Education Department’s Days Are Busy at Sand Ridge

By Connie Shlimovitz, Supervisor, SRSTC

The Education Department at Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center (SRSTC) includes the following members:

- Connie Shlimovitz, Supervisor
- Nathan Engler, Teacher
- Michael Rundio, Teacher
- James Brueggeman, Teacher
- Donna Schmit, Part-time Teacher
- Wendy Patterson, LTE Teacher
- Joshua Miller, Librarian
- Neil Jensen, Chaplain
- Linda Schubert, Volunteer Coordinator
- Danielle Schmelzle, Shared OOA
- Samantha Tolkarz, Shared OOA

We, along with Social Services, Recreation Therapy, and the Therapeutic Work Program, fall under the Social and Community Services portion of treatment. This allows us to partner with the social workers, rec therapists, and rec leaders to provide a wide variety of educational offerings.

We have one dedicated classroom, an overflow classroom, and the library. We also utilize space in the hobby room, gym, therapy kitchen, LIFE center, and the I building (for our vocational equipment).

Sand Ridge’s 5.09 program consists of 46 requirements including Language Arts (4), Reading (4), TABE test, Communication Skills, Computer Typing, Computer Skills, Math (5), US History (4), World History (2),
Geography (3), Economics, Civics test, Biology (3), Health, Vocational (cover letter/resume), Re-Entry Vocational (applications/interviews), Competencies (10), COMPASS test, and the letter to the state. We currently have twenty students working on earning their HSED, but any patient can enroll in these classes.

We have five vocational programs: Custodial (Western Technical College - credit and certificate), Car-Detailing (Western Technical College - certificate), ServSafe (Western Technical College – credit and certificate), Agriculture (UW Madison - certificate), and Small Engines.

We also offer over 40 electives every quarter that include a wide range of topics including Display Boards, Flight, Globe Trekker, NOVA, WWII Movies, Level 1 Master Gardener, Museums, Health Snack, American Muscle Cars, Computer Graphics, Holidays, Community Service, Guitar, Cooking Skills, Book Club, Fishing, Musicals, State Parks, Sewing Skills, and Oceans. One of our Community Service classes has partnered with local nursing homes and assisted living centers to provide seasonal décor. Another one has recently completed a plastic bag collection and is using them to make sleeping mats for the homeless.

We, along with the other staff in the Social and Community Services area, work on Special Events planning that occurs during the Treatment Break that is held at the end of each quarter.

During the last year, we have held June Dairy Days, four Recognition Events for the treatment tracks, a Kwanzaa celebration, and several months of Health Initiatives – assessments, guest speakers, incentives, and a health fair. Our next event will be working on the Veterans Day ceremony.

To say our days are busy at SRSTC would be an understatement, but we enjoy providing a very well-rounded educational setting for our patients.
A Teacher of the Year’s Humble Reflection

In March, Laurie Jarvis was named the 2019 CEA-Wisconsin Teacher of the Year. She is employed by Fox Valley Technical College as an instructor at the Waushara County Jail. Laurie competed against other regional Teachers of the Year at the Region 3 & 4 CEA Conference and Training Event in Sandusky, Ohio. She was selected Region 3 Teacher of the Year and went on to represent Wisconsin and Region 3 at the 74th International CEA Conference and Training Event at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center on July 28-31.

The following is Laurie’s reflection on her journey:

I am humbled to be named the Region 3 Teacher of the Year. My journey began with being nominated for the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year. Upon being nominated, I faced the task of completing an application that required me to reflect on a best practice I implemented this past year. By doing so, I was able to do what all good teachers do and consider why we do what we do every day. Although completing the application was a challenge, the reflective practice reaffirmed why education is so vitally important to our students.

At the Region 3 Conference, I participated in a 50-minute panel interview. It has been years since I was interviewed, and I must admit I was a little anxious. I created a webpage to showcase my work this last year and highlight what being a CEA member means to me. I emphasized the fact that, as an instructor in a rural county jail, it is vitally important to be connected to others who do what I do. CEA has connected me with other “Teachers of Year,” who show up and do important work every day.
All of the Teachers of the Year participated in a panel discussion where we were asked questions from the participants. Some of which included:

- What advice would you give to a new teacher entering into the field of correctional educator?
- What was one of your worst days on the job?
- What was one of your best days on the job?

The Teacher of the Year was announced at the Region 3 & 4 TOY Luncheon held on Tuesday, April 9th.

As the Teacher of the Year, I recently attended the 74th International CEA Conference and Training Event held in Detroit, Michigan, July 28-31, 2019. My experience at this conference reaffirmed why CEA is an important organization for all of us who teach “inside.”

An outstanding conference was planned with nine break out sessions over the 2.5 day event. Presenters offered important information and insight. The Keynote Speaker was David Rendell, author of The Freak Factor. “Dave Rendell has a radical prescription for chronic dissatisfaction: Stop working on your weaknesses and start amplifying them instead. The Freak Factor flips the cult of self-improvement on its head with stories of real people who have soared to success by embracing their uniqueness.” – Daniel H. Pink

His powerful message resonated with the audience and provided topics for conversation and contemplation.

Through the conference, the five Teachers’ of the Year were introduced and honored. The Teacher of the Year Gala was a blast. Many of us sported 60’s and 70’s clothing and celebrated the Motown Experience.

I was humbled and honored to represent all the outstanding teachers in the numerous correctional facilities throughout Wisconsin. The best part of the conference was connecting with other correctional educators from Wisconsin. CEA makes the tough job of being an educator in a correctional facility much easier because we “get it” and we “get” each other.

Thank you to all of the members of CEA for your unending support. Remember, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Nelson Mandela.
Correctional Education Association – Wisconsin
2020 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The Correctional Education Association-Wisconsin, in cooperation with the International Correctional Education Association, has established the TEACHER OF THE YEAR award to recognize outstanding educational contributions by a teacher in a correctional facility.

Who Is Eligible:

To be eligible, the teacher must:

- spend at least 51% of his/her work time in classroom instruction
- have taught in correctional facilities a minimum of two years
- have demonstrated leadership qualities and be active in promoting improvements in correctional education
- have demonstrated devotion to the teaching profession as evidenced by a willingness to work beyond their job description
- have been an active member of CEA for the past year

Teachers who were nominated previous years but were not selected as the CEA-Wisconsin Teacher of the Year may be re-nominated. CEA-Wisconsin Board members are not eligible for nomination.

Nomination Process:

Anyone may submit a nomination for Teacher of the Year. The nomination may be from a colleague, a supervisor, or the teacher themselves. The nomination deadline is January 1, 2020.
After the nominations are received, each nominee will be sent a questionnaire requesting more information and documentation to support the nomination. The 2020 CEA-Wisconsin Teacher of the Year will be selected at the January 2020 CEA-Wisconsin Board meeting and will be notified shortly thereafter.

**Qualities to Be Considered:**

- Teaching excellence
- Classroom and program innovation
- Professional development activities
- Ability to serve as a representative for correctional education in the state of Wisconsin

**Awards:**

The CEA-Wisconsin Teacher of the Year will receive a plaque attesting to their achievement. They will receive a $250 stipend and will be furnished expenses to compete against winners from five other Region III States at the **2020 Region 3 & 4 Conference and Training Event in Bloomington, Minnesota**. If the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year is selected as the Region III Teacher of the Year, they will be furnished expenses to attend the 75th Correctional Education Association International Conference & Training Event to be held next summer.

**Email your nomination letter by January 1, 2020 to Holly Audley (HollyO.Audley@wisconsin.gov)**

**WTCS Common Ground Conference 2019**

October 16 & 17, 2019

Red Lion Paper Valley

333 West College Avenue

Appleton, WI 54911
Scholarship Will Help Student Pursue Career in Dental Hygiene

Again this year, CEA-Wisconsin has awarded a $1000 scholarship. The CEA-Wisconsin Scholarship Award Program is designed to assist a CEA-Wisconsin member who is furthering his/her education in the education or library services field or a member’s spouse or dependent who is pursuing a university or technical college degree in any field. Since the scholarship was established in 2001, scholarships were awarded to ten CEA-Wisconsin members and thirteen children of CEA-Wisconsin members.

The CEA-Wisconsin Board is pleased to announce that this year’s recipient is MaryKate Shlimovitz. MaryKate is the daughter of Connie Shlimovitz, Teacher Supervisor at Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center.

MaryKate has just graduated from Portage High School and is entering Madison College where she will major in Dental Hygiene.

As part of her scholarship application, MaryKate submitted this essay.

“As a child I feared going to the dentist. In the fall of 2019, I plan to attend Madison Area Technical College to major in Dental Hygiene. I am excited to be able to help other children who have the same fear. I know I will be able to relate to them better than others. For these reasons, after I graduate I plan to go back and specialize in Pediatrics. I am looking forward to the career path that lies my way.
I have taken many classes throughout my four years in high school that have gotten me ready for a career in dental hygiene. I have completed Health Issues, Biology, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Pre-Calculus. This year I am also in AP Calculus. By passing this class, I may be able to skip other math classes after I take my placement test. Now that I have completed these courses, I will go into college steps ahead of other students.

Last semester, I was involved in a class at the high school called Youth to Youth. In this class, I got to go over to Woodridge Elementary in Portage and work with a class. I worked with a class of Kindergarteners. Throughout the semester, I helped them read, do flashcards, and I even stayed over there for the entire day. This was an amazing experience that I know will come in handy in the future. I have always had an interest in working with children, and I can’t wait to continue to do this for the rest of my life.

One of my main goals for the future is to have a family. A pro of being a dental hygienist is the hours. With a family, I would need a lot of nights and weekends free. A dental hygienist normally works 8-5 and 5 days a week, which would be perfect. In the future, I hope to have this job as it will suit all of my needs. I have many goals for the future, which include an amazing job and a wonderful family. Going to Madison and majoring in Dental Hygiene will be the start to achieve these goals.

Being successful is my number one goal in life. Being successful to me means being happy, healthy, and enjoying life. I feel that if I choose this career path, I will be able to be successful. None of the goals I have set for myself are going to be easy, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t achievable. With hard work and dedication, I know they are all reachable.”

The CEA-Wisconsin Board wishes MaryKate Shlimovitz good luck as she continues her studies and hopes this scholarship will help her reach her goals.

The 2020 CEA-Wisconsin Scholarship will be announced in the May/June 2020 issue of this newsletter. CEA-Wisconsin members or their spouses or dependents are encouraged to apply.
Creativity Contest
Are you a Writer?
An Artist?

Your original artwork or creative writing piece may be submitted between September 1 and December 1.

Winning entries will be published.

Contact Nancy Alderton in the Oshkosh Correctional Institution Education Dept. for more information.

Nancy.Alderton@wisconsin.gov

Go to www.ceawisconsin.org
Click on “Awards and Contests,” then “Creativity Contest” for the Official Rules and Submission Release Form.
CEA-WISCONSIN NEWSLETTER

CEA-Wisconsin invites incarcerated writers and artists to submit their works for the annual edition of the CEA-Wisconsin Creativity Contest. Each year CEA-Wisconsin publishes original prose, poetry, and ink drawings from Wisconsin's jail, prison, and juvenile facility populations. All levels of writers and artists are encouraged to offer submissions. Authors and artists whose works are selected will each receive two free copies of the booklet when it is published in May.

Encourage your learners to express themselves in drawings (black ink on 8½ by 11 white paper) and writings up to 1000 words including poems, letters, essays, and short stories. Winners are selected from all levels, so urge beginning writers to give it a try.

Submissions are accepted from September 1, 2019 until December 1, 2019. Please ask entrants to read the contest rules and legibly fill out the submission form. Entries can be sent to Nancy Alderton at the Oshkosh Correctional Institution address on the submission form.

Go to www.ceawisconsin.org and click on “Awards & Contests,” then “Creativity Contest,” to access and print the Creativity Contest Official Rules and Submission Release Form.

The booklets are typeset by inmates at Oshkosh Correctional Institution and printed by inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution. This publication reflects the professional commitment of CEA-Wisconsin members to promote literacy. Each person who is a CEA-Wisconsin member as of January 1 gets a free copy of the booklet.

If you want to join the CEA-Wisconsin Creativity Contest committee, contact Nancy Alderton at nancy.alderton@wisconsin.gov. Committee members’ duties include meeting as a group to review and select the writings and artwork for publication.

Creativity Contest Committee Members

Nancy Alderton, OSCI
nancy.alderton@wisconsin.gov

Vicky Ebben-Svitavsky, WCI
victoria.ebbensvitavsky@wisconsin.gov

Jim Gordon, KMCI
james.gordon@wisconsin.gov

Laurie Jarvis, FVTC
jarvis@fvtc.edu

Rose Krutzik, FLCI
rose.krutzik@wisconsin.gov

Tim Mahoney, WRC
timothy.mahoney@dhs.wisconsin.gov

Steve Schmick, OSCI
steven.schmick@wisconsin.gov
It’s Time to Update the County Jail Directory

Teachers and volunteers working in jails and detention centers often express the concern of being isolated and unable to communicate with their peers working in similar settings. To remedy this problem, in April 2008, CEA-Wisconsin published its first Directory of Education Programs in Wisconsin’s County Jails and Juvenile Detention Centers.

Since then, each fall after many teaching assignment changes are finalized, the directory has been updated. It’s now time to update the Directory of Education Programs in Wisconsin’s County Jails and Juvenile Detention Centers again.

All county jail and detention center teachers, education coordinators and volunteers will be emailed the old directory in early September. When you receive it, please review your county’s information and email any revisions to jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com. Make the changes in RED so they can be easily recognized. If your county’s information is correct, email a note stating that the information is correct.

CEA-Wisconsin hopes this directory will enable teachers and volunteers to contact their colleagues working in other facilities to ask questions, share ideas, and pool resources.

When all of the revisions are completed, the updated directory will be emailed to everyone listed in the directory and will be posted on our www.ceawisconsin.org website.

Everyone listed in the directory will also be added to our email list so you will receive:

- Updates of the directory
- CEA-Wisconsin and Parenting Connection newsletters
- Information relating to teaching in county jails and detention centers
- Information on conferences and training opportunities
A Literacy Success Story

Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. publishes a newsletter that often features “Success Stories” highlighting students overcoming obstacles to turn their lives around. One article that appeared in their newsletter recently was, "Success Story: Meet Alejandro Ramirez Gonzalez from Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility." Alejandro has worked as a tutor with Kay George at RYOCF. Here is Alejandro’s story reprinted from Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.'s website:

Meet Alejandro Ramirez Gonzalez

I am incarcerated in Racine Youthful Offender Correctional facility serving an 11 year sentence.

First, I would like to tell you where I am coming from. My name is Alejandro Ramirez Gonzalez. I am 23 years old. I come from a humble and hard-working family. I strongly believe we stand on the old saying of the 3 Musketeer’s: "All for one and one for all." I am not saying we are perfect; we have misunderstandings and problems like any other family, but we always try to solve them and stay together. I was raised in a small ranch in Jalisco, Mexico. I have worked since I was a kid. I worked in the corn fields, fed cows, pigs and chickens, in construction and any other extra duties we had on the farm. I also used to go to school and I was in the top 3 students of my class. I used to be a good, hardworking kid.

When I was 13 years old, my family and I moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin trying to follow the American dream. Everything was so different from the place I came from. They have different ways of living here. It is a different culture. I knew the United States had people from all over the world, but the hardest thing for me was speaking a different language. Imagine going to a school where they don’t speak your own language. I was in a bilingual program, but I still had to go to some classes where nobody spoke Spanish. That is when my grades started to go down.

Then I started to hang around with the wrong crew of guys. When I was 18, I started working in construction. Then I decided to finish High School, so I found a job on second shift. I was doing this for a year when I was 19. I was already a senior in high school, still working 10 hours a day, but I was still on the wrong path. One day I got in a really bad car accident, and that’s how I ended up in here.
I know I hurt a lot of people, including my own family. I wish I could go back in time and change my poor decisions, but I know that is not possible. The only thing I can do is learn from my mistakes and live with them. That is when I decided to change my life and help others. I set myself a couple of short term goals like getting my HSED, getting a vocational program, completing all of my programs while in prison and improving my English.

I have used my time very well. I completed my HSED, a Conflict Resolution Module, and a Diversity Circles workshop. I completed three vocational courses: Customer Service through Computer Applications, Masonry and Bricklaying and Green Clean Custodial. I completed seventy-five hours of community service and I also improved my English. Even though I have a strong accent, my English is much better, and I still keep pushing myself to improve it.

When I arrived at RYOCF, my TABE scores were 7.4 in Reading and 9.9 in Math on the Medium level. Ms. George, the librarian, told me about the tutor program. I signed up and worked with a tutor. It was not easy, but I took the TABE test again and finally improved my scores to 12.4 in Reading and 12.9 on Math on the Advanced level. I then applied for and completed Tutor Training.

For most of my incarceration, I have been an institution worker. My first job was in the grounds crew taking care and maintaining the yard. Then I received a job in the kitchen on the weekends serving food for the inmates. I am currently working half time in the garden crew - my duties during the summer are watering, harvesting, weeding and taking care of the flowers. Other work responsibilities are taking bread and milk to the unit every morning. In the winter, I shovel snow. I also work halftime as a tutor in the Masonry Vocational class. I help the students to learn how to do level, plumb and range on their projects.

It makes me feel good when they get better at it because practice makes the master and anybody is able to learn. I also help them on any question they have in their projects or in their book work. If I don't know the answer, I try to look for it. I like to help guys who don't speak English that well because I know how hard it is. I really like the opportunity to help others and the students give me the opportunity to be a part of their growth.

My long term goals are to be an Office Manager and, if possible, one day to have my own construction business. I have 6 years left in my sentence. During this time, I will continue to improve myself by taking the opportunity to learn as much as I can and help anybody I can along the way.
President’s Message

The start of a new school year has been a beloved time for me for as long as I can remember. The small part of me that is spontaneous and fun-loving enjoys the days at the beach, late evenings on the patio, and the simple, relaxed vibe of summer. However, my naturally type-A heart really skips a beat with the structure, organization, and fresh start of a new school year! From shopping for school supplies to enjoying a walk in the crisp fall air; I love everything about autumn.

While most adult educators don’t get to enjoy the entire summer off, I hope this message finds you rejuvenated from a summer full of long weekends, adventure, and relaxation with loved ones. Personally and professionally, the past few months have been busy, but also relaxing and refreshing. Memories of fun in the sun and promises of earlier bedtimes to come leave me feeling energized to take on new challenges this fall.

As we enter this back-to-school season, my wish for each of you is that you are filled with the same energy, passion, and enthusiasm as a teacher starting the first day of school with a new class. Understanding we don’t get a mass fresh start with our students, I hope that you can think of this time of year as a renewal of purpose for the important work you do, the minds you grow, and the lives you influence each and every day. I hope that your students will witness your energy and enthusiasm for education, and that it catches like wildfire.

As you pour your energy into your work this fall, please remember that you simply cannot pour from an empty cup. Your students, coworkers, and loved ones are better served when you take care of yourself. Take a day off to read a good book, visit an old friend, or enjoy a warm cup of coffee on a cool fall day. Whatever fills your cup will also fill the cups of those around you.

Thank you for the important work you do all year long!

— Emily Propson