

DEC 2011



10th Edition



#### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Holiday Luncheon
- Merrimac Recording Studio
- Post-D Construction Project
- Security System Upgrade

#### NEW ADDITIONS

Since our last newsletter, we had the good fortune to welcome the following new team members to the Merrimac Center:

Clevon Belfield  
Raquel Brown  
James Carter  
Carmen Colon  
David Kaufman  
Geretta McClave  
Robert Whitehead  
Leroy Youmans

# The Merrimac Message

## Middle Peninsula Juvenile Detention Commission

*From the Corner Office...*

**“The single most influential factor in determining the successful outcome of a task is the attitude the team members bring into it” – William James**

Wow! A year has come and gone like the blink of an eye. I continue to be impressed by the dedication of the staff here. From operations, to programs, to mental health, to education; the true wealth of the Merrimac Center lies in its resources of talented, dedicated professionals. It is because of their singular purpose and positive attitude that we have been able to successfully carry out our mission over the past year. My thanks to everyone that has contributed. My admiration of your efforts is genuine. I am proud to be your leader and hope to serve you, as you serve the troubled youth under our care.

Since our last newsletter, FY 2011 ended with many goals accomplished, others a work in progress, and a few left for us to address yet again this year. We fulfilled our mission of providing a safe, secure setting for the at-risk youth placed in our care. Some interesting demographics regarding our population from last year: we had 495 admissions and provided 12,592 child care days for youth from 18 different localities. Of these, 74% were male, 26% female with 58% white, 34% black, and 8% other. Our most common criminal charges were assault, burglary, and larceny. 46% of all residents reported some type of experience with alcohol or drugs; 72% self-reported being a victim of, or witness to, some type of “traumatic” event in their life. Finally, we served 43,444 meals at a cost of \$2.57 per meal, including snacks.

Through all of this I am pleased to report that we have strengthened our intensive treatment program and our mental health credentials. Our education team continues to provide a thriving learning environment and has expanded the emphasis on literacy and reading. We have solidified our relationships in the community and the juvenile justice system. We continue to be leaders in detention and reentry programming. The administrative team is coming together to address the diverse challenges of operations, budget, personnel, and programs. The support of our Commission members remains strong and unequivocal in their commitment to the Center.

In closing, I come back to where I started. The resiliency of this team and its leaders is truly impressive, especially in light of today’s challenges of “doing more with less”. As William James said above, attitude, attitude, attitude is the singular difference between failure and success. Thank you all for a successful year and I look forward to many more.

*Mike Sawyer*

## MERRIMAC RECORDING STUDIO

Residents now have the opportunity to purchase time at the Merrimac Recording Studio. For **20 COUPONS** they may write and record one song with producer Mr. Kaufman.

One (1) 30 Minute session – to pick out a backing track to sing or rap to, figure out how many bars (lines) are in the song, and develop the structure of the song.

One (1) 60 Minute session – At a later date (determined upon availability) the resident will have 60 minutes to record the song.

The lyrics must be **free of inappropriate talk** (profanity, gang related, guns, drugs). Resident recorded tracks can be added to MP3 players or even burned to a CD upon release.



Congratulations to **Matthew Sopko and Frank Beers** who reached the 10 year anniversary of their employment at the Merrimac Center! Employees reaching the 5 year milestone in 2011 include **Karen Dobson, Gina Workman, Tara Belfast, Barry Wallace, Darryl Brown, William Wimbish & Liana Vallecillo**. Thank you for your hard work and dedication!



### ADVENTURES IN POST-D

The Merrimac Center Post-D program recently had the pleasure of working cooperatively with a local contractor on the construction of two dog houses. The opportunity allowed the residents to learn construction terminology, garner hands-on experience with tools, and enabled them to give back to the community through the donation of the finished products to a local dog shelter. The building project also bolstered communication, cooperation, and critical thinking skills. The residents will apply the lessons learned in a future volunteer build with Habitat for Humanity.



## Christmas Recipes

From the kitchen  
of Ms Redcross



### RANCH CHEESE BALL

- 1 Lg Can Chicken Breast, Drained
- 16oz Soft Cream Cheese
- 2 C Chopped Pecans
- 1 Package Dry Ranch Dressing

Mix well, chill 2 hours. Serve with Vegetable Crackers



### SNOWBALLS

- 5 T White Corn Syrup
- 3 T Orange Marmalade
- 2 T Orange Juice Concentrate
- 1 Box Vanilla Wafers, Crushed
- 1 C Coconut/1 C Fine Chopped Pecans
- 48 Mini Marshmallows

Stir together first 3 ingredients, then add Vanilla Wafer crumbs and mix well. Roll into small balls, inserting 2 or 3 marshmallows into each one. Roll in coconut/nut mixture and enjoy! Store in air tight container for up to 1 week.

### Speaking of “pigging out”...



The Merrimac Center recently received a visit from Brownie the Berkshire/Tamworth piglet. Brownie was purchased by Les Hooker, one of our teachers, from a farm in King William County. Pigs such as Brownie, who was named by Mr Hooker’s children, are raised until they are around 180 to 200 lbs. Brownie remained in his crate while he met staff and residents, as piglets really are quite quick and hard to catch if they get away!

The Tamworth breed is considered to produce the best bacon. Berkshire is a historical breed that originates in Berkshire County England. Find this interesting? Check out this website:

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/swine/>



## WRATS!

The Merrimac Center WRAT's, or Writing and Reading Acceleration Teams, will be reading "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens this year. Appropriate reading level texts have been purchased for each group, and reading will begin after return to school from the Thanksgiving break. The teams are led by Ms Bailey and Mrs. Carson, who are planning to serve up a holiday treat, Dickens style of course, once reading has been completed. Students will then be able to choose a movie version of the book to watch and compare it to their reading. This idea came about after our students started the school year reading a school-wide book from the Blueford series. With the success of the Blueford book, teachers thought this might be a fun idea to get the students in the holiday mood while promoting literacy.



"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!"

- *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens



This holiday season the Merrimac Center plans to honor its staff with a luncheon at TGI Friday's, 12122 Jefferson Ave, Newport  
News

The celebration will take place on two different dates & times to allow all shifts an opportunity to attend:

**Tuesday- December 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00AM**

**Wednesday-December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30PM**



## STAYING SECURE

In 2011 Norment Security Group was awarded the contract to upgrade the major components of our door and camera security system. Over a period of five months, employees of Norment installed new wiring, a new PLC (Programmable Logic Controller), two new touch screen computers, and upgraded many other vital system components. The transition to the new system was a smooth one, with minimal downtime. This was the first major upgrade since the center opened its doors.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY M.A.  
A POST-D RESIDENT



MERRIMAC WISHES YOU AND YOURS  
A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON &  
ALL THE BEST IN THE NEW YEAR!

