



# WHAT'S WORKING

A Message From DJJ Director Andy Block

Dec. 8, 2014

## Our Norfolk Kids Have

Family involvement and visitation is critically important to the reentry and rehabilitation of our incarcerated youth. CSU 4—Norfolk's "Buddies on the Road" program is allowing families in the Norfolk area an excellent opportunity to participate--one that they might not have otherwise had.

Since the early 1980s CSU 4, with the help of the community, has been providing free transportation to facilities across the Commonwealth to ensure Norfolk families are able to visit their incarcerated children. The program was started by Friends of Norfolk Courts. When the group became inactive, it turned the program over to the CSU where it became known as "Buddies on the Road."

CSU 4 Parole Officer Nadine Whitley is in charge of the program now. Whitley and her colleagues work together to recruit volunteers from all over the area, including churches, schools, and family friends. The volunteers rotate driving the 10-person van to the institutions and back in time for Sunday visitations. Families sign up through their parole officers and are then able to visit with their children during approved visitation. Currently the project has four volunteers who drive to the facilities about once a month: Michael and Mollie Pavlik, Greg Hinshaw and Roger Howell. They use a DJJ van that was donated to them by the agency.

"The 'Buddies' program has been around through the tenures of CSU directors Elmira 'Chris' Boyce, Kevin Moran, Claudette Overton and our current Director Valerie Boykin, and they have all been 100 percent behind us," Whitley says of the support she has received from her supervisors. "Just as important is the incredible support from our community. Without our volunteer drivers, we absolutely could not have a Buddies program; they are the glue that makes this program what it is. Their commitment is extraordinary."

Two of the volunteers, husband and wife Mollie and Mike Pavlik, have been working with the Buddies program for more than four years. "We were looking for a way to give back," Mike says. "We understand the importance of giving money, but we really enjoy the ability to give of our time. We get so much out of our time spent with the families, getting to



Above: Michael and Mollie Pavlik of Norfolk have been volunteering with the "Buddies On The Road" program for more than four years. "We were looking for a way to give back," Mike says. Right: CSU Parole Officer Nadine Whitley administers the program, which has served families in the Norfolk area since the early 1980s.



know them and easing their burden in this small way."

We appreciate the dedication that Nadine, CSU 4, and especially our community volunteers have shown to this program. It is because of programs like this one that our youth are able to continue to strengthen their relationships with their families while under our supervision.