSD, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder (panic attacks), generalized anxiety disorder and phobias. Also included are mood disorders such as depression and bipolar depression, which affects nearly 10% of adults each year and are characterized by difficulties in regulating one's mood.

While being confined in a carceral setting many of us can relate to a form of worry and anxiety that we face in our everyday lives. The American Psychological Association records show the percentage of incarcerated person's mental health in jails is 64% for the state, and 45% for Federal Facilities. Prison intuitive statistics show 68% of female and 41% of males, make up the mental health demographic. Women in prisons are more likely than men to have a history of mental health problems. The vast majority of people are unaware they even have a mental illness and some attach the illness with a stigma. These stigmas are manifested through the lack of education, misinformation, and lack of resources, but that should not stop us from continuing to educate ourselves about mental health awareness and self-care. Sometimes we may need to seek professional counseling or other forms of self-care for our well being.

It may be easy to overlook, but each and every one of us should be mindful of their own mental health needs. There are exercises that we can do to help our mental, physical and emotional states towards positive growth. Making positive changes to improve your well-being is just one important factor towards improving one's mental health. For example, it has proven that physical activities such as yoga, aerobics, exercise, and even walking can improve a person's mood and reduce stress, providing a boost towards your mental health self-care. There are many forms of self-care that are helpful, some include prayer, journaling, or even starting your day with affirmations during a morning meditation.

The key to improving your anxiety is being in a good relationship with yourself and others. The key to improve your mood is to reduce anxiety; it is an important factor to have a good relationship with yourself and others.



*You can handle whatever happens next*

*So relax, take a deep breath*

*And keep going*



*Fact: Each year, approximately 44 million Americans adults will experience a serious mental health condition; less than half will seek treatment due to stigma and discrimination.*

## Health Care Hustle: **Things You NEED to Know**

By: Melanie Slate

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Two thirds of female breast cancer patients in the U.S. are diagnosed with localized-stage disease, when treatment is more likely to be successful. Women of color tend to be diagnosed with more advanced forms, reflecting inequities in access to (and quality of) breast cancer screening. A combination of factors increases mortality among Black women diagnosed with breast cancer, like more unfavorable tumor characteristics and higher rates of other health conditions.

*How can you lower your risk?*



**Self-examination** is the most common- and effective-way to discover breast cancer. Nobody knows your body like you do. It's recommended monthly, usually right after menstrual cycle ends. After 40, both the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and American Cancer Society both recommend **yearly mammograms**.

**Stay active** "Women who get regular physical activity have a 10-20% lower risk of breast cancer compared to women who are inactive." A large study found that "for each 11 pounds gained during adulthood, the risk of post-menopausal breast cancer increases 11%..." (ACS,2023)

Make sure you **tell your doctor** about any family history of breast (or ovarian) cancer. Bottom line-early prevention and detection save lives. No one will care for your health the way **you** will.

## Practicing Mindfulness

by Myrna Diaz

As a recent graduate from the NJ-STEP Rutgers BA Program, I sometimes found myself overwhelmed with essay deadlines and project due dates. To maintain my sense of tranquility and not over exert myself, I began to look into different forms of relaxation to reduce stress. I found a book titled *Practicing Mindfulness* by Mathew Sockolov, and it contained an exercise that has been very helpful to me. I hope that it is equally beneficial to you too.

### **5-4-3-2-1**

When you are in the throes of an overwhelming emotion, it can hook you in completely. Mindfulness practice helps you notice when this happens. When you do notice you are feeling overwhelmed, you can use this exercise to bring yourself back to the here and now. It takes just a few minutes and extends an invitation to be present:

1. leaving the eyes open, notice five things you can see. You can say them out loud or silently in your head. With each of the five sights, pause to take them in completely.
2. Next, notice four things you can feel in the body. Note them out loud or in your head, and rest your attention with each sensation for a few deep breaths.
3. Name three things you can hear. (Try to choose three different sounds, not the same noise three times.)
4. Note two things you can smell. If you cannot seem to smell two things in this moment, feel free to move somewhere to smell something more closely.
5. Finally, find one thing you can taste. It may be the leftover taste of a meal, your toothpaste, or just your breath. If you cannot connect with one in the moment, note a taste you enjoy in general.

Source: Practicing Mindfulness 75 Essential Meditations

# “Candid Corner”

By: Carline Inginac & Katy Dorsett

What did a tick and the Eiffel Tower have in common?



They're both Paris sites

Why do fathers take an extra pair of socks when they go golfing?



In case they get a hole in one

As a rule, humans are fools...  
When it's hot, we want it cool.



When its cool we want it hot.



Always wanting what is

Why was Cinderella such a poor athlete?

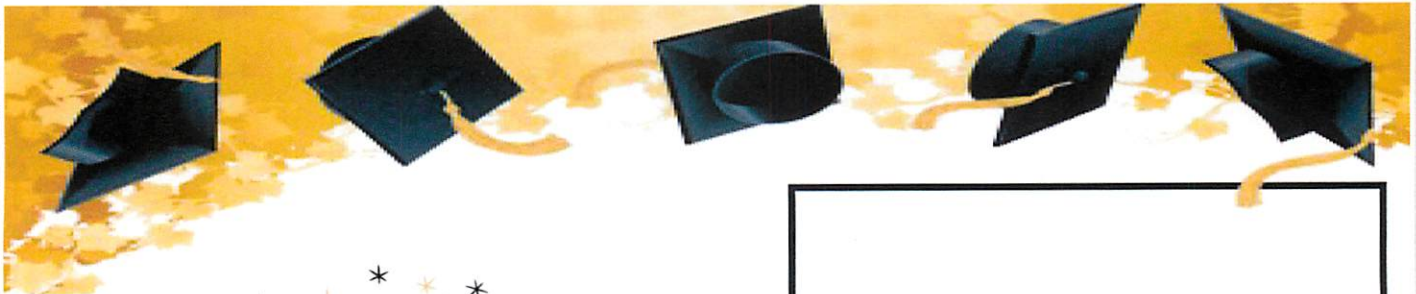


Because her coach was a pumpkin

What has a hand but can't scratch itself?



A clock



## \* We did it! \*

Congratulations to all of the people graduating from the Associates Degree Program this Fall. We are proof that hard work pays off. September 13<sup>th</sup> will be a day to remember!

- Chelsea Braunskill
- Angela Brown
- Jennifer Cebula
- Hyphern- Kemberly Dorvillier
- Raquel Garajau
- Kokila Hiatt

- Dawn Jackson
- Myriam Janvier
- Phyllis Kocheran
- Tina Lunney
- Paige Pfefferle
- Antionette Stephen

Congratulations to all of the graduates from the NJ-Step Bachelor's Degree Program. One more milestone accomplished.

Congratulations to the GED graduates!! Great job and can't wait to see you in the NJ-STEP Associates Degree Program.

- Briann Lindsey, Chlowe Peterson, Sky-Lyn Reed, Yuwana Roberts, Lotus Unity, Monique Walker

## A WOMEN'S WORD

There are two new "firsts" at Edna that have been impactful in the I.P.'s lives, and create an aura of empowerment and self discovery for all who have partaken in the activities. The first is Assistant Commissioner Tomé **The Empowered Women's Speaker Series**. The series consist of various speakers, some previously housed at Edna Mahan, who overcame the challenges that life presented them and moved forward toward a successful life and career. Invited speakers ranged from the educational arena to the political field like Ms. Angela V. McKnight, who is the first African American Assemblywoman for the 31st District of New Jersey, to women who have moved on to create their own organizations to help those in need like Ms. Tia Ryans who runs "All of Us or None of Us", and Ms. Nafeesah Goldsmith who shared her life lessons while housed here and recommended to everyone present to, "Show Up For Yourself." The range of speakers has touched every spectrum of career accomplishments and has become an example of women's empowerment and advocacy for our communities. We extend our gratitude to all the invited guest speakers for their participation in this program and demonstrate that success is achievable in all circumstances.

The second event that has been equally inspiring and life changing in the lives of the women at Edna is the new trauma group, "**Releasing Trauma and Embracing Faith**". The group is facilitated by Dr. Dawn McRae and Reverend Esther Maurice. This group runs for twelve weeks and upon completion, the participants continue on having monthly refresher sessions and discuss the changes that they experience, as well as how they have applied the new healing and coping techniques they have learned. The group is recommended to everyone who at one time or another has been challenged by trauma and has been affected by its debilitating apprehensions. The facilitators have created an environment that allows the participants to safely identify the areas of pain they have endured and empowers them to permit healing to begin. With its successful implementation the monthly sessions have grown to incorporate all the graduating participants and a sisterhood has developed where one woman's experience has turned into another woman's life lesson and has helped create building blocks toward triumph and positive self esteem.

- Myrna Diaz

## BILINGUAL CORNER

Edna Mahan has for the first time begun to incorporate different aspects of the daily functions of the institution in a different language: Spanish. This has helped to maintain a better sense of inclusivity for the population that has had difficulty blending in. One initiative that was extremely beneficial was the multilingual function on the kiosk, which made it easier for the Spanish speaking population to write their own request and submissions to custody, medical, business office and social services.

An additional program that was received

positively, was the EMCF Spanish Book Club. Attendance has been steady and the books supplied by Ms. Sferlazzo, have been very interesting, ranging from suspense to historical fiction. Looking toward the future, a Spanish Club will be initiated that will provide various different components that will enrich the Spanish speaking population in their daily life styles. We look forward to expanding ample opportunities to all here at Edna.

-Myrna Diaz

The following comments are from the Spanish IP's



SALUDOS

A mi me gusto leer el libro "Violeta" un libro excelente! - Carmen Matos

Me encanto la historia de "Los Siete Maridos de Evelyn Hugo", me quede muy impresionada! - Maria Montalvo

Nuestro Book Club en espanol es un programa excelente! - Germania Terrero

Mi Esperencia en Esta Pricion by Katheleen Ayala (FMU)  
 Mi esperencia fue un poco sorprendida por como me tartan, tanto los oficiales y las companeras, con mucho respeto. Yo estaba un poco intimidada porque no sabia a lo que me enfrentaba, pero me di de cuenta que no era tan malo, e aprendido que el lugar lo haces tu, como tu te comporte y como tu trate a la jente asi te tratan patra, si tu da respeto, respeto tu recibes, no es el lugar donde yo quiero estar, pero vencere.

Mi Esperencia Aqui en (FMU) by Dominga Mosquea  
 Fue muy diferente a lo que yo creia que me iba a pasar, tenia un poco de miedo por como me iban a tratar. Si me iban a tratar bien, o si me iban a tratar mal, pero me trataron muy bien con respeto. Me dieron ropa para yo estar mas comoda y me hicieron sentir bienvenida!

Gracias por nuestros programas en espanol. -Myrna Diaz

## What's on the menu? The Sweet & The Savory

### "Bangin" Brownie by Si' Jarae Lindsey

14 Crème Cookie (remove crème)

6 Creamers

6 Blue equal Sugars or 5 regular sugars

1 melted Hershey plain or with Almonds

Mix together until desired texture

Microwave for 1 minute 2 times, then remove it and melt 1 Hershey plain or with almond on top. If it is still mushy on top put back in for a few seconds

Place the lid on it.

P.E.R.I.O.D.

All I'm saying is.... That's Bangin!



### El Pastelon

by Myrna Diaz

This recipe requires: 1 Bag of nachos, 1 Hot cheese stick, 1 Yellow cheese stick, 1 Bag refried beans, 1 Summer sausage, 1 Jerk pork pouch (if you like spicy), 1 Milk.

First, slice the summer sausage into small pieces and cook for 1 minute in microwave. When done, mix with the jerk pork pouch and cook in microwave 1 minute. When done set aside. Cut both cheese blocks into small pieces mix together set aside. Now, in a small bowl cook the refried beans in the microwave but keep them thick, not runny. Once all that is done—smash the nachos up and place in a bowl with 1 container of milk. Cook the nachos for 3 minutes in the microwave until it becomes soft, but firm. Once done—using a small bowl, place 1/3 of the masa into the bowl and mold it into the shape of the bowl and leave the middle hollow for filling in. Now the layers begin: first, put the refried beans on the bottom, then layer the meat carefully on top of the beans, then layer the cheese on top of the meat. Once everything is in: place the last portion of the masa carefully on top and with the back end of the spoon carefully spread out to cover everything in the bowl, similar to a pie being covered by a crust. Once this is done bake in the microwave for 3 to 4 minutes. Buen provecho—pastelon is done!

### A Beginner Chefs Recipe!

by Chelsea Braunskill

This is a quick and easy recipe for Mackerel & Rice. If you are new to the institution as well as cooking in a microwave this is a great place to start. Ingredients can be interchangeable based on preferences.

#### You Will Need:

1 Big Bowl//1 Small Bowl//1 Bag of Rice

2 Packs of Mackerel//Adobo//Sazon

Pepper//Hot & Spicy Noodle seasoning pack (if you like spice)//

Mayonnaise//Butter//Honey//Salsa



#### Let's Begin!

Pour the whole bag of rice into the big bowl

Open both packs of mackerel and drain them of liquid. Then empty both packs into the small bowl.

Season the bowl of rice with Adobo, Sazon, and pepper to your discretion. (If you have access to any Food Package seasonings such as Garlic or Cajun you can put that in your rice).

Once seasoned to your liking, pour two spoons of salsa into the big bowl. Then two squirts of Mayonnaise (Don't mix together). Then take 6-8 pads of butter and put them around the rim of the big bowl.

#### Okay, let's get frying!

You are going to put the bowl in the microwave for 1 minute. Take it out, stir, put it in for another minute. Let the bowl rest and cool down for a few seconds between minutes. You are going to repeat this process until the rice is a nice golden brown or however lightly fried you would like it.

Once the rice is fried to your satisfaction, we're going to add our water. Pour water into the bowl. The water should come to about a quarter of an inch above the rice.

Put the bowl back in the microwave and cook for 6 minutes.

Skim some rice off the top to taste for flavor as well as texture. If the rice is still a little hard, put a big bowl lid lightly covering the bowl and put back in for 1-2 minutes to allow for steaming.

After these last 2 minutes the rice should be perfect. Take it out of the microwave and cover with a paper towel.

#### Mackerel Time!

In the small bowl that we put the mackerel in, season with Sazon and some (NOT ALL) of the Hot & Spicy pack.

Pour 1 spoon of honey into the bowl.

Add 1 & 1/2 pads of butter to the rim of the small bowl.

Put the bowl in the microwave for 1 minute. Take it out, stir it, and break up some of the chunks if you like. Put it back in for another 2 minutes.

#### Let's put it all together:

Pour the mackerel on top of the rice and stir it all together and enjoy!





ZEN ZONE

By: Paige Pfefferle

FALL 2023 PLAYLIST



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. All Too Well (10 min. Version): Taylor Swift | 9. Wait In The Truck Hardy Feat. Lainey Wilson             |
| 2. Vampire: Olivia Rodrigo                      | 10. I Ain't Worried: OneRepublic                           |
| 3. Lie: Nessa Barrett                           | 11. Barbie World: Nicki Minaj Feat. Ice Spice              |
| 4. Copa Vacía: Shakira                          | 12. On My Mama: Victoria Monét                             |
| 5. Creepin' (Remix): Metroboomin                | 13. Castle's Crumbling: Taylor Swift Feat. Hayley Williams |
| 6. Favorite Song (Remix): Toosii Feat. Khalid   | 14. Pressure: Machine Gun Kelly                            |
| 7. She: Jellyroll                               | 15. X'S N O'S: Chase Shakur                                |
| 8. Narcissist: Avery Anna                       |  |

MEET YOUR MAX

Plank	4 sets-hold for 20 seconds each
Plank Knee Drops	3 sets: 10-15 reps
Great Glute Kick	table top position, one foot raised and lifting to the sky/ 2-3 sets: 10-15 reps on both legs
Military Crunch	forearm plank bringing knees to shoulders one at a time 2-3 sets: 10-15 reps
Window Washer	plank position, place towels under your feet, spread legs out bring together again keeping feet on towels/ 2-3 sets: 10-15 reps
Double Towel Slider	plank position, towels under feet "mountain climb"/ 2-3 sets: 10-15 reps



Success is simple. It's dealing with defeat that's tough, but there's no greater show of strength than refusal to hang your head."- NCA

The Joy of Stretching  
by Myrna Diaz

A good practice to implement in your daily routine is some form of stretching. Aside from helping to maintain flexibility, it also helps with posture. A simple routine that I have practiced for many years follows some basic yoga poses that help limber the body. It only takes a few minutes, and you can do them anywhere. You can start with a Mountain Pose, then move into a Fierce Pose raising your arms above your head and bending slightly back to stretch your back muscles. Then follow with a Standing Table Top Pose with the arms stretched and aligned all the way out parallel to your head and then bend your knees and lower yourself into a Wide Squat Pose with your arms crossed over your chest. Then slowly rise and return back to Mountain Pose. Hold each pose for 30 seconds and repeat three times in the morning and in the evening.

## THE GROUNDS COMPOUND

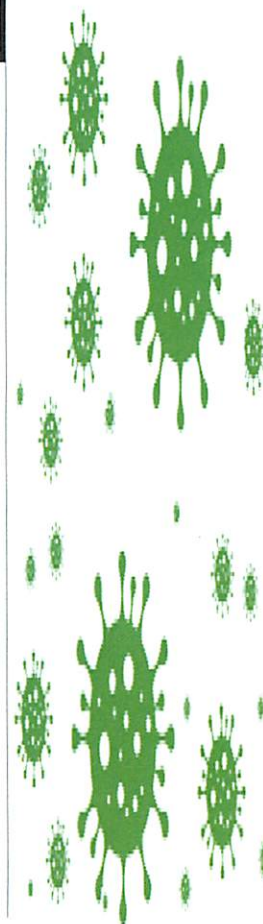
### Covid 19

by Regina Wallace

For the first time in EMCF history a global pandemic was experienced within the institution. It was an unprecedented occurrence, so there were no official guidelines for the facility. Of course, the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control were followed exactly. However, the way quarantine mandates translate within the institutional setting are quite different from the free world. Administration, custody, and medical did their best to create normalcies within housing units according to the needs of each housing space. Commissioner Kuhn and Assistant Commissioner Tomé did their best to convey new mandates and guidelines to be followed. Administration relayed messages via JPay to make sure everyone was informed of when and how to mask,

regulate social distance and codes for visitation regulation. Medical provided information regarding vaccines and made them readily available. Administration also offered incentives to encourage all incarcerated persons to become vaccinated.

Custody held meetings with the incarcerated persons on weekends to provide masks, relay updated information and to assess the needs for disinfectants and cleaning supplies. It was a difficult time for all concerned despite anxieties being high. We all felt the loss of our peers who succumbed to the virus. For those of us who made it through, we are grateful for the support afforded to us in that difficult time.



### ~Successful Recovery~

by Phyllis Kocheran

EMCFW offers a positive opportunity on grounds for those of us that want to join and begin or continue to maintain our journey for a successful substance abuse disorder recovery. Ms. Graham leads the OP, out patient, division of the GATEWAY program here on grounds. We meet daily where Ms. Graham provided different topics throughout the week such as, positive thinking, gratefulness, economic success, moving on, personal strengths, transitioning, and some group activities. There are some days when we discuss difficult topics like trauma, anger, boundaries,

forgiveness, and relationships. Ms. Graham will provide ways to build boundaries, ways to forgive others and ourselves, and how to have healthy relationships and how to spot red flags. This program offers an opportunity to feel safe in an environment where a safe space is sometimes difficult to find to discuss personal experiences, problems, and concerns. Our group is always very engaging and provides tools and positive mindset for a successful recovery. I am personally very grateful for the SUD, (substance use disorder),

program so I can sharpen my tools for recovery and secure a positive frame of mind for my recovery and a successful reentry into society.



**“The EMCF ART EXHIBIT”**

by Jamie Farthing

EMCF has several amazing artists who have been able to express and share their abilities via a bulletin board decorating competition within the prison’s housing units. This friendly competition starts with a theme; like...”Women’s Empowerment”, and each unit is then given a paper bag of supplies. This bag consists of; 1 pack of colored construction paper, 2 glue sticks, a pack of alphabet letters, a roll of color paper to be used as the background for the bulletin board, and a couple rolls of boarder.

Commissioner Victoria Kuhn was so impressed with A. Stephen’s 2022 rendering of the “Unhinged Woman”, she requested it be displayed in the Voorhees

Building in the DOC Central Office in Trenton.

The vocational carpentry/cabinet making class, taught by Master Craftsman Zadlock, who was just nominated as one of the Ambassadors of Hope within the facility, was given the honor of making the display case as a class project to hone and show our new acquired skills. Both the art and the display case are 100 % the skill and artistry of the women at EMCF.

This spring 2023 bulletin board competition, themed “Wear Your Crown”, brought more esteemed winners.

Melanie Slate, and Catelin Perez-Carstarphen, and Denise Staples, were chosen to be displayed along side of Antionette Stephen’s “Unhinged Woman”. Ms. Lovelace, the head of education and a great supporter of the women here, approved two more display cases to be made by Mr. Zadlock’s class.

It is a rare honor for the skills of the women at EMCF to not only be recognized, but proudly displayed. We are so grateful to Commissioner Victoria Kuhn and hope the small EMCF art exhibit she is creating will continue to grow.





Submitted poem:

**About Hope**

by Mattie J.T. Stepanek

Hope is a garden  
of seeds sown with tears,  
Planted with love  
Amidst present fears.

Hope is a rainbow  
Of butterfly wings,  
Gently it beckons,  
Lightly it sings.

Hope is a present  
Of future each day,  
A voice from our heart  
To show us the way.

Hope is not passive,  
It's real and alive,  
Hope is a strength  
To guide choices made wise.

Yes, hope is a garden,  
Grown from love and  
from tears,  
And hope which is nurtured,  
Survives throughout years.

Source: Reflections of a Peacemaker:  
A Portrait Through Heartsongs

**Uplifting Quotes**  
from Phyllis Kocheran

Stepping onto a brand-new path is  
difficult, but not more difficult  
than remaining in a situation,  
which is not nurturing to the whole  
woman.

-Maya Angelou

Never let a stumble in the road be  
the end of your journey.

Optimism is a happiness magnet.  
If you stay positive, good things  
and good people will be drawn to  
you.

-Mary Lou Retton

It's during the worst storms of  
your life that you will get to see  
the true colors of the people who  
say they care for you.

They tried to bury us. They did  
not know we were seeds.

**"Women"**

by Leurissa Dominguez

We are Women  
Abundant in knowledge, Inspirational in our own  
way.

Full of Divine Power, that naturally leads, leaving  
no-one astray.

We are Women

You taught me so many things,  
The sadness and happiness that living may bring  
Right from wrong was a lesson I learned at a young  
age.

You said I will be here to support you.  
The world is your platform.  
Your life is the book and your days are the page.

Don't be afraid for there are challenges ahead  
Giving me the tools to build a healthy homestead.  
Even if you didn't get to teach me or simply didn't  
want to.

I want to let you know,  
How thankful I am for each and every one of you.

This goes to all the women, I ever encountered in  
my life,

That gave me a chance to grow.  
With me still I carry a little something from them.

## SATELLITE

**Our Commissioner Kuhn**

by Crystal Afanador

Our first experiences with Commissioner Victoria Kuhn are all the speaker series events we have been having at FMU. My favorite one happens to be the one we had for **Mother's Day**. That event was different. There were ex-incarcerated persons who came back to speak to us about all of their FIRST when they were released. The stories of each of those women were inspiring. After we had asked all the questions, we all ate lunch together. All the civilians and the I.P.s actually sat at the same table to eat and talk. It was nice to see that; it was something different for us. It was nice to see that we weren't just khakis and a number. It was nice to be acknowledged as a mother, sister, aunt, as a human being.

I believe we need more of these events and I think she will deliver!

**Staying Active**

by Elyse Castillo

Many of the activities here at FMU-East are run by the Alternate PRC-Elyse Castillo. She has been successfully running the Crochet Club along with co-facilitator Regina Woods. Two styles of teaching, but one goal, bringing a soothing, calming hobby into the lives of different ages and backgrounds.

The Book Club here at FMU-East is small but constant, our latest book *Finding Me*, a memoir by Viola Davis, hit home with many of our ethnic and social struggles. It was an interesting read because of the success Viola Davis has achieved with her talent and in her life.

Our Zen Coloring Club, is independently run, however, we all take turns attending to take advantage of sharing the card stock, materials and coloring sheets.

Our prized and most cherished club has become our Yoga Club, run by Kim Sparrow. Kim, provides us with a calm, tranquil space to work out our aches and sores, both emotionally and physically. Thanks Kim, Namaste.

**Encouragement To An Inmate**

by Natalie Tice

I want to encourage all women that are incarcerated in every prison all over the world. To never give up even when your circumstances are not to your advantage. Prison is what you make of it. You have to understand that for some women around you it may be their first time here or their fourth time here. This is my third time here. And although I'm not proud to be here, I am thankful that God placed me here and spared my life. In less than two months I'll be leaving. I do not expect to ever step foot inside of any DOC facility ever again as an inmate. But one day, I hope to step foot inside, as a motivational speaker. I want those who are locked down not to feel down. Let's use this time to become a better person than when we first walked inside these gates. Do not let yourself give up hope because you feel hopeless. Everybody deserves a second chance in society no matter what crime they have committed. If God is love and loves us and forgives, then let us first forgive ourselves. Let us be kind to one another. If we don't know each other, let us not judge one another because of our offenses, but on how they tried us. I was fortunate to plan and throw two events inside of FMU autonomously.

The first one was for Memorial Day called "Remember Me 2023" and I did a moment of silence for all the soldiers we lost in war, family members, friends and EMCF Sgt. Tyler Ford, who we lost May 27 to an accident. I used to call him Sgt. Tom Ford; I got the nickname from Monique Walker when we lived in Hillcrest. My heart goes out to his family, wife and son. May God keep them covered during this hard time. The turnout was amazing and I appreciated all who attended. The other event I planned was for Independence Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>. I had the pleasure of getting the whole East side together. Planners, decorators, cooks and ITI's together. They let us cook in the kitchen and set up the whole unit. Everybody from the East side attended. Crystal, Marilyn, Ms. Carmen, Mecka, Pooka, Toot and Molly. I really appreciate and thank y'all for helping me put everything together. Maybe in the near future, we can do something with both sides. Again, let us not lose hope inside these walls. I would have never known that I wanted to start party planning until I planned those two events. I found joy, and pleasure at getting people together to have a good time. And that's what we all need to do have a good time. I hope who ever reads these words finds peace at knowing although we are temporarily incarcerated we can find freedom in our minds. Yesterday is gone and tomorrow is not promised. So let's start living right today. Make a change to do better and be a better person. I'm out!

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



## WELCOME AUTUMN

### COMING IN NEXT ISSUE . . .

This issue was a compilation of the current initiatives that are in place at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. In the coming months, with the holidays approaching, we look forward to engaging our readers in a holiday themed issue. We are also incorporating the voices of the entire population and presenting a column that will receive and answer questions from our fellow IP's. In addition, we

will highlight the graduation ceremony at Edna Mahan. Due to the COVID crisis graduations were suspended, but in September 2023, Edna Mahan will once again honor all graduates with a full cap and gown ceremony. We look forward to sharing with everyone our future initiatives and all new highlights that the end of year and new year bring.

## BY EMCF FOR EMCF

### EDITORS

MYRNA DIAZ AND  
MARIA MONTALVO

### THE TEAM

Crystal Afanador, Chelsea Braunskill, Angela Brown, Jamie Farthing, Dawn Jackson, Phyllis Kocheran, Myrna Diaz, Katy Dorset, Carline Inginac, Si'Jarae Lindsey, Tina Lunney, Maria Montalvo, Paige Pfefferle, Shaniqua Pierre, Melanie Slate, Antonette Stephen and Natasha White

Dear Edna

### QUESTIONS

---

---

---

---

### NEW TOPICS

---

---

---

---

### COMMENTS

---

---

---

---

