# ROLL CALLER



On Friday, October 18th, DOC proudly welcomed 84 new Correction Officers into the Boldest Family

### Heroes Work Here



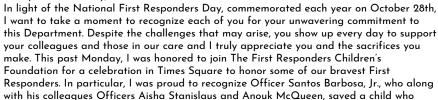
#### Boldest Spotlight



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## **BOLD THOUGHTS**

To my Boldest family,



began to choke while visiting with his father at RNDC last month. These brave officers quickly sprung into action and provided lifesaving care. Their actions represented the very best of our Boldest family in action. You, and your dedication and quick thinking, are what makes us great and keeps us safe. It is my privilege to lead a Department of such brave, resilient, and capable individuals. We also recently celebrated the graduation of 84 new officers who proved their abilities over the course of their 13-week training program. As the next generation of the Department, I am incredibly excited to see what these officers will bring to our team. I am also proud to share with you that, for the first time in the Department's 130-year history, one of our new Officers, Alan Forestal, earned the title of both Valedictorian and Top Shooter in firearms proficiency! The graduation ceremony also served as a promotion and appointment ceremony for many new and seasoned leaders: Solomon Chester, Courtney Rothwell, and Ronald Miller have been promoted to the rank of Warden; James Conroy has joined us as the new General Counsel; and we welcome back Ned McCormick as Associate Commissioner of Facility Operations and former Chief of Department Eric M. Taylor as Deputy Commissioner of Custody Management, Classification & Facility Operations. Collectively, their expertise and commitment will guide us as we navigate the complexities of our daily operations, and they will continue to cultivate future leaders who will continue to guide this Department well into the future. In this spirit of recognition, I am excited to announce our upcoming Medal Day Ceremony on November 15th, where we will celebrate the exceptional service and achievements of our team. This event will take place at the New York City Police Academy at 11:00 AM, and I encourage everyone to join us in honoring those who have gone above and beyond their call of duty. From acts of extraordinary bravery to exceptional contributions in our community, the awards we will present reflect the values of what it means to be New York City's Boldest. In closing, thank you once again for your hard work, resilience, and unwavering dedication. I am proud to stand with you as we continue to forge a bold future together.

## Heroes Work Here



This month's Heroes Work Here spotlight goes to K-9 Unit Officers Ditommaso and Mariani for their leadership in training our newest history-making K-9s, Pringles and Baxter, respectively.

Thanks to the efforts and compassion of Officer Grey, Pringles was brought to the DOC family earlier this year to help New York City. This one-year-old pup also made history as the first Labrador Retriever to be adopted into our K-9 Unit.

Under the guidance of handler Ditommaso, the K-9 has been properly trained and is now assisting in narcotics searches in our facilities each day.

"Pringles was brought to us as a regular house dog, he had no previous training and we worked together to get him ready for the field. I love his energy, he's always ready to work and I'm happy to have him as my partner," said Ditommaso, a 19-year DOC veteran.

K-9 Baxter also made history in DOC when he started working here about six months ago. The two-year-old Giant Schnauzer is the first of his breed to serve in our Department.

With direction from handler Officer Mariani, the K-9 has been properly trained in narcotics searches as well. Baxter also understands commands in Czech and Mariani noted that working with him has enabled her to learn another language.

"Baxter is amazing with finding the narcotics. He's quick, intelligent and when it's time to work, he's ready to work," said Mariani, who has been on job for almost 21 years. "Baxter was brought over to us already trained in Czech, so I've been learning a new language since I've been assigned to him and it's been a great experience."



Officer Mariani and K9 Baxter

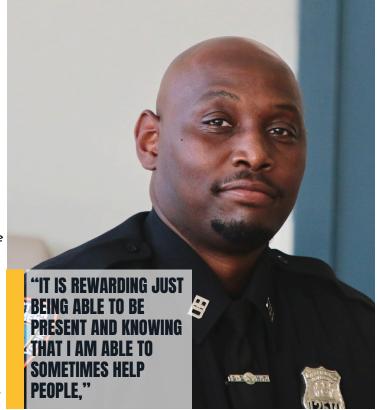
Training & Development
Division

Before they receive their new shields, all DOC supervisors must complete "pre-promotional" training at the Correction Academy. The Training and Development Division has made significant improvements to its pre-promotional curriculum and recently trained fifty new captains who are now working across DOC facilities.

Historically, there has been little training for supervisors after their promotion. This is changing, thanks to the development of a new leadership-oriented curriculum. Beginning this fall, experienced captains will be brought to the Correction Academy for a full week of training where they will receive instruction in topics such as Transformational Leadership, Effective Communication, Effective Team Building, Use of Force for Supervisors, and Defensive Tactics. The Training and Development Division is eager to invest in DOC's first-line supervisors and expects that increased leadership capacity in the rank of captain will serve to benefit all staff.

## **Boldest Spotlight**

Correction Officer Clifton Brooks Jr. is a hero who was just gearing up for an ordinary day in the jails when he came across a member of service in dire distress and saved the man's life. Quick thinking helped him realize that an unreturned greeting was really a Tuesday, September 10th started off like any other day for Correction Officer Clifton Brooks Jr. He had just wrapped up an early morning run and was heading to his car parked outside the George M. Detention Center (GMDC) when he noticed a colleague and mentor sitting in his vehicle nearby. The friend, also a DOC employee, didn't respond when Officer Brooks said hello, so he walked over to make sure everything was okay. It wasn't. The friend, whose name we are not publishing to protect his privacy, told Officer Brooks in a low voice that he could not feel the left side of his body. Realizing that it might be a stroke, Officer Brooks notified his supervisor and requested assistance. He also rendered aid by clearing the man's airway and helped him get out of his car when help arrived. Officer Brooks is now being hailed a hero by his colleagues. But the seven-year department veteran, ever so humble, says that he's sure that if the shoe were on the other foot, and he needed



help, his fellow colleague would've done the same thing. "Just being a law enforcement professional and being part of the department, that is our responsibility and our obligation – to be here for one another," Officer Brooks said. "The circumstances may not always be the best, but we make the best [by] utilizing our training." Officer Brooks recently visited his friend and says he's recovering. Throughout his career, Officer Brooks has worked in several commands, including the Robert N. Davoren Center (RNDC), Horizon, and the Correction Intelligence Bureau (CIB). He currently works as a Grievance Investigator at the George R. Vierno Center (GRVC). Officer Brooks resolves complaints, concerns, and grievances from persons in custody, improving conditions both for them and for Members of Service in the jails. "It is rewarding just being able to be present and knowing that I am able to help people," he says, adding that he can rectify concerns and complaints at the facility, turning a negative into a positive.

For Officer Brooks, maintaining personal integrity while on the job is the top piece of advice that he would give to someone just starting.

"Integrity in this department is something that you don't get back – that is something that I learned when I started as an officer -- so you must hold dear to that, in terms of carrying yourself as a productive law-enforcement professional and not discrediting your oath or shield," he said. "Those things are invaluable."

Officer Brooks says there's a lot of good leadership in the department, and he has benefited from many mentors. "If you are humble enough to be present and want to prefect your craft, you can have staff teach you the tools to be successful and progress in your career as a Correction Officer," he said.

## **PROGRAMS**



Did you know that we have a team dedicated to ensuring individuals in custody may pursue their education if they so choose? The Educational Service Unit, in collaboration with New York City Public Schools, is dedicated to empowering emergent adults on their journey to academic success in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. Within 10 days of incarceration, a member of the Educational Services Unit will meet with a person in custody to ascertain their interest in educational services and from there, coordinate with each facility and the NYCPS to identify the best individualized plan of action. Recently, the Unit has also adopted remote, asynchronous learning options via Essential Education, an app on the tablets, allowing the Education team to continue to support students even outside the classroom. By providing access to GED preparation and support, the unit helps individuals overcome barriers to education. In addition to GED programs for emergent adults, the Unit offers a range of post-secondary courses through partnerships with Columbia University and LaGuardia Community College, designed to promote creative thinking and support students' commitment to continuing and higher education. Through personalized guidance and resources, the Educational Service Unit fosters a nurturing environment that encourages lifelong learning and self-sufficiency, paving the way for brighter futures.

## ROLL CALL

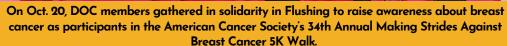




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H.R. The Fall 2024 Health Benefits Open Enrollment Period is open until Saturday, November 30, 2024. During the transfer period, you may transfer into any health plan for which you are eligible, add or drop optional rider coverage, or add or drop dependents in your current plan. This is the only time you can change your elections outside of a qualifying event, such as marriage, divorce, death, birth or adoption of a child, etc.,. Employees hired between January 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 are unable to participate in the fall transfer period. After 365 days of employment, those employees will have the option of either remaining in the HIP HMO Preferred Plan or selecting a different health plan within 30 days before the end of the 365 day period. To update your coverage please access employee self-service (ESS) through cityshare at http://cityshare.nycnet/ess or logging in through the internet at www.nyc.gov/ess . Click "employee self-service" on the left navigation pane or you may do so from home by logging in through the internet at www.nyc.gov/ess. If you need assistance, you can facilitate changes by contacting the New York City Automated Personnel System (NYCAPS) at 212-487-0500 and speak to a representative or email nycapscentral@dcas.nyc.gov .





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#### Breathing techniques to reduce stress:

Put aside your worries for a moment and

Focus on your breathing. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach. Breath in slowly and deeply through your nose. As you breath in, slowly count to three and feel your stomach expand with your hand on your belly. Hold your breath for 1 second. Whole counting to four, exhale slowly and slowly. It is easier to practice by doing this exercise while counting 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8. You can breathe either through your nose or mouth. The important point is making your exhales last longer. We tend to focus on inhaling and forget to exhale. It's normal to feel anxious. It would be nice if we could manage our anxiety better, instead of letting it limit our actions.