

*A Newsletter for NEOCAP Staff, Family and Stakeholders*



# NEO NEWS

*The NEO NEWS was established in December 2016 as a quarterly newsletter highlighting current events at NEOCAP and throughout the NEOCAP region.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Ohio Department of Corrections has implemented several key updates to its Program Standards. A major change is the requirement to track how many residents are successfully released into the community with stable income, housing, and a consistent social and health support network—collectively known as Social Determinants of Health (SDH) factors. This marks a significant shift from the previous focus on recidivism rates, which measure re-offense after release. Success will now be defined by residents' overall SDH stability upon reentry.

To improve residents' completion rates by more effectively addressing SDH, we need to shift our current approach away from providing only in-house programming Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM, without weekend or holiday sessions.

This change also requires adjustments to our current needs assessments, orientation process, technology, hardware, & software, and program services. The four to six months spent addressing residents' problematic, criminogenic, and antisocial behaviors through evidence-based cognitive-behavioral interventions must also ensure that SDH factors are addressed. Moving forward, the program must place greater emphasis on SDH factors. The group curricula should be reviewed to assess their effectiveness and determine whether to continue or replace them, with a focus on their relevance to helping residents reintegrate into the community with cognitive stability and access to resources.

Case plans— from initial assessment through program completion— must include objectives that ensure these factors are addressed before or upon release. Meeting these new standards will require an earlier and more intensive focus on SDH factors.

This edition of NEO News features a special article highlighting early efforts to address this new challenge. Be sure to check out the article on page 7.

Sincerely,

*Jake E. Jones, Sr.*



**Jake E. Jones, Sr.**  
Executive Director

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### CorJus Annual Meeting September 10 & 11, 2025:

On September 10-11, 2025, Executive Directors Jake Jones, Deputy Director Kim Massary, Clinical Director Kristina Henik, and Female Facility Director Jennifer Melvin participated in a two-day Annual Meeting focused on strategic planning. They joined other Community-Based Correctional Facility Directors and senior managers. Hosted by CorJus Inc., a network that aims to enhance Ohio's criminal justice system through advocacy, education, and collaboration. The event focused on developing strategies to better support member agencies and to foster stronger relationships with state and local stakeholders.



Jennifer Melvin (light sweater) and Kristin Henik (Green top) and other listens to presenters at the CorJus Annual Meeting, September 10, 2025.

### Newly Hired PO Madison Rice Visit Male Facility!

On September 15, 2025, Madison Rice spent time with Admissions Administrator Samantha Neiheisel and Clinical Director Kristina Henik learning about NEOCAP. Ms. Rice works for the Portage County Adult Probation Department as the Felony Unit Supervisor and Budget Manager. Although she is not new to the adult probation field, she is new to Portage County and is eager to learn more about what NEOCAP offers probationers. During her visit, she toured the facility and received detailed information about the CBT programming residents receive, as well as how their mental health, physical health, educational, employment, and housing needs are addressed throughout their residency. Ms. Rice expressed surprise at how clean and orderly the facility was maintained and said she felt reassured knowing that the probationers sent to NEOCAP would receive the care they need in a safe, clean environment.



L to R Kristina Henik, Madison Rice, Samantha Neiheisel, September 15, 2025

## Community Collaboration

### Hope Town Recovery Community Center — Portage County

By Kristina Henik

NEOCAP has partnered with Hope Town since its inception in 2019 to provide reintegration support to male residents returning to Portage County. Since then, Hope Town has grown to offer more than sober homes. On November 14, 2025, I went to the open house at Hope Town's new Recovery Community Center, where I also toured the Hope on Wheels site. The Center and Hope on Wheels allow Hope Town to offer more comprehensive support to individuals working to recover from addiction and mental health instability. Their approach seeks to fill gaps for men living in their homes, including transportation, peer support, and healthy leisure-time activities. Check out their website at: [www.hopetownohio.org](http://www.hopetownohio.org).



## Portage County Probation Staff Visits Female Facility!

By Jennifer Melvin

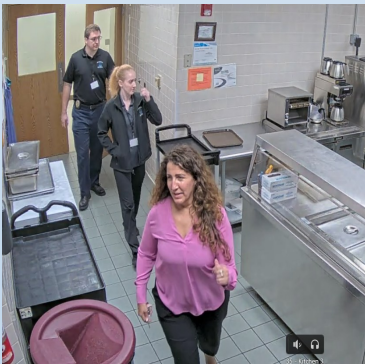


On September 16th at 10:00 am, Madison Rice and Nicholas Haddad from the Portage County Adult Probation Department visited the facility for a tour. The purpose of the tour was for a "meet and greet", to tour the facility, and to learn more about the Female Facility. They were very impressed with the building's cleanliness and the open layout, which seemed conducive to maintaining safety.



We discussed the typical daily activities of the women, program expectations, treatment group programming (highlighting Moving On), removing barriers (such as obtaining IDs, addressing warrants, and medical issues), visitation (highlighting Family Night), case plan development via the Portal, how release plans are created, how serious behavior issues are managed, and how the facility handles medical care and mental health treatment for the women.

PO Nick Haddad noted that he really likes the format of our termination reports because they are detailed and easy to understand.



## Residents Involved in Community Service -

On Friday, September 19, 2025, several NEOCAP residents and staff helped set up for Oktoberfest in the courthouse square. The event is organized by the Trumbull County Historical Society.



The 10th Annual Oktoberfest on the Square will take place in downtown Warren on Saturday, September 20th from 4pm - 8pm!

**BREAST CANCER AWARENESS  
MONTH OCT. 2025:**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**

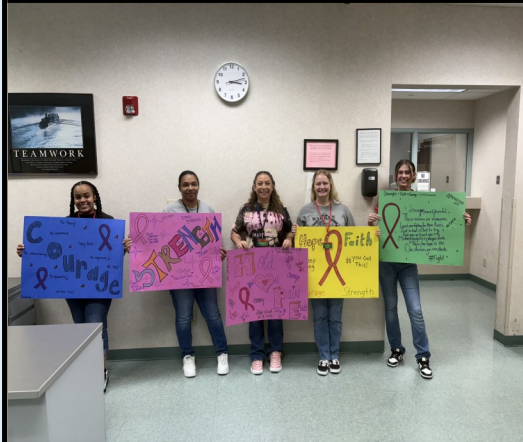
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14TH—POSTER  
MAKING**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16TH 1P-3P-  
CRAFTS**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17TH 1P-3P-  
CRAFTS**

**OCTOBER 27TH—OCTOBER 31ST  
SCAVENGER HUNT**

**NEOCAP's First Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign:**



(left to right) Dezrae Clark, Jessica Appleberry, Kimberly Campbell, Alyssa Nicolino, Kamryn Frasier.



October 16, 2025 Heather Kovac provides instruction to the women on painting craft project.



Kristina Henik, Clinical Director

**More GEDs please...**

By Kristina Henik

In 2025, 14 NEOCAP residents earned their General Equivalency Diploma (GED)! This is an increase from the 10 GED's earned in 2024. The addition of a full-time GED teacher, made possible by increased funding from our Trumbull County ASPIRE partnership, has supported our agency's goal of increasing GED attainment. Our partnership with Aspire has been an invaluable resource we have gratefully fostered for over ten years. The full-time position provides the support needed for testing and assessing student strengths. That information is then used to separate students into classrooms based on motivation and ability, allowing them to achieve their goals more consistently. Additionally, the female GED program was restored, and two female students earned GEDs in 2025.



On November 7, 2025, NEOCAP held its Annual Judicial Advisory Board (JAB) meeting at the female facility located at 1955 Blasé' Nemeth Road in Painesville, Ohio. The session was chaired by Judge Ronald Rice from the Trumbull County Court of Common Pleas. Afterward, Female Facility Director Jennifer Melvin guided a tour of the facility for several judges and attorney Matt Ries.



L to R Jennifer Melvin, Judge Patrick Condon, Judge Ronald Rice, Judge Matthew Rambo, and Judge Carolyn Paschke.

**JAB Annual Meeting  
November 7th, 2025!**





Victoria Stubbs-Cockerham

### Victoria Stubbs-Cockerham

On September 14th, 2015, Vicky was hired as a Resident Supervisor, she has also held the position as “Go To”, over the past ten years. Vicky has shown herself to be truly unique. She blends street-smarts and motherly instincts, along with distinctive hairstyles and attire, to engage residents and hold them accountable daily. Outside of work, Vicky dedicates time to community service. For the past twenty years, she has actively volunteered in the addiction support community, providing guidance to many battling addictions. Vicky often discusses her goal of completing her degree at Kent State Trumbull and becoming a chemical dependency treatment specialist. Congratulations on reaching this important milestone!



Johnny Hugley

### Johnny Hugley

After a lengthy career at Delphi Packard Electric, he retired and had ample free time. Executive Director Jake Jones invited him to join the NEOCAP team, and on December 15th, 2015, Johnny Hugley became a Transportation Officer, a role he has held for the past decade. He demonstrates excellent attendance and consistent reliability as a team member. As a Transportation Officer, Johnny has transported over 4,000 residents across more than 20,000 miles. In addition to NEOCAP, he serves on the Warren G Harding varsity football staff as equipment manager. A lifelong Warren, OH resident, Johnny is a martial artist and has studied Labor Relations at YSU. We sincerely appreciate Johnny's dedication to our team.

## Promotional Congrats!



Clayton Bond

On October 24, 2025, Clayton was promoted from Resident Supervisor to Community Specialist. Although his time at NEOCAP has been short, he has demonstrated enthusiasm for learning, contributing, and accepting extra duties. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Youngstown State University, a degree that suits the communication and assessment skills needed for this position. Please join us in congratulating Clayton on his recent promotion.



Amber Mitcham

### Amber Mitcham

On November 25, 2025, Amber was promoted to the “Go To” role on the day shift at the male facility. In this position, she works alongside Shift Supervisor Jeff Corson to lead the resident supervising team and will serve as SS during the shift supervisor's absence. Her promotion to “Go To” reflects her skills, reliability, and strong work ethic, making her the clear choice. Congratulations on this well-earned advancement.



## MEET NEW TREATMENT TEAM MEMBERS



Michelle Wagner

On September 2, 2025, Michelle Wagner joined the NEOCAP team as a Case Manager at the Warren facility. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Youngstown State University. Before joining NEOCAP, she spent three years at Gateways to Better Living, Inc., in Youngstown, Ohio, as a QIDP/Program Manager. In that role, she managed three group homes, oversaw staff and nurses, and served as the treatment team leader. She has also worked as a Registered Behavior Technician at the Knapp Center for Childhood Development in Boardman, Ohio. We are excited to welcome Michelle to the team!



Lisa Butti

On August 3, 2025, Lisa Butti joined us as a GED Instructor. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Kent State University. In addition to teaching 4th through 8th graders at Steam Academy, Lisa has experience in the restaurant industry and over 20 years in apartment property management. She is certified by the Ohio State Board of Education in Comprehensive Social Studies, General Science, Mathematics, and Speech/Communication. Welcome aboard, Lisa — we're excited to have you on board!

### MEETING EXPLORES WAYS TO IMPROVE:

On December 17, 2025, twenty-one agency staff members—including administrators, health services staff, case managers, and program supervisors—gathered for a day of brainstorming. They focused on ways to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the facility's resident medication refill systems and overall health and wellness services delivery to residents.



### ORAS CERTIFICATION TRAINING:

Kim Massary, Deputy Director of NEOCAP and a State Certified Master ORAS Trainer, led a two-day ORAS certification training for eleven staff members from the local probation department, NEOCAP, and the Mahoning County CCA program. The training was held at the Trumbull Metropolitan Housing Authority on October 29th & 30th, 2025.



NEOCAP staff members (L to R) Martha Raley, Michelle Wagner and Clayton Bond completing an assigned activity during the ORAS certification training.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

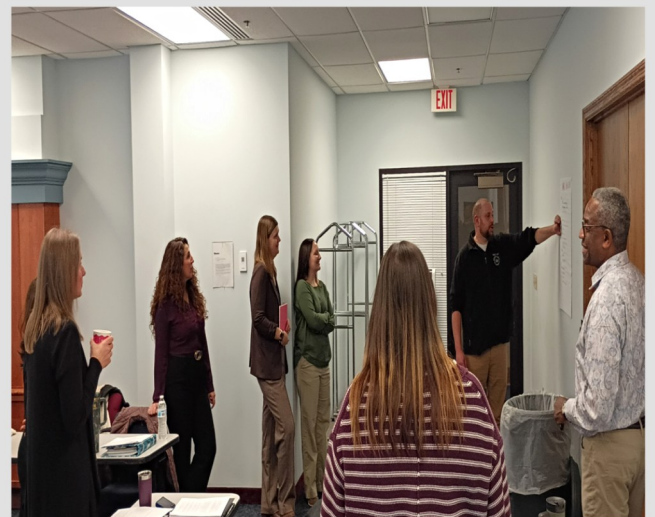
### The SDH Integration Team Presentation to Facility Directors!

On December 9, 2025, facility directors and the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Integration Team gathered at the Trumbull Metropolitan Housing Authority for an information-sharing and presentation session. This six-hour



meeting featured 'Report Outs' from SDH Integration Team members. Formed in August 2025 to research and analyze various NEOCAP program elements, the team presented documents, statistics, and suggested updates to the agency's assessment methods, computer systems, and program delivery. These updates aimed to align with new standards from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections and to modernize the program for the 21st century. Led by consultant Dr. Bill Bradley, an expert in Organization Transformation, the team, consisting of select-  
ed NEOCAP staff, critically examined NEOCAP's current

strategies for addressing social determinants of health such as employment, education, housing, physical and mental health, and social support during treatment and reentry. Working in subgroups, each focused on different aspects of the program, and each presented its findings and recommendations. One subgroup of female facility staff—Rachel Defazio, Elizabeth Merkosky, and Tracy Grimes—discussed residents' motivation to change, including their motivation to improve SDH factors and methods for assessing and classifying residents accordingly. Another subgroup, including Samantha Neiheisel and Ben DeGennaro, described their system for collecting and integrating SDH data, along with a treatment plan addressing residents' SDH needs from admission through program completion. A third subgroup, comprising Josh Morgan and Heather Kovac, explored ways to better coordinate Operations and Treatment to support residents' progress. Executive Director Jake Jones emphasized that the agency is fortunate to have Dr. Bradley's expertise as it transforms the program to meet evolving standards and serve residents better. He added that Clinical Director Kristina Henik has closely collaborated with Dr. Bradley and will continue to lead the ongoing transformation.



## From The Business Office

### The staff maintains the tradition of Gift Giving!

Each year, the Holiday Committee selects a local school or nonprofit organization that supports children to participate in

NEOCAP's Santa's Gift Giving. This year, the committee chose Willard PK-8 School in the Warren City School District. Ms. Shaina Shardy, the Community Outreach staff member for the Willard building,



identified six students and their families as recipients. Twenty-five NEOCAP staff members volunteered to buy toys, clothing, and other items, including a bike, to make this Christmas extra special. Ms. Shardy recently sent a thank-you card to the agency, expressing her gratitude and appreciation.

To: NEOCAP STAFF,

I want to take the time to thank you for your generous donation of Christmas gifts for our families. They were very appreciated and had smiles on their faces. Merry Christmas!

FROM, Willard PK-8



### Staff Receives Attendance Recognition!

It's always a pleasure to acknowledge those who achieve perfection. This year, 14 team members upheld a flawless "Zero Attendance Occurrence" record from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. The recognized team members include Heidi Trautman, Katie Sprague, Amanda Thomas, Lisa Ginn, Kandy Taylor, Tim Bongiorno, Tina Davenport, Kristin Helle, Christina Xenakis, Andrew Gibbs, Brenda Waters, Tracy Grimes, Khaled Amireh, and James Jenkins. Congratulations to all of them!

#### Newsletter Committee

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Jennifer Melvin  
Ben DeGennaro  
Proofreaders: Kristina Henik  
Jennifer Melvin  
Layout: Jake Jones



### NEOCAP Receives Opioid Remediation Grant

On December 1, 2025, the agency received an Opioid Remediation Grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Originally intended to support Ohio's county sheriffs and jails, the grant was recently expanded to include community correctional facilities across the state. NEOCAP was granted \$145,390 for one year to fund a Reintegration Addiction Service Coordinator and purchase drug-testing supplies and other essential items. Executive Director Jake Jones stated, "Securing this grant was a team effort," and he expressed gratitude to Kim Massary, Kristina Henik, Ben DeGennaro, and Samantha Neiheisel for their expertise during the application process.