

Presidential Proclamation

National Correctional Officers and Employees Week

May 3-9, 2009

The corrections profession is one of the most challenging professions one can pursue. It is also one of the most noble. Correctional staff help keep our citizens and our communities safe—not simply by securing jails and prisons and the offenders confined there. Correctional officers and employees serve admirably in facilities all across the country as counselors, teachers, chaplains, health care professionals, support staff, custody officers, supervisors, wardens and directors. They are among the most capable, committed, patient and persistent public servants in our nation.

Few truly understand the difficulties and challenges these corrections professionals face daily, often at great personal risk. They are given those who engaged in dangerous and addictive behaviors, along with the responsibility to reform and rehabilitate. They are given society's illiterate and unskilled, and the task to educate. They are given those who lack medical care, or who are in poor health, and must help make them well. They are given the mentally ill, and the responsibility to diagnose, treat and protect.

The men and women entrusted to our custody have many wants—either because they failed to find what they needed, or refused to accept what was offered in their homes, schools, or communities. Offenders need training, guidance, support and, in many cases, they are searching for spiritual direction. Correctional officers and employees are in a position to offer them a better example, and a new path. These staff do so with limited resources, and often with little awareness or acknowledgement from those outside of the field of corrections. Yet, correctional employees continue to rise to the challenge time and time again.

On behalf of the American Correctional Association, I salute all those who currently serve in the corrections profession, those who have served and those who have been injured and lost in pursuit of this most honorable profession. I proclaim the first week of May 2009 as National Correctional Officers and Employees Week and encourage all ACA members, our chapter and affiliate organizations, correctional leaders and the citizens we serve to recognize and give thanks to the many dedicated individuals serving in the corrections profession.



Harold W. Clarke, President
American Correctional Association

