



# Monroe DRC Update



JULY 2020

## WELCOME



**Marc Reimer**  
*Program Manager*

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Monroe DRC Case Managers have shown great initiative and dedication to their jobs. Right now, we are holding in-person classes as well as classes via telephone to ensure that participants are keeping up with the program and receiving needed services. As each participant continues to follow their individualized treatment plans, most are remaining at home and call their Case Managers daily to check in.

I would like to thank Case Managers Paige Epps, Sherman Ashley and Retieka Hudson, each whom have been outstanding in rising above and beyond the call of duty; Client Services Specialist Erica Strawder, whose professionalism is on display when she assists during intakes; and Driver Donny Jackson, who we appreciate for helping in all aspects of the daily running of the center. As the days go by, Case Managers and the rest of the Monroe DRC staff will keep on providing services to our participants while following guidelines from the CDC and local government officials. Thanks for reading our July update, and please stay safe!

## SPOTLIGHT ON... CASE MANAGER RETIEKA HUDSON

Case Manager Retieka Hudson has always been interested in the criminal justice field, but she started her professional life working for the State of Louisiana as a communications officer at Grambling State University. Before joining GEO Reentry Services in November 2019, she worked in the areas of economic stability, child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health and served as a case manager for individuals with financial issues. Now, at the DRC, her role is to connect with new participants, work with them on a treatment plan and keep them on track with that plan. Hudson also provides cognitive behavioral therapy, teaches classes and serves as a backup instructor when needed. "The classes I teach at the DRC —Thinking for a Change, Parenting and Job Readiness — are really beneficial to participants," said Hudson. "They offer resources and knowledge they can use." Hudson's other duties at the DRC include conducting ICBT sessions, drug testing, and administering the HiSET exam. Her goal, she said, is to teach participants to think prosocially in place of their former antisocial thinking. "I chose this field because I wanted to help people," said Hudson, who has a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice with a double minor in psychology and sociology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and a master's degree in criminal justice from Grambling State University. "When taking classes in college and learning about criminal justice, this job was exactly what I wanted to do," she said. "I wanted to help lower the recidivism rate."



## DID YOU KNOW?



Individuals released to community supervision benefit from a measure of assistance to successfully transition back into community life. To help, GEO Reentry Services developed the **Community Connections** program, which connects parolees with valuable local resources and service providers. Through the program, GEO Reentry centers collaborate with local representatives from social services, governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, community groups and the business community to share helpful information with program participants. Often, Community Connections involves regular presentations for participants at the centers on topics such as employment, vocational training, education, family services, food and clothing, housing, mental health, identification, substance abuse, support groups, legal assistance, mentoring

and more. Community Connections has achieved significant results, reminding program participants that there is a safety net available to them and a community that wants them to succeed and become contributing citizens.

*By Kasia Kijanczuk, M.S., Research Manager for GEO Continuum of Care*