

IGNITE[®] INSIGHT



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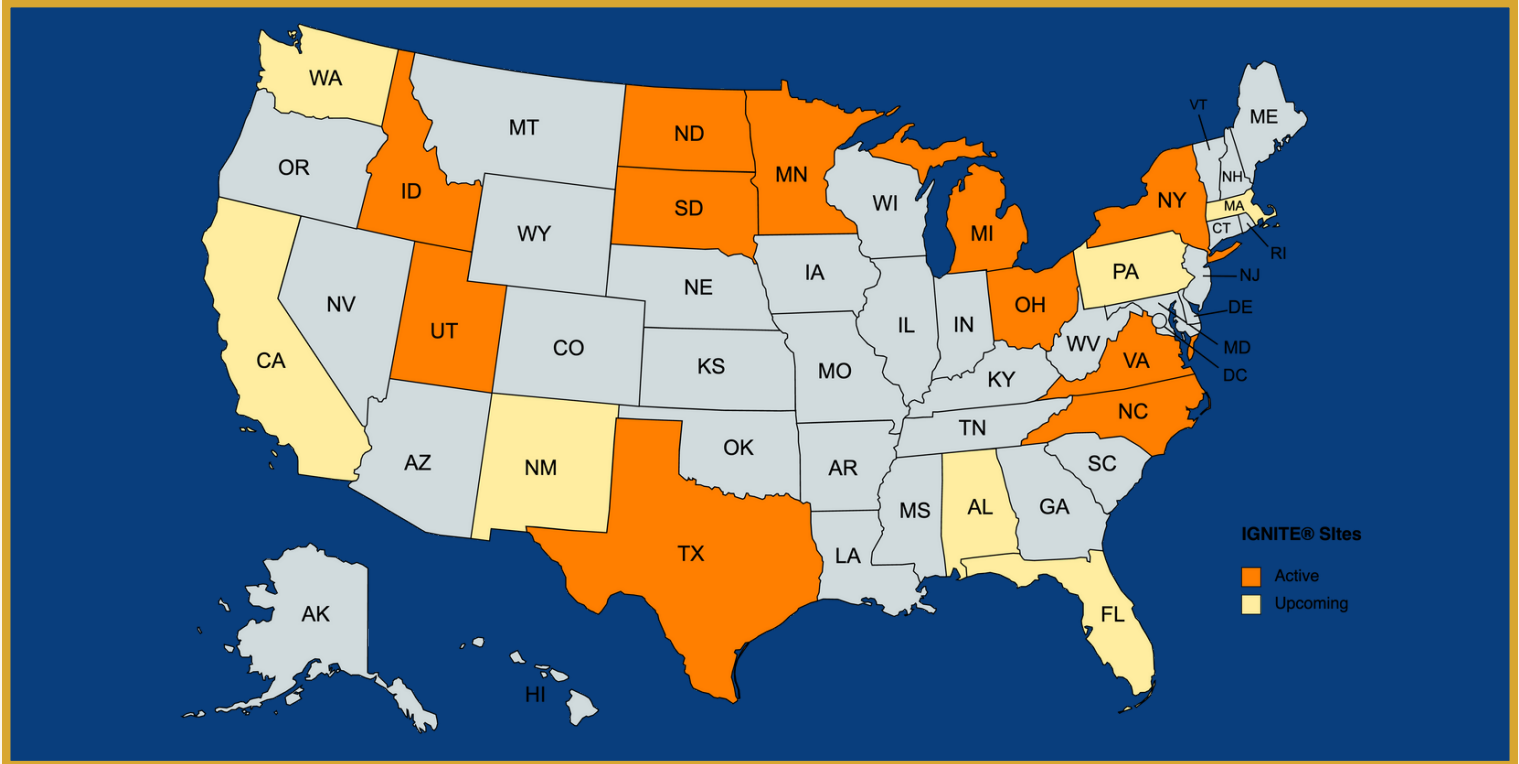
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IGNITING A NEW BEGINNING: MEET OUR SITES



GENESEE COUNTY, MI

SHERIFF CHRISTOPHER R. 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

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY

SHERIFF JAMES QUATTRONE
LAUNCHED OCTOBER 2023

ULSTER COUNTY, NY

SHERIFF JUAN FIGUEROA
LAUNCHED DECEMBER 2023

IRON COUNTY, UT

SHERIFF KEN CARPENTER
LAUNCHED JANUARY 2024



FANNING THE FLAMES OF LEADERSHIP: A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF SAM HULSE: BONNEVILLE COUNTY, ID



In the dynamic landscape of law enforcement, Sheriff Sam Hulse of Bonneville County, ID, stands out as a visionary leader committed to reshaping the role of correctional facilities. Elected sheriff in 2020, Sheriff Hulse assumed office in January 2021 and embarked on a mission to bring about innovative changes in the criminal justice system.

Bonneville County has one of the largest jails in Idaho, currently housing 453 incarcerated individuals, with ongoing expansion plans to accommodate up to 643. Sheriff Hulse, with his 24 years of service to Bonneville County and 31 years in law enforcement, has been at the forefront of seeking progressive approaches to transform the jail's image from a place of punishment to one of rehabilitation and positive change.

The catalyst for this transformative journey came in 2021 when Sheriff

Hulse encountered IGNITE® at the National Sheriffs' Association Annual Conference. A presentation by Sheriff Christopher R. Swanson left an indelible mark on Sheriff Hulse, inspiring him to envision a jail system that focuses on rehabilitation rather than punitive measures. Sheriff Swanson's success and willingness to share insights resonated deeply with Hulse, who saw an opportunity to implement similar positive changes in Bonneville County.

"I loved the idea of changing the face of the jail from punishment to rehabilitation and change. This is in keeping with the potential I see in our jail in Bonneville County," remarked Sheriff Hulse, highlighting the pivotal shift in perspective that IGNITE® brought to the forefront.

What sets IGNITE® apart, according to Sheriff Hulse, is the tangible impact it has on correctional facilities. Embraced enthusiastically by Sheriff Hulse's staff, IGNITE® has garnered positive feedback from incarcerated individuals, reinforcing its efficacy in fostering meaningful change within the correctional system.

An unexpected and welcome outcome of IGNITE® has been the overwhelming support from the local community. Volunteers have stepped forward, offering their time and resources to contribute to IGNITE® initiatives within the jail. From teaching to donating food, the community's involvement underscores IGNITE®'s positive impact and its potential to bridge the

gap between correctional facilities and the community.

Despite the success, Sheriff Hulse acknowledges the challenges in fully integrating IGNITE® into the system. Formalizing coordination with the courts and local community remains a priority, presenting an obstacle that the sheriff's office is actively addressing.

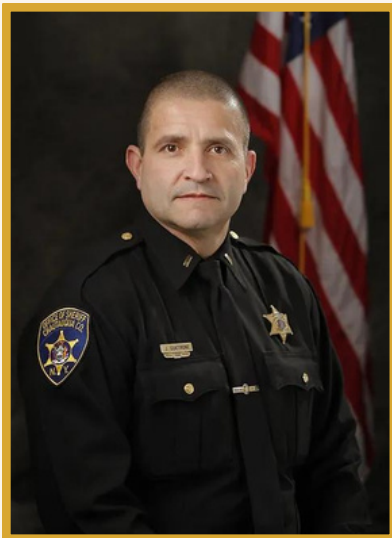
Sheriff Hulse's extensive background, spanning roles such as Patrol, Narcotics, Special Operations, and Emergency Medical Technician, uniquely positions him to lead transformative change. Beyond the Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Hulse actively participates in various local and state boards, showcasing his commitment to advancing innovative law enforcement and criminal justice approaches.

In June of 2023, Sheriff Hulse achieved another milestone by being elected to the Board of Directors of the National Sheriffs' Association. This national recognition underscores his dedication to pushing the boundaries of traditional law enforcement practices.

As Sheriff Hulse continues to spearhead the IGNITE® initiative, the community eagerly anticipates the positive impact it will bring to both incarcerated individuals and the broader criminal justice system in Bonneville County. With a steadfast commitment to transformative change, Sheriff Hulse is paving the way for a new era in the county's approach to correctional facilities.

FANNING THE FLAMES OF LEADERSHIP: A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF JAMES QUATTRONE: CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY



Sheriff James Quattrone, with an impressive 35-year career in law enforcement, has been at the helm of Chautauqua County for the past five years. Driven by a fervent dedication to rehabilitation and the reduction of recidivism, Sheriff Quattrone is spearheading transformative change in Chautauqua County through the IGNITE® initiative.

In Chautauqua County, the jail, overseen by Sheriff Quattrone, has a maximum capacity of 301 incarcerated individuals. Despite daily averages lingering around 165, Sheriff Quattrone is acutely aware of the pressing need for innovative solutions to grapple with the intricate challenges posed by the criminal justice system.

The ignition of Sheriff Quattrone's interest in IGNITE® occurred through repeated interactions with

Sheriff Swanson and committed staff members of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA). Drawing inspiration from IGNITE®'s success stories, Sheriff Quattrone envisioned a program seamlessly aligned with his commitment to providing incarcerated individuals with the necessary tools for successful reintegration into society.

"IGNITE® truly aids in our goals to reduce recidivism. It equips incarcerated individuals with the tools needed to return to their community in a better state than when they entered our facility," affirms Sheriff Quattrone. The IGNITE® initiative, centering on pre-release resources and rehabilitation, aligns with Chautauqua County's commitment to breaking the cycle of incarceration.

In 2010, Chautauqua County laid the foundation for rehabilitation by establishing a non-profit program dedicated to assisting individuals returning from jail, prison, and rehab with skills to prevent relapses into criminal behavior. The introduction of IGNITE® acts as a complementary force, enhancing resources available to incarcerated individuals before their release.

The initiation of IGNITE® in Chautauqua County has been met with enthusiasm from incarcerated individuals and dedicated staff members. Sheriff Quattrone acknowledges the support and excitement emanating from the community, recognizing IGNITE® as

a potential crime reduction tool. The prospect of instigating positive change in the lives of incarcerated individuals resonates deeply with the community, emphasizing the transformative potential of the IGNITE® initiative.

Despite the evident enthusiasm, Chautauqua County faces its share of challenges in implementing IGNITE®. Sheriff Quattrone points to space constraints as the primary obstacle, hindering the ability to conduct various essential educational classes for IGNITE®'s success. Nevertheless, Sheriff Quattrone remains optimistic about the future of IGNITE® in Chautauqua County.

As Chautauqua County embarks on this journey with IGNITE®, Sheriff Quattrone's leadership promises a future where rehabilitation takes center stage, fostering hope and transformation for incarcerated individuals and the broader community. The IGNITE® initiative becomes a beacon of change, guiding Chautauqua County towards a more compassionate and effective approach to criminal justice.

FANNING THE FLAMES OF LEADERSHIP: A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF JUAN FIGUEROA: ULSTER COUNTY, NY



Sheriff Juan Figueroa, a seasoned professional who has an impressive thirty-five-year tenure in law enforcement, is deeply committed to serving Ulster County. Currently in his second term and sixth year as Sheriff, Figueroa oversees a 457-bed jail.

The sheriff's extensive career reflects a profound commitment to community and country. After joining the US Marine Corps straight out of high school, he served both active duty and 18 years in the Marine Corps Reserve, reaching the rank of Chief Warrant Officer. Later, as a trooper with the New York State Police, he spent 25 years in various leadership roles, specializing in long-term investigations related to money laundering, narcotics, drug cartels, and organized crime. His impactful career resulted in significant seizures

of cash and drugs, totaling over \$60 million and 400+ kilos. With a veteran's perspective and corporate experience, Sheriff Figueroa brings a comprehensive approach to law enforcement, emphasizing fairness, compassion, and the highest standards of professionalism in addressing critical issues like the opioid epidemic. His enduring sense of duty and commitment to the community define his brand of leadership.

Sheriff Figueroa's journey with the IGNITE® initiative began at the National Sheriffs' Association Conference in Kansas City in 2022, leaving a lasting impression that prompted Ulster County to join this groundbreaking initiative. The National Sheriffs' Association's rollout of IGNITE® in Ulster County has been a significant milestone, with Sheriff Figueroa expressing gratitude for the impactful presence, motivation, and experience brought to the table.

One key highlight for Sheriff Figueroa has been witnessing the positive influence of IGNITE® on the rank and file within his office. IGNITE®'s implementation has brought a sense of purpose and direction, fostering a more motivated and engaged law enforcement community in Ulster County.

However, as with any transformative initiative, challenges arise. The primary hurdle for Sheriff Figueroa and his team is securing buy-in from

correction officers. Acknowledging this as the biggest challenge, Sheriff Figueroa remains focused on addressing concerns and ensuring that all law enforcement community members understand the value and benefits that IGNITE® brings to Ulster County.

Sheriff Figueroa encapsulates the Sheriff's vision for IGNITE®, stating, "Together, with engagement from our community partners, our corrections division will give incarcerated individuals the resources and opportunity for successful rehabilitation so they can reintegrate into society and thrive." This highlights the collaborative effort involving community partners to provide resources and opportunities for rehabilitating incarcerated individuals successfully. It underscores the commitment to ensuring those in custody have the necessary tools to reintegrate into society and thrive post-release.

As Ulster County moves forward with its commitment to IGNITE®, Sheriff Juan Figueroa remains at the forefront, navigating challenges, fostering engagement, and leading the way toward a more progressive and effective law enforcement environment.

BURNING BRIGHT: RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF OUR STAFF

COLLIN COUNTY, TX: OFFICER A. SATTAR



In the realm of transformative initiatives within the Programs Department of the Collin County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Jim Skinner recognized Officer A. Sattar as a dedicated detention officer playing a pivotal role in IGNITE®. Her journey with IGNITE® commenced during her tenure in the Programs Department, where her steadfast commitment bore witness to its profound impact on individuals within the correctional facility.

Central to IGNITE®, Officer Sattar assumed a crucial role, primarily focusing on crafting class rosters and meticulously tracking attendance for the classes offered. Yet, her responsibilities extended beyond administrative tasks; she actively contributed to the seamless functioning of IGNITE®, ensuring its efficacy in fostering positive change.

The highlight of Officer Sattar's involvement was preparing for and attending the inaugural IGNITE® graduation. Amidst this milestone event, participants seized the opportunity to articulate their experiences. Officer Sattar vividly recalled a poignant speech delivered by one individual, expressing profound gratitude for the programs. The speaker conveyed a sense of being equipped for success upon release and finding hope during an otherwise challenging period.

Confronting challenges head-on, Officer Sattar acknowledged the initial hurdle of requesting student participation. Many individuals sought clarification regarding the nature and benefits of IGNITE®. However, a transformative shift occurred during the post-graduation ceremony, where photo-sharing within the pods led to a positive ripple effect. Increased attendance and participation reflected a noteworthy change in the perception of incarcerated individuals.

Officer A. Sattar's unwavering dedication to IGNITE® is a testament to its transformative prowess within the correctional facility. As IGNITE® continues to carve paths in rehabilitation and empowerment, Officer Sattar and her colleagues remain resolute in their commitment to catalyzing positive change and providing a trajectory to success for those navigating redemption within the intricate folds of the criminal justice system.

KINDLING THE FLAME: STUDENT SUCCESS UNVEILED

SANDUSKY COUNTY, OH: TIM NORRIS

In Sandusky County, Ohio, IGNITE®, led by Sheriff Chris Hilton, is leaving a lasting impact on students' lives, and Tim Norris is a testament to the positive transformations within the community. Norris's journey is one of resilience, self-discovery, and the meaningful connections fostered through IGNITE®.

Norris has actively participated in IGNITE®, showcasing near-perfect attendance in his unit's classes. Norris consistent engagement speaks volumes about his dedication to education and personal development.

Norris's influence extends beyond academic achievements. Norris has emerged as a positive force within the IGNITE® community, encouraging and supporting his fellow students. Norris's presence has contributed to a collaborative learning environment where mutual growth is encouraged and celebrated.

Norris's journey is marked by a significant achievement: recognizing when to seek help. This self-awareness has played a pivotal role in his personal growth and has inspired others within the IGNITE® community to embrace vulnerability as a strength. Norris's courage in seeking assistance has created a supportive atmosphere.

For Norris, personal growth involves shedding past burdens and moving forward purposefully. Actively participating in IGNITE®, he navigates challenges and discovers untapped potential within himself. Norris's commitment to becoming his best version is an ongoing process marked by resilience and determination.



Norris's aspirations for the future are grounded in improving relationships with his children and giving back to the community. Recognizing the significance of family bonds in personal development, he aims to contribute to a more supportive community by helping others.

Norris's philosophy revolves around taking life seriously and embracing continuous growth. He believes in the power of listening, learning, and extending a helping hand to others. Norris's gratitude for the opportunity to participate in IGNITE® reflects the positive influence of such initiatives in fostering an environment where individuals like him can thrive.

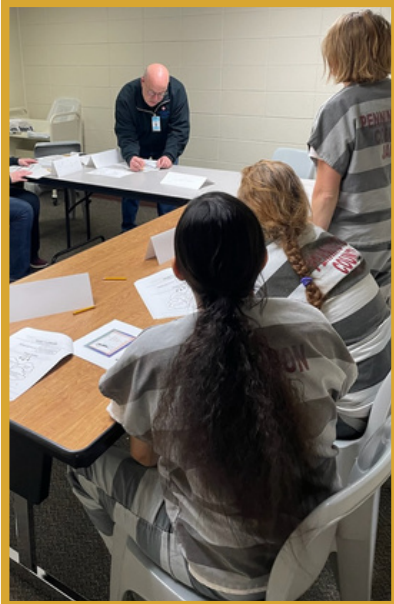
Norris's story exemplifies the transformative potential of IGNITE® and its positive impact on individuals and communities in Sandusky County, Ohio. Through Norris's journey, IGNITE® continues to catalyze growth, resilience, and community development.

"We can grow every day. There is nothing wrong with listening, learning, and helping others."
 Tim Norris, IGNITE® Student



BURNING BRIGHTER TOGETHER: STORIES OF CLASS TRIUMPHS

PENNINGTON COUNTY, SD: ACTIVE RELATIONSHIPS



After launching in May 2023, Pennington County, under leadership of Sheriff Brian Mueller, has created an expansive array of courses tailored for its incarcerated population, marking a significant step in providing opportunities for personal growth and rehabilitation. Among the standout offerings is the "Active Relationships" class, skillfully led by instructors Miriam Thielen and Marty Krause. This seven-session course zeroes in on enhancing communication and cultivating healthier relationships across various spheres, including romantic, familial, roommates, and co-workers.

The curriculum is designed to equip participants with a versatile skillset, enabling them to navigate employment successfully, fortify relationships, and adeptly tackle

challenges in a constructive manner. Participants delve into critical concepts such as communication styles, understanding the impact of trauma on decision-making, unraveling the complexities of money and its influence on relationships, decoding anger, a 10-step conflict resolution tool, exploring the biology of love in romantic relationships, and effective goal-setting.

Within the safe and supportive environment of the class, participants have demonstrated remarkable honesty, openness, and vulnerability. Many have taken accountability for past actions, acknowledging the repercussions on relationships, jobs, and other

"Even though this program was voluntary for incarcerated individuals, many of them from day one expressed a desire to complete all 7 classes. They showed up every day, took accountability and ownership for previous mistakes, and did the work."

Miriam Thielen, Instructor

aspects of life. Armed with newfound tools acquired during the course, participants reported improved effectiveness in communication and a more constructive approach to handling differences.

Addressing prevalent issues such as anger management challenges and

relationship struggles, the curriculum empowers participants to take ownership of their past behavior while instilling the confidence and tools needed for a healthier future. Long-term jail inmates have successfully completed the entire course, while those released after taking a few classes have expressed motivation to continue the course in community settings.

Crafted by a marriage and family therapist, the curriculum serves as a unique avenue for individuals who might not otherwise engage in therapy. It encourages a reframing of thinking, behaviors, and belief systems, offering participants greater control over their lives and choices in an informal setting. Thielen and Krause deliver the content in a relatable, down-to-earth fashion that resonates with participants.

The class extends beyond theoretical knowledge, providing practical life skills aimed at fortifying relationships, sustaining employment, and laying the foundation for future success in both personal and professional realms. By guiding participants to reflect on past life choices and their consequences, the course fosters a sense of self-exploration, leaving individuals inspired to pursue their goals with pride and a newfound commitment to personal growth.

[Click Here to Read How to Set Up this Class: Active Relationships](#)

FUELING SUCCESS: THE POWER OF MERITOCRACY

GENESEE COUNTY, MI



At the core of IGNITE is meritocracy. Meritocracy is a system in which individuals' success, advancement and reward are based on their demonstrated abilities, achievements, and qualifications rather than factors such as social class, wealth, or privilege. As Sheriff Christopher R. Swanson said, "Meritocracy is the rocket fuel for IGNITE®."

In Genesee County, as an incentive for participation, all IGNITE® students gain access to tablets, providing a gateway to entertainment and education. These tablets allow participants to enjoy movies, music, games, and the Edovo educational application. Students also receive a commissary credit as a reward for completing courses, adding a tangible acknowledgment of their efforts.

A highlight of the IGNITE® are the bi-monthly graduation ceremonies

providing a platform for graduates to celebrate their achievements. Each graduate is allowed to invite one family member, fostering connections and support crucial to their journey toward rehabilitation.

Other rewards include distinctive two-piece jumpsuits emblazoned with "IGNITE®" that set graduates apart from other incarcerated individuals, symbolizing their commitment to personal development. This visual distinction is a testament to their dedication and accomplishments within the program.

Notably, Genesee County has designated a floor exclusively for high-achieving students, aptly named "IGNITE® University." Students housed in IGNITE® University benefit from an extra hour of dayroom and enhanced access to Mt. Morris Consolidated School Chromebooks and individual tablets. This dedicated space represents a pinnacle achievement within the IGNITE®, with students striving to earn their place through exemplary coursework and attendance.

The tablets, operating on the Viapath system, emerge as the linchpin of the meritocracy system. Incarcerated individuals purchase tablet content, fostering a sense of responsibility and ownership. The success of this initiative is evident in the positive impact it has on the educational experience within the correctional facility. Crucially, the meritocracy system is self-sustaining. The sales

of movies, music, and games yield a 20% commission to the Sheriff's Office. This commission is then reinvested into the program, funding commissary rewards for incarcerated individuals as they complete courses. The cyclical nature of this system ensures ongoing motivation and engagement among participants.

Genesee County Sheriff's Office's IGNITE®, with its innovative meritocracy system, not only focuses on rehabilitation but also provides tangible incentives for incarcerated individuals to participate actively in their transformation. As IGNITE continues to evolve, it stands as a beacon of progressive approaches to incarceration, fostering an environment where personal growth is recognized and rewarded.



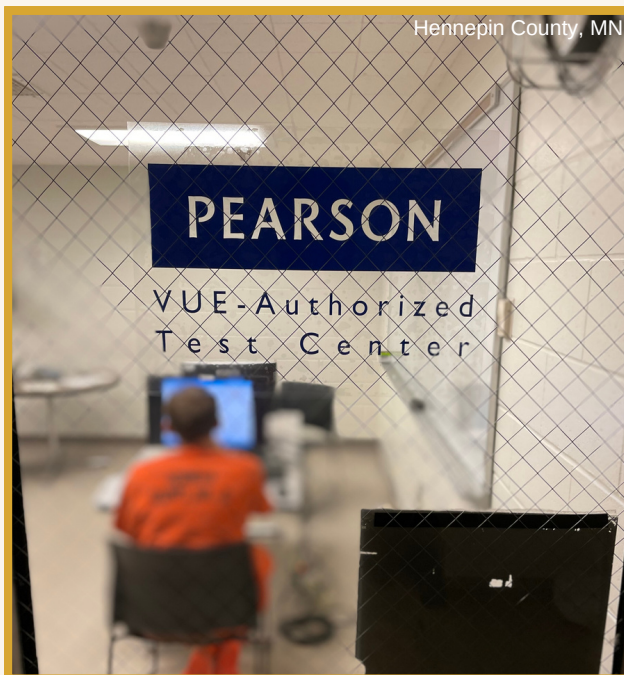
FEEDING THE FIRE: LATEST SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Hennepin County, MN

Hennepin County has hired its own in-house adult education instructor. She is a licensed teacher who is responsible for the GED programming. They are continually adding more options and courses offered to the residents in their custody. The next item desired is Virtual Reality programming that may offer actual certifications.



Hennepin County, MN



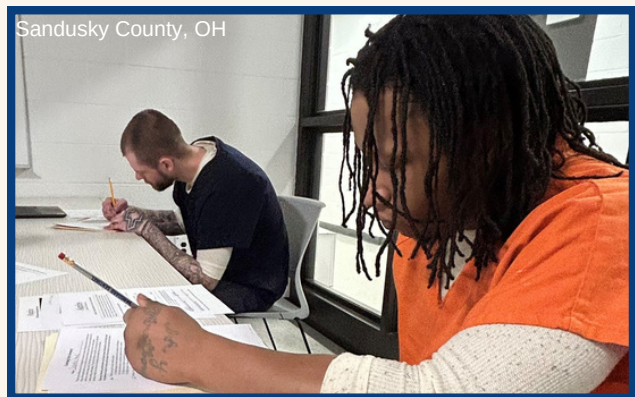
Hennepin County, MN

Pennington County, SD

Pennington County has introduced ServSafe testing with a certified proctor, increased in-person GED classes, implemented both men's and women's yoga, and had its first group of individuals complete a seven-session Active Relationships. They currently offer 24 different in-person programs. During November, 342 incarcerated individuals attended in-person programming. Some individuals attended one class, while others participated in various classes each week.

Sandusky County, OH

Sandusky County Jail has enrolled three students into the new GED Program, and one student is working on his high school diploma. Three individuals have followed through with job placement after taking career coaching classes. They will add a Fatherhood 24/7 class and a vision board project class for the new year. The boards will help develop goals and values for life outside incarceration and will be a part of reentry planning.



Sandusky County, OH

FEEDING THE FIRE: LATEST SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County, ID

Bonneville County graduated their first two incarcerated individuals from Solutions of North Texas on January 2nd. They also have two incarcerated individuals testing to get GEDs. The local health department has been great to work with and offers classes on parenting, smoking cessation, STD awareness, and mental health first aid. Frontier Credit Union has been bringing in some financial literacy classes about once a month.



Genesee County, MI

In Genesee County, a new class launched in collaboration with Avancez, introducing Manufacturing 101 to the curriculum. The course covers orientation principles, problem-solving, interpersonal communication, and more. GCSO is also working with the Flint Institute of Music to bring music therapy and music lessons. In the early stages, they explore a course or forum named "Both Sides Equal Us," akin to the Frederick Douglass Project. This involves pairing law enforcement with incarcerated individuals to challenge preconceptions from both sides. GCSO eagerly looks forward to presenting this fresh material to the students.

Ulster County, NY



Ulster County, NY

In Ulster County, NY, Edovo was launched in all housing units. Their GED program is back after winter break, holding virtual classes on Mondays and Tuesdays and in-person instruction on Fridays. One individual received his GED through Kingston High School, and another is close to taking the test. UCSO is working with a credit union to set-up financial literacy classes through virtual learning. All housing units, except classification, have program rooms with TVs equipped for virtual instruction.

FEEDING THE FIRE: LATEST SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Mecklenburg County, NC

Mecklenburg County has continued to evolve its programming under RIGNITE®. MCSO will be going facility-wide with its programming beginning in the first quarter of 2024. Programming, including education and peer support meetings, has been gradually introduced to all general housing pods in January 2024. MCSO will launch its NCCER vocational grant program. One hundred residents will be provided training to be nationally certified in NCCER Core Construction skills and provided post-release employment support and case management. This grant is in partnership with Erika's Closet and FHI360.



Roanoke City, VA



Mecklenburg County, NC

Roanoke City, VA

Roanoke City Sheriff's Office celebrated the completion of its Inside-Out Program, uniting Roanoke College students with Detention Center residents for transformative learning about Stigma in Society. In the Reentry Pod, four residents completed Mental Health First Aid training. The Alpha Program supported five graduates in overcoming addiction. A new Therapeutic Pod supports residents with behavioral and mental health challenges. The Sheriff's Office and local faith leaders launched a Chaplaincy Program, introducing religious studies classes. Alongside, self-improvement workbooks cover resume building and conflict management, empowering residents for successful community reintegration.

FEEDING THE FIRE: LATEST SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Cass County, ND

In Cass County, ND, there is an ongoing effort to address overcapacity issues daily. Despite these challenges, the existing programs continue to operate, and the team has successfully conducted a GED graduation. Construction is underway for new housing, incorporating two additional classrooms equipped with technology to expand student educational programming. The construction project is expected to be completed in mid-2025.



Collin County, TX

The Collin County Sheriff's Office continues to receive increased support from the community and organizations interested in contributing. Collaborative efforts include working with the community college to secure a grant for program funding and facilitating the provision of extra tablets for residents. The Sheriff's Office is also partnering with a sizable organization to train residents to work on traffic lights to aid in traffic flow.



Chautauqua County, NY

The Chautauqua County Sheriff's Office proudly announces the appointment of Corrections Officer John Clark to oversee IGNITE® at the Chautauqua County Jail. Officer Clark has initiated meetings with diverse individuals and groups to ensure the success of IGNITE®. The Sheriff's Office is pleased to have a dedicated partner in the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), collaborating to implement various Career and Technical Education programs within the jail. Despite the gradual progress in full implementation, the initiative has garnered substantial support from various community organizations, individuals, and the dedicated correctional staff.



FIRESIDE CHAT: PARTNER COLLABORATIONS AND UPDATES

EDOVO

Edovo is a mission-driven organization available on nearly any tablet or computer within Jails and Prisons nationwide. Edovo is excited to announce a partnership with IGNITE®

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 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 IGNITE® standards and an easy first step to start the IGNITE® journey at your facility.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

The National Association of Counties is honored to be a member of the IGNITE® Advisory Board and is excited to partner with IGNITE® on this initiative. At a time when counties across the country are facing workforce shortages, IGNITE® 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.

IGNITE® also fosters a sense of community vital to creating a safe space within local jails. It emphasizes respecting the residents of these institutions, leading to better outcomes for these individuals' post-incarceration.

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 IGNITE® 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: How is this Possible](#)

AMERICA'S CREDIT UNIONS

America's Credit Unions is excited to collaborate with IGNITE® to expand to more counties nationwide. 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 IGNITE®. The credit union philosophy is "people helping people" and creating financial well-being for all Americans regardless of their background. Please contact Jessica Hrubes, VP/Strategic Credit Union Relations, at jhrubes@americascreditunions.org to start today.



SUSTAINING THE FLAME: HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR SPONSORS

Thank You to Our Sponsors

It is through partnerships that we can make a meaningful impact and continue our journey toward making jails safer and reducing recidivism.



NEWS ARTICLES

- “Kyle Kuzma Visits Genesee County Jail”... [read more](#)
- “Chautauqua County Jail Becoming 1st in NYS to Implement IGNITE Education, Rehab Program”... [read more](#)
- “Country music star Jelly Roll to privately perform for incarcerated individuals, participate in IGNITE graduation at Genesee County Jail”... [read more](#)
- “Ulster Sheriff to ‘IGNITE’ incarcerated individuals’ minds”... [read more](#)
- “New Mexico sheriff bringing education program to Eddy County jail”... [read more](#)
- “New soup shack in eastern Idaho helps give back by raising funds for different causes monthly”... [read more](#)

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THE DETROIT NEWS

DECEMBER 14, 2023

CURRY: GENESEE COUNTY JAIL PROGRAM IMPROVES LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION



ILONA CURRY

Looking back on my conviction for felony theft, the thing that scared me most wasn't my arrest, my court appearances or even my incarceration. Those were horrifying, but what I feared the most was that upon my release, I would have to tell prospective employers I was a convicted felon.

Thanks to a new program by Genesee County Sheriff Christopher Swanson and the National Sheriffs' Association, I was able to overcome my record and get a job within a week of my release. I've also gained skills that have changed my life forever.

Imagine having a sign around your neck that told job interviewers about the worst thing you've ever done. That's exactly what I faced when I was released after serving my six-month sentence.

Tragically, almost every one of the nearly 6.9 million people on probation

or parole in the U.S. are eventually released into the community, with two-thirds being rearrested within three years of their release.

That's where Sheriff Swanson's IGNITE program comes in. IGNITE stands for Inmate Growth Naturally and Intentionally Through Education. In my case, it turned my entire life around.

The program allowed me to obtain a ServSafe Manager certification, which helped me get another job with better pay, more responsibilities, and 20 minutes closer to my home.

ServSafe is a program designed to provide restaurant owners a way to ensure that their kitchen staffs are using the most up-to-date and effective food safety practices. The certification I obtained while serving time at the Genesee County jail verifies that I have sufficient food safety knowledge to protect the public from foodborne illness.

Most states, including Michigan, require that a restaurant employ at least one person with the ServSafe Protection Manager Certification. The program is fully accredited by the American National Accreditation Board Conference for Food Protection and is a real game-changer for those who want to work in the restaurant field.

Swanson's IGNITE program is a groundbreaking initiative that uses jail as a chance to improve people's lives through education.

It taught me how to cook in a full-scale industrial kitchen that serves 600 people every day, and I got to learn and work with restaurant equipment I had never even seen before.

In addition to all I was learning in the industrial kitchen, I took online classes two or three days a week for two to six hours each day. The online classes were geared toward teaching me the high standards required for the ServSafe Protection Manager Certification.

Thanks to IGNITE, I went back into the world with the skills to work in a restaurant and to teach the younger employees how to do so safely. It's changed the way I prepare food for my own family, too. It's now a far more balanced menu at our house, and the standards of cleanliness have improved nearly everything I do in the kitchen.