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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: June 2, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

It is difficult to believe we have turned another page in the 2021 calendar! If you take a look back at my staff message from exactly one year ago today – June 2, 2020 – the focus was on the rate of COVID-19 positive cases in our facilities – particularly at Lansing – and the importance of taking the virus seriously. The hospitalizations and passing of a number of staff and residents this past year serve to remind us of the seriousness presented by this pandemic.

Today (thankfully), one year later, our numbers of positive cases remain at zero or close to it thanks in large part to the health protocols we have in place, and our vaccination rate for residents is among the highest in the nation according to a recent article in the New York Times. All of this continues to contribute to the recovery from the pandemic in our state, nation and world. You can read the New York Times story here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/us/vaccine-prison-covid.html> .

Several programs have been wrapping up in recent weeks. The batterer intervention program (BIP) group at Lansing Correctional Facility (LCF) completed its six-month, twice a week program last week. Due to COVID restrictions, residents from other facilities were not able to transfer to LCF to complete the program so this is the BIP group where four residents at LCF participated in person and three residents at Ellsworth Correctional Facility attended via Zoom. Facilitators commented that the group was dedicated and focused in their efforts to learn and grow.

Norton Correctional Facility (NCF) completed its first Victim Impact Class last week as well. Classes focused on various types of crime and the impact on victims, with emphasis on understanding victims' unique experiences. The participants also learned about the apology letter bank and explored their own processes for beginning to make amends for harm they have done. The seven residents took part in 18 classes over the last five weeks.

I want to close with a few words from a graduation speech given by one of our residents as he reached an education milestone in early May:

“As for myself I look back on my life and see how I used to be. It is the complete opposite of who I feel I have become. To see this change is only a recent realization for me, one that leaves me in awe of the capacity of humanity to grow out of the pain and suffering too many must endure and become something wonderful. Education for me has been a life-altering factor. It has given me the sense of purpose and motivation to become something more than my past would lead you to think I would become.”

My hope is that you find encouragement in the speaker's words. These thoughts perfectly illustrate the reasons our strategic plan, Pathways for Success, is about transforming lives through opportunity for change.