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Newport News Trains To Be Center Of Excellence

KATHLEEN CAREY, PIO

The Newport News Sheriff's Office is providing a wide array of training opportunities to all its personnel in an effort to be a center of excellence. To stay current in the law enforcement career field, on-going training is essential.

Sheriff Gabe Morgan points out that training is what sustains an organization. "We look at training from a holistic perspective. Opportunities are made available for sworn staff and associated personnel. There is a symbiotic relationship. And we want to enhance their ability in delivering services."

One of the obvious mutually cooperative relationships is that of the medical staff. Nurses in a correctional setting face perplexities that their counterparts in other settings, like private practice and hospitals, do not regularly encounter. Correctional nurses do not specialize in any specific area. They need to be proficient in all fields.

"That's what I always tell new nurses that come here. You can be any kind of nurse you want here. We experience a lot of different fields," explained Hope Hasan, Newport News Sheriff's Office Medical Director. "We deal with a lot of diabetes and hypertension, so internal medicine is big for us. Because of AIDS and HIV, we are infectious disease nurses. We are in trauma/ER, psychiatric and OB-GYN (obstetrics and gynecology). We do it all," Hasan continued.

The Sentara and Virginia HIV and AIDS Resource and Consultation Center – Eastern Satellite Office sponsors regional training for correctional nurses. This is something that they do annually. This year, that training was hosted by the Newport News Sheriff's Office. Our nurses were joined by colleagues from the Petersburg Sheriff's Office, Hampton Sheriff's Office and Newport News Juvenile Detention for the week-long seminar. Among the topics discussed was substance abuse and addiction.

Steven Goynes is a certified substance abuse counselor with Probation and Parole. Abuse of prescription medications is on the rise, and nurses need to better understand why offenders might be

asking for certain medications. Goynes explained that inmates take advantage of medications. "Sure they do. Many of them come to jail knowing that they can get free opiates, more or less. And all they have to do is mimic certain symptoms and nurses who are unaware may give them those medications that they are seeking to get under false pretenses."

"It is important to be updated," said Hasan, but said training opportunities provide much more. "It is also for nurse fellowship. What I call 'nurse fellowship.' We exchange ideas. We find out what is done at their facility. What kind of policies and protocols are working somewhere else. Getting nursing insights and fresh ideas ... that's important."

That concept of shared ideas applies to leadership training for middle and upper management in the command chain of the Newport News Sheriff's Office.

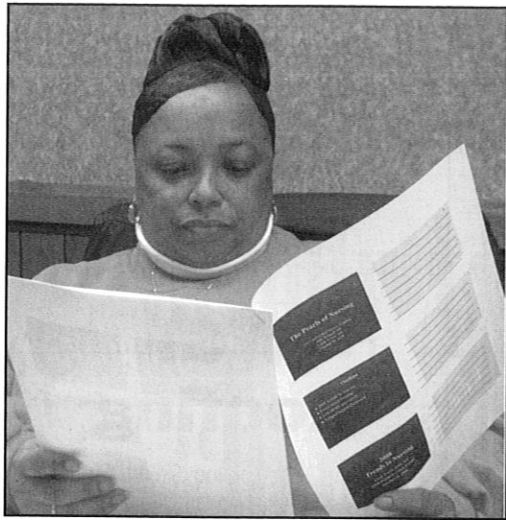
The Management Development for the Future program conducted by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is a way to jump-start leaders. Because the training is done on site with a combination of face-to-face instruction, satellite instruction, group exercises and independent study, the Newport News Sheriff's Office will have 26 people trained over the course of 18 months.

"It would take 13 years before we could get that many leaders through school if we did it the traditional method of sending one or two people a year to class," explained Sheriff Morgan of the program's efficiency. "This way, we have a boost in our leadership and will see exponential returns on that investment."

The training will benefit each individual professionally and personally. In turn, the organization will benefit from their development.

Lecturing about performance goals, NIC instructor Bill O'Connell used the analogy of coming to a fork in the road, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there."

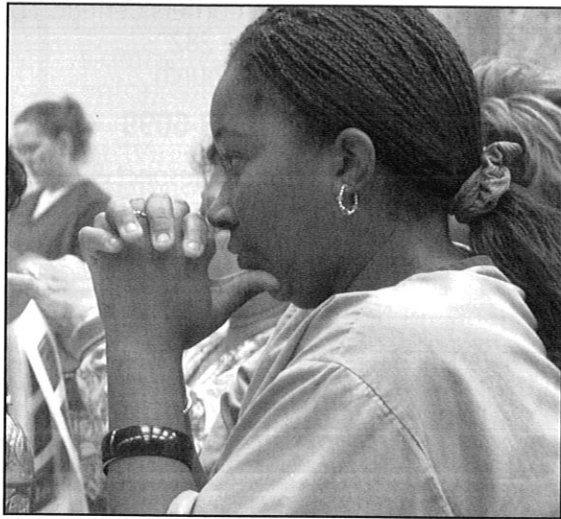
Sheriff Morgan's vision for the Newport News Sheriff's Office is to head down a one-way street toward the center of excellence.



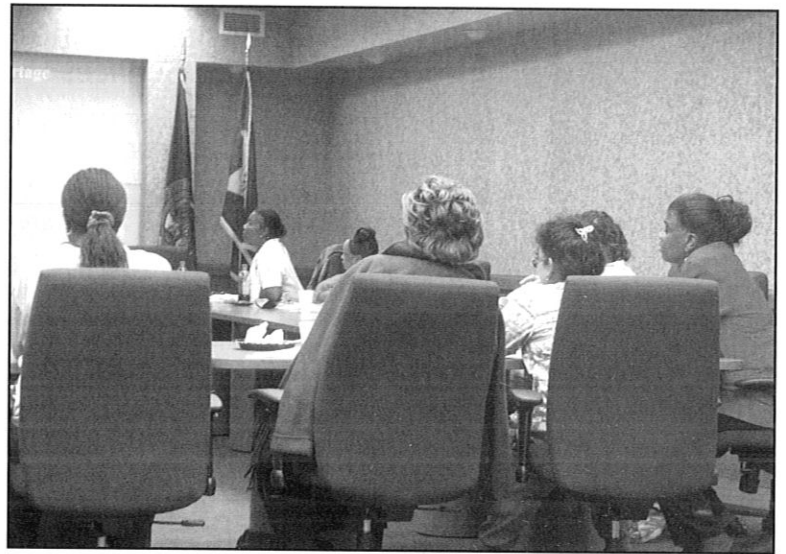
Wanda Henderson, Petersburg Sheriff's Office nurse, reviews study materials.



Table teams exchange ideas as part of NIC leadership training.



Candyce Ferguson, Newport News Sheriff's Office nurse, concentrates on lesson during training seminar for regional correctional nurses.



The Newport News Sheriff's Office hosts an annual training seminar for regional correctional nurses.



Carol Mitchell (left) and Candyce Ferguson (right), both nurses with Newport News Sheriff's Office, participate in training.



Sergeant Laura Saunders (second from right) leads her table team in a group exercise as part of NIC leadership training.