

I.G.N.I.T.E. INSIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2023



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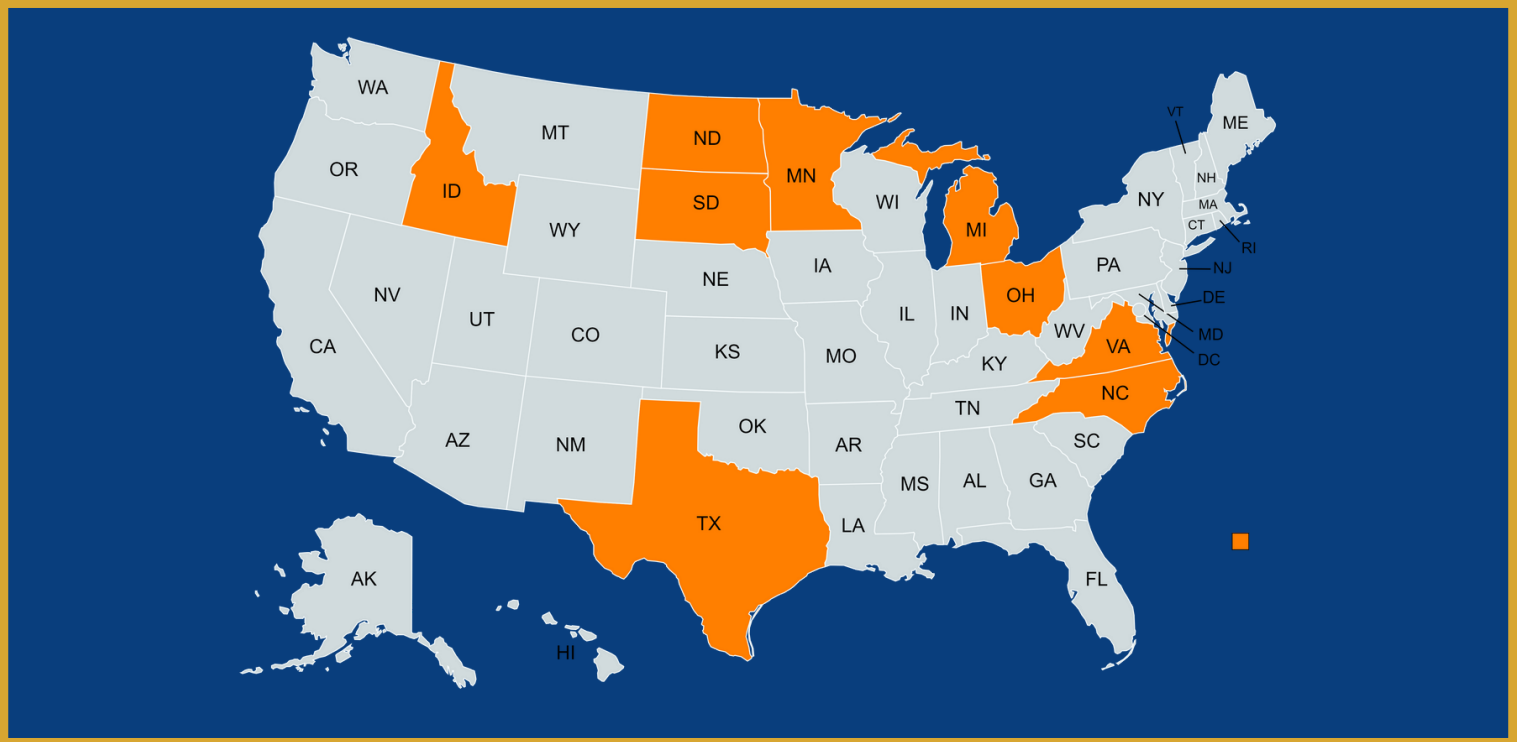
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SETTING THE NATION ABLAZE: I.G.N.I.T.E. INITIATIVES IN ACTION



IGNITING A NEW BEGINNING: MEET OUR SITES



GENESEE COUNTY, MI

SHERIFF CHRIS SWANSON
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2020

HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN

SHERIFF DAWANNA WITT
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2021

MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

SHERIFF GARRY MCFADDEN
LAUNCHED MARCH 2022

CASS COUNTY, ND

SHERIFF JESSE JAHNER
LAUNCHED MAY 2022

ROANOKE CITY, VA

SHERIFF ANTONIO HASH
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2022

SANDUSKY COUNTY, OH

SHERIFF CHRIS HILTON
LAUNCHED MARCH 2023

COLLIN COUNTY, TX

SHERIFF JIM SKINNER
LAUNCHED APRIL 2023

PENNINGTON COUNTY, SD

SHERIFF BRIAN MUELLER
LAUNCHED MAY 2023

BONNEVILLE COUNTY, ID

SHERIFF SAM HULSE
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2023



**FANNING THE FLAMES OF
LEADERSHIP:
A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY**

**SHERIFF BRIAN MUELLER
PENNINGTON COUNTY, SD**



Sheriff Brian Mueller of Pennington County, South Dakota, is no stranger to the field of law enforcement. With an impressive 27-year tenure in the profession, all of which was spent at the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Mueller brings a wealth of experience and dedication to his role. Having taken office just under a year ago, he has wasted no time in pushing for innovative changes within his jurisdiction.

One such change involves the implementation of the I.G.N.I.T.E. initiative, an ambitious program aimed at transforming the lives of inmates, while simultaneously reducing recidivism rates. The Pennington County Sheriff's Office has embarked on this venture under Sheriff Mueller's leadership, reflecting his commitment to fostering positive change in the criminal justice system.

The Pennington County jail and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office are of considerable scale. With 662 adult inmates, the county's jail stands as the largest in South Dakota. Accompanying this is a 57-bed regional juvenile facility and a 160-bed Care Campus, which serves as a regional substance abuse treatment center. This expansive infrastructure underscores the pressing need for effective initiatives that can aid in transforming the lives of individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Sheriff Mueller's interest in the I.G.N.I.T.E. initiative was sparked by his friend and retired sheriff, Paul Laney. A five-minute pitch delivered by Laney at a National Sheriffs' Association Conference was all it took to capture Sheriff Mueller's attention. The concept of I.G.N.I.T.E. resonated with him as it offered the potential to introduce accountability and a helping hand to individuals seeking to reshape their life trajectories. Simultaneously, the initiative presented a promising strategy to curtail recidivism rates and potentially integrate skilled workers back into the community's workforce.

"I.G.N.I.T.E. offers a unique opportunity to add accountability and a hand up for individuals wanting to change the trajectory of their lives," Sheriff Mueller expressed. "At the same time, it has the potential to reduce recidivism rates and contribute to a more productive community."

While the Pennington County Sheriff's Office is just beginning its journey with I.G.N.I.T.E., Sheriff Mueller and his team have hit the ground running, with the appointment of a dedicated

coordinator and a strong foundation of community support. The enthusiasm surrounding the initiative is palpable with the incarcerated population all eagerly anticipating the positive change that I.G.N.I.T.E. could bring into their lives.

However, like many law enforcement agencies, the Pennington County Sheriff's Office faces challenges, particularly regarding jail capacity and staffing shortages, "Our jail is at capacity, and like most of you, we are short-staffed," Sheriff Mueller acknowledged. Nevertheless, he remains undeterred and resolute in his commitment to the I.G.N.I.T.E. initiative and its potential to transform lives.

"I am very thankful to Sheriff Swanson, Sheriff Hilton, the amazing staff at NSA, and everyone else who has worked hard to make this initiative possible and successful," Sheriff Mueller stated. He emphasized that the Pennington County Sheriff's Office is firmly dedicated to its I.G.N.I.T.E. partnership and is prepared to persevere until its goals are achieved.

As Sheriff Mueller steers the Pennington County Sheriff's Office toward a future that prioritizes rehabilitation and community reintegration, his dedication to I.G.N.I.T.E. underscores his commitment to fostering positive change within the criminal justice system. With an ambitious vision and a determined spirit, Sheriff Mueller aims to create a lasting impact in the lives of those within his jurisdiction.



**BURNING BRIGHT:
RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION
OF OUR DEPUTIES**

DEPUTY JILL WORDEN
GENESEE COUNTY, MI



When did you become involved with the I.G.N.I.T.E. program?

February 16, 2022.

What is your role?

Coordination of classes, recording accomplished teaching hours, delivering meritocracy rewards for those who have completed milestones, and inspiring others by giving approbations which has helped change the culture.

What have you found most rewarding about being involved with I.G.N.I.T.E.?

Witnessing and being a part of the change in relationships and also the self-pride in the students. Seeing the genuine pride and joy of a student completing a program or getting a GED or HS Diploma has been very rewarding. Seeing the pride when I tell a student that I am proud of them for working hard on something, and watching their self-confidence and self-worth grow.

What has been the biggest challenge of I.G.N.I.T.E.?

The biggest challenge has been gaining the trust of the inmates as well as other deputies. Making people understand that I.G.N.I.T.E. is worth investing in, people and relationships are worth investing in, and if they give it chance, it can be life changing for everyone.



**KINDLING THE FLAME:
STUDENT SUCCESS UNVEILED**

**AUSTIN LECLAIRE
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN**



In a remarkable testament to the power of determination and resilience, Austin LeClaire, a student in the Hennepin HOPE program, has hit extraordinary milestones during his time in custody. The Hennepin HOPE program, which is part of the broader I.G.N.I.T.E. initiative, aims to provide inmates with educational opportunities and pathways to success, setting the stage for a brighter future upon release.

LeClaire's journey through the Hennepin HOPE program has been nothing short of inspiring. Despite facing significant challenges, Austin demonstrated unwavering dedication, ultimately emerging as a shining example of the transformative potential that lies within each individual. During his time in the Hennepin HOPE program, LeClaire

accomplished an extraordinary feat: he completed a total of 118.5 classroom hours and successfully passed the RLA (Reasoning Through Language Arts) GED exam. This achievement is particularly commendable given the circumstances Austin faced when he first enrolled in the program.

LeClaire's journey was marked by the hurdle of a learning disability. From the outset, he was candid about the challenges he had encountered due to this disability. Moreover, his mother reached out to the program administrators to share the school-related struggles he had faced in the past. Despite grappling with a learning environment that proved difficult for him, LeClaire faced a crossroads when he contemplated dropping out of the GED class on multiple occasions.

However, LeClaire's resilience and the support he received from the Hennepin HOPE program staff proved to be pivotal in his journey. Encouraged to persevere and keep moving forward, Austin pressed on. Austin's journey took an additional turn when he was sentenced to prison.

Undeterred by the challenges that lay ahead, he continued his pursuit of education by enrolling in the Adult Diploma program within the Minnesota Department of Corrections - St. Cloud. This tenacity exemplifies his commitment to transforming his

life and ensuring a brighter future for himself.

Looking ahead, LeClaire's goals remain as resolute as ever. He is determined to complete his formal education while incarcerated, further equipping himself with the tools necessary to thrive beyond the prison walls. Upon his eventual release, Austin's aspirations include securing a job that offers a steady income, thereby providing him with a means to distance himself from a path of criminal behavior.

The Hennepin HOPE program, under the I.G.N.I.T.E. initiative, has provided LeClaire with not only an education but also a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. His journey is a testament to the program's potential to empower individuals, regardless of their past struggles, to overcome adversity and carve out a new path forward.

As LeClaire continues to work towards his goals with determination and courage, his story stands as an inspiration to all, reminding us that transformation is possible when determination is met with support and opportunity.



**BURNING BRIGHTER TOGETHER:
STORIES OF CLASS TRIUMPHS**

**NEXT GREAT 50
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC**

In an effort to transform lives and break the cycle of recidivism, the Next Great 50 (NG50) program, led by instructor Josh Proby, was introduced within the walls of Mecklenburg County's correctional facilities. Offering a transformative 8-session curriculum, NG50 equips students with the knowledge and tools necessary to establish their own Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) during their time of incarceration. This innovative program has not only created new business owners but has also revitalized a sense of purpose among the students.

At its core, the NG50 program is an eight-session journey that extends beyond the confines of incarceration, empowering residents to build a more promising future.

**“JOSH PROBY & SHAMITA HELPED ME TO BETTER UNDERSTAND MY CREDIT AS AN INMATE. THE PROGRAM HELPED ME TO ESTABLISH A BUSINESS; NG50 CHANGED MY LIFE.”
- ACTIVE STUDENT**

The NG50 program has witnessed remarkable outcomes, with over 20 students becoming business owners.

These individuals have taken the initiative to establish LLCs for their respective business ideas. Beyond the creation of businesses, NG50 has had a profound impact on the participants' self-perception and aspirations.

“I’M GRATEFUL FOR TEAMING UP WITH THE MECKLENBURG COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE. THANK YOU, SHERIFF, FOR ALLOWING THIS TO BE. THIS IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND AND I’M JUST GRATEFUL WE ARE ABLE TO COME IN AND TO HELP THESE RETURNING CITIZENS BEFORE THEY ARE RELEASED WITH REENTRY AS WELL AS BEING ESTABLISHED UPON THEM GETTING OUT, SO THAT WE CAN LOWER THESE RATES OF RECIDIVISM.” - JOSH PROBY

The curriculum covers four key domains:

1: Credit Repair & Building: Recognizing the fundamental importance of financial health, NG50 addresses credit repair and building strategies. Students are educated on understanding credit scores, managing debts, and restoring their financial reputation.

2: Business Structure & Development: Students are provided with insights into the world of entrepreneurship. They learn about business structures, idea development, and the steps



required to transform their aspirations into tangible business ventures.

3: Mental Health: Acknowledging the significance of mental well-being, NG50 devotes a session to mental health awareness. Residents learn coping mechanisms, stress management, and the importance of maintaining a positive mindset amidst challenges.

4: Business Website: Participants learn how to create and manage their own business websites. This skill empowers them to establish an online presence and reach potential customers, even while incarcerated.

The Next Great 50 program stands as a testament to the power of education, mentorship, and empowerment. By equipping students with practical skills, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose, NG50 is breaking down barriers and reshaping the narrative of incarceration.





FUELING SUCCESS: THE POWER OF MERITOCRACY

ROANOKE CITY, VA

What are some of the things you do to incentivize individuals to participate in I.G.N.I.T.E.?

Incentives include food items, hygiene products, stamps, journals, coloring pages, and allocated library browsing time. We celebrate accomplishments with small celebrations where residents get a certificate and goodie bag when they complete a class or program.

What has been most successful?

Through the use of these incentives, we have seen an increase in resident participation in all classes and programming pods. One example is the attendance in our GED and Advanced Studies classes. At the beginning of the year the attendance rate was 78%. Last month, the attendance rate was 98%.

How have you funded the meritocracy?

Donations from local churches and community partners.

NSA UPDATES

- The I.G.N.I.T.E. Advisory Board will be meeting in October
- The playbook is in draft stages now and is hoped to be finalized in November
- Bonneville County, ID launched on September 20, 2023
- Our next site: Chautauqua County, NY will be launching on October 17, 2023
- For questions, please email mbeal@sheriffs.org or cmcnally@sheriffs.org

FEEDING THE FIRE: LATEST SITE DEVELOPMENTS



GENESEE COUNTY, MI

GCSO has started “I.G.N.I.T.E. University,” which rewards those top achievers with more dayroom time, two-piece uniforms, and the ability to continue their learning more than just the two one-hour sessions the rest of I.G.N.I.T.E. enrollees get.



SANDUSKY COUNTY, OH

SCSO has offered in-person education taught by a variety of dedicated volunteers on subjects such as Career Readiness, Financial Literacy, Parenting, and Mental/Behavioral Health, just to name a few! We have held two graduations to date. Next steps: We are looking forward to expanding our resources to offer online education via a correctional platform coming soon!



MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

In addition to the broad array of programs currently being offered, MCSO will be launching a recording studio for residents in custody, to provide a constructive outlet to express their inner thoughts and emotions in an effective, prosocial way, while educating them with a foundational business understanding for future monetary possibilities.



PENNINGTON COUNTY, SD

PCSO has hired Jessica A Frank as the I.G.N.I.T.E. Coordinator. Their team is working diligently to establish their foundation and assessment process to successfully kick-start I.G.N.I.T.E..



FEEDING THE FIRE: LATEST SITE DEVELOPMENTS



BONNEVILLE COUNTY, ID

Bonneville County launched on September 20, 2023, as our ninth I.G.N.I.T.E. site!



HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN

HCSO announced a new 'HOPE Hub' in partnership with EMERGE Minnesota to empower formerly incarcerated individuals. Program attendees are given training, stipends, tuition and other resources they need to find work in construction, transportation, manufacturing and more.



ROANOKE CITY, VA

RCSO has implemented Re-Entry and Parenting workbooks available for all residents, Keys to Freedom, which is an 8-week faith based course, and the CHARLII Program offering education free HIV & HCV testing as well as risk reduction education. Sheriff Hash is pleased to share a successful GED graduation for one of our female residents. We have partnered with Roanoke College to offer the Inside-Out Program, this course will focus on "Stigma in Society." Detention Center "insiders" and Roanoke College "outsiders" will participate in this class together each week at the Detention Center.



COLLIN COUNTY, TX

CCSO I.G.N.I.T.E. continues to work with community partners to bring in hands-on skills to help inspire individuals. The individuals feel the I.G.N.I.T.E. program has brought about a cultural change in the facility. It is not just a time to get out of the pod, but an opportunity to prepare for their release. The individuals continue to look forward to the new programs that will help set a better pathway for their future.



FIRESIDE CHAT: PARTNER COLLABORATIONS AND UPDATES

SOLUTIONS OF NORTH TEXAS

Scott Wisenbaker is a speaker, author, and founding executive director of Solutions of North Texas (SONTX). Clean and sober since 1995, Scott has worked in the addiction field since 1997. In 2006, he saw the need for a unique approach to fighting addiction on a community level. He then founded Solutions of North Texas, a robust re-entry program to reintegrate men and women

recovering from addiction back into the community. SONTX is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), licensed as a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center by the State of Texas, and partnered with I.G.N.I.T.E. to provide nationwide addiction and reintegration programming. As of 2023, SONTX has provided direction and/or directly worked with over 20,000 individuals.



Click here to read his story:
[The Light and the Hope](#)

NACO

The National Association of Counties is honored to be a member of the I.G.N.I.T.E. Advisory Board and are excited to partner with I.G.N.I.T.E. on this initiative. At a time when counties across the country are facing workforce shortages, I.G.N.I.T.E. provides an opportunity for justice-involved individuals to receive the training and education needed to fill these existing gaps and bring the county workforce back to full strength. It also fosters a sense of community that is vital to creating a safe space within local jails and places an emphasis on respecting the residents of these institutions, leading to better outcomes for these individuals post-incarceration.

EDOVO

Edovo is a mission driven organization available on nearly any tablet or computer within Jails and Prisons across the Nation. Edovo is excited to announce a partnership with I.G.N.I.T.E.

Edovo has provided 30 million hours of digital programming to over 560,000 incarcerated individuals at no cost to the Learner.

Edovo's comprehensive platform is a self-driven learning application with thousands of hours of content from hundreds of providers in areas like education, vocational training, treatment, health, spirituality, substance misuse and more. This partnership is an exciting move toward supporting and providing programmatic tools that align with I.G.N.I.T.E. standards, and an easy first step to start the I.G.N.I.T.E. journey at your facility.

CUNA

The Credit Union National Association (CUNA) is excited to collaborate with the I.G.N.I.T.E. to expand to more counties across the country. As a national partner, we look forward to collaborating with sheriffs and their staff to connect them with credit unions in their local areas to provide financial literacy

education as part of the program. The credit union philosophy is "people helping people" and creating financial well-being for all Americans regardless of their background. Please reach out to Jessica Hrubes, VP/Strategic Credit Union Relations at jhrubes@cuna.coop to start today.



SUSTAINING THE FLAME: HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR SPONSORS

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

It is through partnerships that we are able to make a meaningful impact and continue our journey towards making jails safer and reducing recidivism.



A word from Stand Together Trust:

Stand Together Trust is part of the Stand Together Philanthropic community, whose mission is to create a society where every individual can live a life of meaning and succeed by benefiting others.

To accomplish that vision, Stand Together Trust invests in partners like I.G.N.I.T.E. who have passion and personal knowledge in their subject area, and who share our vision of a society based on equal rights, mutual benefit, openness, and self-actualization.

NEWS ARTICLES

Sheriff Announces New Inmate College Program at I.G.N.I.T.E. Graduation...[read more](#)

Sandusky County Holds First I.G.N.I.T.E. graduation...[read more](#)

Jail reform effort gives inmates skills and county budgets a break...[read more](#)

'It'll Give Us Hope': Collin County Jail Is First in Texas to Launch I.G.N.I.T.E. Educational Program for Inmates...[read more](#)

'I.G.N.I.T.E.'ing an educational fire in U.S. jails...[read more](#)

New 'HOPE Hub' aims to empower formerly incarcerated Minnesotans...[read more](#)

PARTNER AND SPONSOR LINKS

- [Verizon Frontline](#)
- [Aramark](#)
- [Stand Together Trust](#)
- [Credit Union National Association](#)
- [Colour Bank](#)
- [Solutions of North Texas](#)
- [National Association of Counties](#)
- [Edovo](#)





Sandusky County's first graduation



Collin County Launch



Pennington County Launch



Sandusky County's first graduation

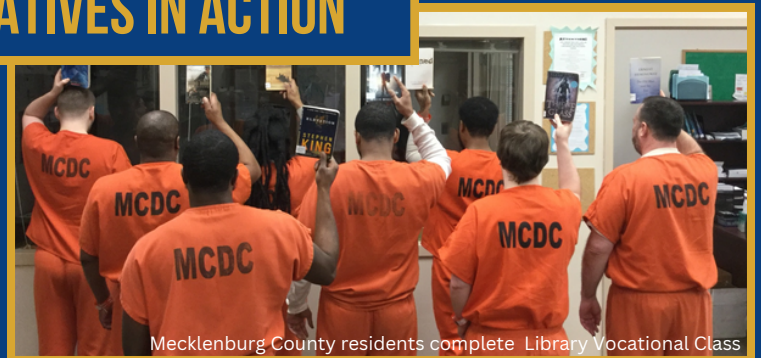


Collin County Launch

SETTING THE NATION ABLAZE: I.G.N.I.T.E. INITIATIVES IN ACTION



Hennepin County Resource Fair



Mecklenburg County residents complete Library Vocational Class



Roanoke City's residents complete OSHA 10 program



Mecklenburg County Graduation



Genesee County 20th Graduation

