



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONS

At the start of a new year we instinctively reflect on the year that has passed and plan for the year ahead. Generally, 2018 was a good year, ending with the promotion of 156 Correctional Officers. I use this medium to congratulate all officers who have been promoted. I encourage those who are expecting their promotion to continue the hard work.

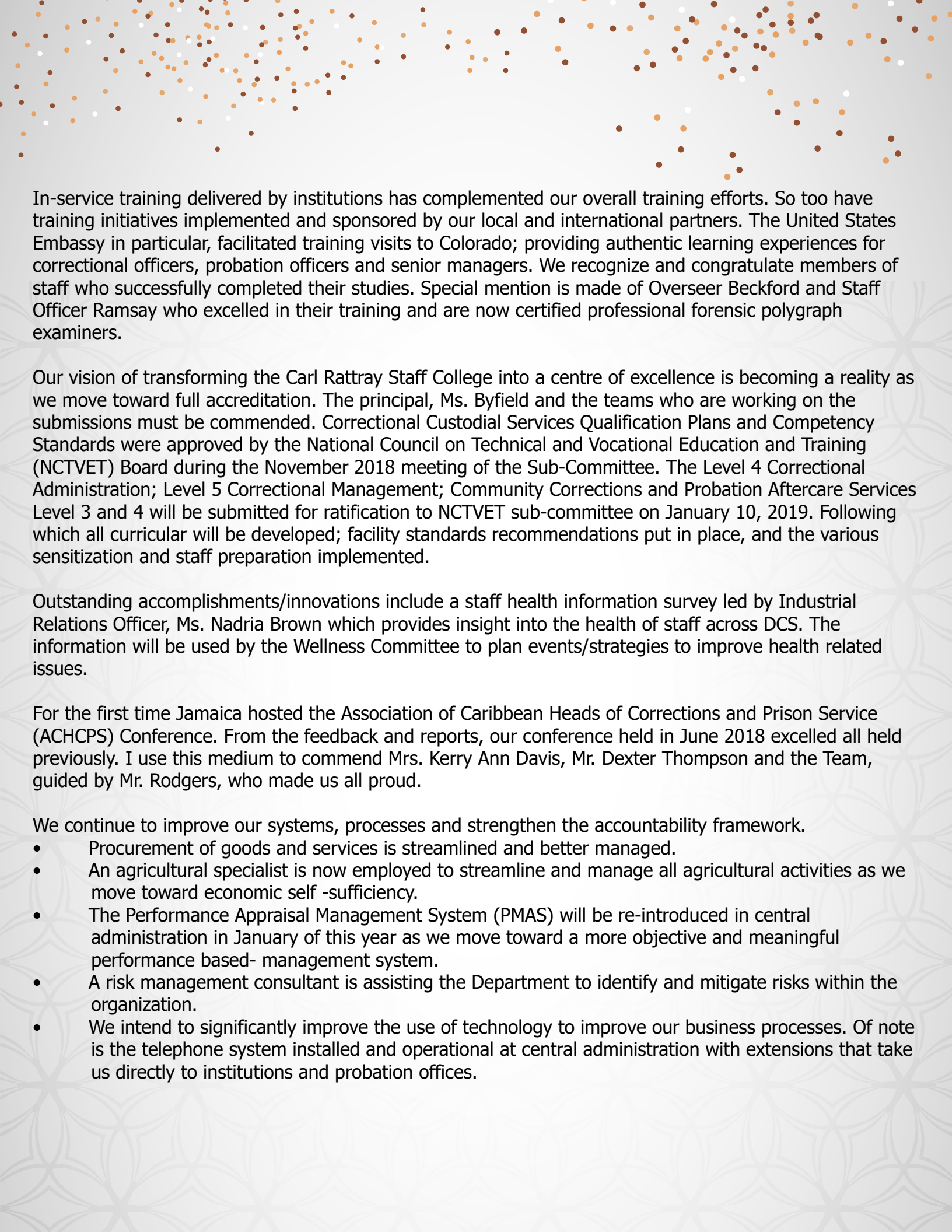
Let me thank the entire staff for their commitment and dedication to duty. We take pride in knowing that we work in a difficult field and contribute to a very important part of national development; that of public safety. We pride ourselves in knowing that we work with persons who we can positively influence to make life changing decisions.

We are fully aware that insufficient numbers of both correctional officers and probation officers have added to the inherent challenges of work. On Monday January 7, 2019, one hundred and fifty persons (150) will begin 12 weeks of training as the 77th Intake of Correctional Officers and twenty - five (25) will begin 8 weeks of training as probation officers. For the first time both sets of persons will be trained together at the start and then separate into their respective disciplines. The common curriculum will ensure that both sets of persons learn the fundamentals of corrections. The 78th Intake of Correctional Officers will also be trained during this year.

Our success in rehabilitation include: three national programmes by the probation service; re-opening of the hostel; 100 inmates electronically tagged from Richmond Farm and Tamarind Farm and are carrying out internal and external projects; expansion of the Skype programme and success in external examinations. The Organization of American States (OAS) continued to strengthen and diversify the programme in juvenile centres. Planning for electronic case management systems for inmates and children in institutions is in the advanced stage. When established, sentence plans will become an integral part of rehabilitation and re-integration processes. Risk assessment, a key factor, is being strengthened with the help of DFID which has sponsored 6 additional staff to conduct risk assessment at Tower Street and St. Catherine Adult Correctional Centres.

All institutions have had at least one major infrastructure project completed in 2018 as we improve the working space for staff and the conditions under which our inmates and children are housed. A comprehensive maintenance plan is being developed to manage the different systems and air conditioning units. This will stem the frequent breaking down and unnecessary emergencies; as we foster a more proactive approach in the operations of our institutions and offices.

Training of staff remains a priority. Approximately sixty-five per cent (65%) of staff members across DCS were trained in several areas to include institutional strengthening, project management; leadership and management, strategic planning; CPR and first aid and HEART Trust/NTA certification in various subjects. In preparing for the implementation of the DNA Evidence Act, 2016, sixty- five (65) Correctional Officers were trained by an international forensic advisor.



In-service training delivered by institutions has complemented our overall training efforts. So too have training initiatives implemented and sponsored by our local and international partners. The United States Embassy in particular, facilitated training visits to Colorado; providing authentic learning experiences for correctional officers, probation officers and senior managers. We recognize and congratulate members of staff who successfully completed their studies. Special mention is made of Overseer Beckford and Staff Officer Ramsay who excelled in their training and are now certified professional forensic polygraph examiners.


Our vision of transforming the Carl Rattray Staff College into a centre of excellence is becoming a reality as we move toward full accreditation. The principal, Ms. Byfield and the teams who are working on the submissions must be commended. Correctional Custodial Services Qualification Plans and Competency Standards were approved by the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) Board during the November 2018 meeting of the Sub-Committee. The Level 4 Correctional Administration; Level 5 Correctional Management; Community Corrections and Probation Aftercare Services Level 3 and 4 will be submitted for ratification to NCTVET sub-committee on January 10, 2019. Following which all curricular will be developed; facility standards recommendations put in place, and the various sensitization and staff preparation implemented.

Outstanding accomplishments/innovations include a staff health information survey led by Industrial Relations Officer, Ms. Nadria Brown which provides insight into the health of staff across DCS. The information will be used by the Wellness Committee to plan events/strategies to improve health related issues.

For the first time Jamaica hosted the Association of Caribbean Heads of Corrections and Prison Service (ACHCPS) Conference. From the feedback and reports, our conference held in June 2018 excelled all held previously. I use this medium to commend Mrs. Kerry Ann Davis, Mr. Dexter Thompson and the Team, guided by Mr. Rodgers, who made us all proud.

We continue to improve our systems, processes and strengthen the accountability framework.

- Procurement of goods and services is streamlined and better managed.
- An agricultural specialist is now employed to streamline and manage all agricultural activities as we move toward economic self-sufficiency.
- The Performance Appraisal Management System (PMAS) will be re-introduced in central administration in January of this year as we move toward a more objective and meaningful performance based- management system.
- A risk management consultant is assisting the Department to identify and mitigate risks within the organization.
- We intend to significantly improve the use of technology to improve our business processes. Of note is the telephone system installed and operational at central administration with extensions that take us directly to institutions and probation offices.



Securing our institutions remains a priority. Our search and patrol teams continue to battle the smuggling of cell phones and prohibited articles in our institutions. A cell phone in the hand of an inmate remains a lethal weapon. Technology may partially solve the problem, but integrity is our ultimate solution. We commend all who serve with integrity and appeal to the conscience of those who for selfish gains compromise safety and security. Let this year be the turning point as we transform our organization in keeping with our core values: confidentiality, accountability, respect, integrity, fairness and transparency.

This year 2019 will be a great year. We will make use of all opportunities as we work together to make our Department the Caribbean Centre of Excellence in correctional management. We applaud the excellence exhibited in the institutions and offices. We commend the individuals and teams who were singled out by their supervisors and peers as demonstrating the excellence we all envision. Let us affirm the excellence among us and address the deficiencies as we transform our department; moving from where we are to the desired future state.

We can never single-handedly carry out our mandate and so we are grateful to our stakeholders and partners who invest their time and resources in helping us to make the difference in our work and our service to nation building.

We acknowledge the contribution of those who passed on and cherish the memories we have of them. Several members of our DCS Family also lost loved ones. We pray your strength and keep you in our prayers.

The business of Corrections requires heart and soul. Thank you for your commitment, dedication and hard work.

I wish for you and your families a prosperous and productive 2019.

Ina Hunter
Commissioner of Corrections

