

## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available at <http://www.pacounties.org/ProgramServices/Pages/Criminal-Justice.aspx>

County	Chester County
County Class	3
Address	201 West Market Street, Suite 2100
City, State, Zip Code	West Chester, PA 19380
Primary Contact/Title	Christopher J. Murphy, Chief
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### PROJECT INFORMATION

Title	Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program
Project Start Date	September 2017

### NARRATIVE

**Enter program narrative that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. Entries must be submitting using this form. All sections must be complete. Entries submitted without the required information may be disqualified.**

**Problem Discussion** - Enter comments on the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort. This section is worth 10 points.

In 2013 Chester County Adult Probation was looking at ways to reduce recidivism for both technical violations and new arrests. We were attempting to reduce the jail population by avoiding the return of probation/parole violators.

The 2013 PA Recidivism Report from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections showed a 45% re-arrest rate in Chester County. Research conducted as part of the Reentry Strategic Planning Project found that Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Programs are effective at deterring crime, assisting victims and preventing recidivism. CBT Programs rely on a cognitive behavioral approach to teach participants strategies to manage risk factors. The programs place heavy emphasis on skill building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development. These components address actions, ways of thinking and behaviors to prevent less harmful outcomes to themselves and others. Since evidence based practices such as cognitive

behavioral interventions have been found to be an effective way to reducing recidivism, why not provide an opportunity for institutional residents to engage in CBT Programs. Why not divert inmates into programs that will help them.

Although Chester County Prison offered a wide variety of programs by governmental agencies, community agencies, non-profit organizations, the faith community and volunteers, we recognized that there was a lack of cognitive based programming for inmates while incarcerated. To begin meeting this need, grant funding was awarded which allowed staff to be trained to deliver the National Institute of Corrections Thinking for a Change (T4C) curriculum (Bush, Glick & Taymans 2002). Further grant funded was received and we were able to purchase and train staff to deliver the gender specific Moving On Program for At Risk Women (Orbis Partners, Inc.), an evidence-based educational and cognitive skill building program and *S.E.L.F.* Trauma-Informed Psycho-educational Group Curriculum (Bloom), an “evidence-supported” (National Child Traumatic Stress Network) and “promising practice” (California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse) that addresses the fundamental problems surrounding exposure to violence within a group setting. Our greatest success has been contracting with Gateway HorseWork’s Stable Pathways equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP) program, a nonprofit organization, which has an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach to complement and enhance the teachings of our CBT programs.

We are pleased to nominate Chester County Prison for CCAP’s Best Practices County Jail Programming Award for their hard work and efforts in providing support and resources to partner and collaborate with Chester County Adult Probation as well as community non-profit organizations (HorseWorks) to implement the Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program.

**Background** – Enter history of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county- wide planning strategies, etc. This section is worth 20 points.

In October 2013, Adult Probation Staff began facilitating The Thinking for a Change curriculum at Chester County Prison.

T4C is an integrated, cognitive behavior change program for offenders, which includes cognitive restructuring, social skill development, and development of problem solving skills. T4C has been the subject of many studies and has routinely proven to be effective in reducing recidivism when implemented with integrity.

Thinking for a Change is purposely divided into three components:

Cognitive Self Change - Teaches individuals a concrete process for self-reflection aimed

at uncovering antisocial thoughts feelings, attitudes and beliefs.

Social Skills - Instruction prepares group members to engage in pro-social interactions based on self-understanding and consideration of the impact of their actions on others.

Problem Solving Skills - Integrates the two previous interventions to provide group members with an explicit step-by-step process to address challenging and stressful real life situations.

In 2015 statistics were compiled which reflected the following positive results:

- ✚ 234 Graduates
- ✚ 9% returned to Chester County Prison on technical violations
- ✚ Less than 1% returned on new charges.
- ✚ 94% of graduates felt the class was beneficial.

### **Quotes from past graduates**

“The most helpful aspect of the class was developing the ability to be able to recognize my feelings and thoughts and processing them before I react negatively to a situation.”

“As a father I always want the best for my family but my approach hasn’t always been the best but I learned some new things.”

“The class gave me practical tools to deal with myself and the demands of life.”

“I can truly say that I changed for the better because of this class.”

“The skills that I have learned in this class have made me feel comfortable around others, and most importantly given me hope that I can change how I think, and when I think differently and act differently I can and will have a better life.”

“I have many more tools that I can access now before I make decisions in my life.”

Due to the apparent success of the T4C Program, Chester County looked into expanding upon our Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Programs. Through grant funding received in 2014, we were able to purchase and train Adult Probation staff and volunteers to deliver the gender specific Moving On Program for At Risk Women (Orbis Partners, Inc.), an evidence-based educational and cognitive skill building program.

Moving On is an evidence based intervention program developed specifically for women who are involved with the criminal justice system. The goal of this program is to assist women in mobilizing and developing personal and social resources to reduce the risk of future criminal behavior but also increasing the health and well-being of women, their families and the community. The program is facilitated in a gender-responsive,

respectful and empathetic style and the women are encouraged to reciprocate this approach. An emphasis is placed on building protective factors that can reduce the impact of high-risk situations. Throughout the program, resource information is shared and explored and women are provided with the skills necessary to build healthy relationships, to develop new interests and to access resources and services.

Moving On is made up of six modules:

- **Module 1: Orientation** – This Module is designed to listen to a woman’s concerns and then motivate her to participate. In this module the woman explores her strengths and challenges during an initial assessment. Once the assessment is complete, the facilitator provides feedback and encourages the women to develop personal goals. These goals are revisited throughout the program.
- **Module 2: Listening and Being Heard** – This Module devotes a significant amount of time toward the enhancement of social and interpersonal skills and provides group members with communications skills that help them initiate and maintain healthy and positive relationships.
- **Module 3: Building Health Relationships** – This Module helps the women to assess and explore their intimate relationships and friendships. They define a healthy relationship and explore the impact of unhealthy relationships and domestic violence.
- **Module 4: Expressing Emotions** – This Module focuses on expressing and celebrating emotions.
- **Module 5: Making Connections and Staying Healthy** – This Module addresses real-life challenges regarding a woman’s relationship with herself and connections with others. Participants identify and build supports that assist them with family needs. A representative from the Crime Victim’s Center also facilitates the workshop, “Stewards of Children”.
- **Module 6: Endings** – This Module ensures that participants are prepared to deal more effectively with community supervision.

In addition, S.E.L.F. Trauma-Informed Psycho-educational Group Curriculum (Bloom), an “evidence-supported” (National Child Traumatic Stress Network) and “promising practice” (California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse) that addresses the fundamental problems surrounding exposure to violence within a group setting was purchased and Adult Probation staff and community volunteers were trained to deliver the curriculum.

S.E.L.F. is a program that was developed to help people address the negative effects of trauma and adversity. It helps people think differently about their problems and helps them breakdown seemingly overwhelming obstacles and challenges into more manageable pieces. S.E.L.F. helps people to recognize how current behaviors are related

to past experiences and learn healthier responses. The program offers a roadmap and momentum for a person to make changes in his or her life.

The S.E.L.F. program focuses on the results of trauma, not the traumas themselves. Experiencing trauma results in threats to four areas:

- Safety - maintaining our physical, psychological, social or moral boundaries.
- Emotions - experiencing our emotions without letting them control our behavior
- Loss - understanding that loss is part of life and that moving on often means having to let go.
- Future – managing the freedom and power to make choices in one’s life – choices that are not determined by one’s past.

The first Moving On group and S.E.L.F classes commenced at Chester County Prison in 2015.

Moving-On, S.E.L.F. and T4C are being delivered simultaneously at Chester County Prison. The jail-implemented program elements include trauma-informed training, art therapy and curriculum delivery.

### **Quotes from past Moving On graduates**

“I found the Moving On program to be extremely beneficial during my time spent in prison. Beyond the tools and coping skills I learned for challenges I face outside of prison, it forced me to step out of my box. I had a hard time interacting with the women when I first got to prison. All I wanted to do was isolate. I became more comfortable interacting with all of the women. I realize how important a social network is and motivated me to work on establishing a support system that is outside of my family.”

“Thank you to probation for coming twice a week- always accountable and learned how forming a relationship with your PO is not only possible but also extremely helpful.”

“Now that I learned tools I just want to put them to good use in my every day life.”

“I’ve learned that there’s a strong woman inside of me coming out because of this class”.

### **Quotes from past S.E.L.F. graduates**

“This program can benefit people in ways they don’t realize”.

“Learning about change and learning good coping mechanisms. Learning what I can do to control my emotions that won’t lead me back to relapse”.

“Being able to open up and really look at myself and learn how to not let my emotions, and loss, effect my future”.

We recognize that one of the strengths in the success of our program has been the collaborations and partnerships that we have forged within our community. In 2017, we contracted with Gateway HorseWork's Stable Pathways equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP) program, a nonprofit organization, which has an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach to complement and enhance the teachings of our CBT programs. This partnership provided an excellent opportunity to pilot a new treatment approach. The program involves the collaboration of an Equine Specialist certified in the EAGALA Model and a licensed Mental Health Professional.

Using horses, but never riding, clients are invited into a safe, non-judgmental space to build a trusting relationship with the horses and the treatment team. They interact with the horses for self-reflection and self-assessment without the need to tell their story so that they can experience the present moment (both their inner world and outer world). The program targets anxiety, depression, and hopelessness and understands the impact of traumatic events in one's life.

The HorseWorks Program originally began with female participants under the supervision of the Women's Reentry and Assessment Program (WRAP) who were in the community. We quickly realized the benefit of this program and expanded to include female inmates. A total of 21 Female participants housed in the Work Release Center were selected by probation officers and Chester County Prison staff. With the help and support of Chester County Prison Officials, the female inmates were transported by Adult Probation Staff to an off-site facility in order to participate in HorseWorks, and returned after class to Chester County Prison.

### **Quotes from past graduates**

"I love the horse program because I don't have to wear a mask. I can be myself."

"..the discovery that this massive animal would let me touch her, groom her, rub the satiny spot on her nose. She let me say things like 'YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL.' 'YOU ARE SO CALM.' She stood still while I gave her love, admiration and my baffling addiction story. She did not turn her head and run through a list of my atrocities. I told her my story - the bad parts- It only took a second or two and when I looked into her eyes and I knew! SHE ALREADY KNEW MY STORY - the slit wrists, the attempted hangings, the despair, the hurt I caused my loved ones, hospitals, jail, psych wards, tasers, stealing, lying, eating rat poison. I got on my knees and told it all and her shoulders heaved and I knew she went through and FELT each and every failure. This big bad ass animal heard my story and then she started following me around the ring. No judgement; just a buddy in arms."

"Having grown up in an extremely non-affectionate family, the freedom we have to touch these horses is amazing. The horses trust us to touch them. They just allow it - In this process I am recognizing how often I let my body be abused. I have been raped, strangled, bullied and abused. This has made me realize that the power of touch should

be sacred and exquisite. I thought I would never want to touch lovingly again. These horses have changed that. I never knew how much I needed safe touch.”

“I will try to make this short, while still expressing my love for this program. I started horse works about 5 weeks ago. We are the first group of women from the Chester County Probation program, WRAP. I have been through more therapy and drug rehabilitation centers than I can count, or remember. And all these years, 13 to be exact, I have been searching and hoping someone would care enough to try something different for us. I see the pain being tugged away when we are with the horses and seeing life differently. I have had so many friends die from addiction or just never get the help they needed. HorseWorks make me feel so good, probation is working on other methods of treatment and there could be nothing better than this program. They are willing to take suggestions to make it better for us and I feel so good while I am there.”

". While there I realized how much I've been holding IN and holding BACK because of fear of judgement from a HUMAN BEING! I thought " Wow, I trust Jubilee more than my therapist!" EVEN KNOWING I could be bit, pummeled, stomped on, kicked at - there is a sacred thing that happens when an enormous animal lets you pour your story into them, and still stands close.. *I hope and pray that you can get more funding so women can continue to find safety and healing in their souls. It is kind of ironic that fragile women find hope through massive animals.*"

Unfortunately, due to funding issues, the last HorseWorks session for the women was October 2018. However, in October 2019, additional funding was received through a private donation and Chester County Adult Probation and Parole was able to continue our partnership with HorseWorks. The Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program expanded to include male inmates housed at the Work Release Center at Chester County Prison. A facility was created at Chester County Prison which includes a shed, fenced in area and picnic tables. Chester County Prison bought benches for \$1,160. The horses are transported from the Horseworks facility once a week. Male inmates who are identified as high/medium risk, are court ordered, or have the desire to participate are selected for the program. They participate in a combination of classroom learning (T4C) taught by Reentry Officers at the Work Release Center and hands-on learning (Horseworks). To date, 18 men have participated in the program and currently 5 women are participating.

**Soundness of approach** – Enter a description of the ways the project conforms to either program themes or goals as established in the criteria. This section is worth 20 points

The implementation of the Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement addresses many award program goals and themes. T4C, Moving On and SELF are evidence based programs that place heavy emphasis on skill building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development. These components address actions,

ways of thinking and behaviors to prevent less harmful outcomes to themselves and others and have been found to be an effective way to reducing recidivism which in turn assists in reducing the jail population and return to jail for technical parole violations. The Equine enhancement involves the collaboration of an Equine Specialist certified in the EAGALA Model and a licensed Mental Health Professional. Clients interact with the horses for self-reflection and self-assessment without the need to tell their story so that they can experience the present moment. The program targets anxiety, depression, and hopelessness and understands the impact of traumatic events in one's life. The hopeful result of these programs is to motivate the client to modify their behavior and thinking which leads to better choices and effective change.

The impactful contribution Chester County Prison has made to create a facility and accommodate horses on their property represents best practices in criminal justice. They are an important link between the corrections workforce, probation and the non-profit sector.

**Program Elements** – Enter a description of the elements of the project, utility, adaptability, strategies used, community and stakeholder involvement, evidence based approach. This section is worth 20 points.

The Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program at Chester County Prison has been successfully implemented and is available to male and female inmates housed at the Work Release Center. The program is a collaborative effort made by Chester County Prison, Adult Probation, community volunteers and a non-profit organization. Through funds received from our Women's Reentry Assessment and Programming (WRAP) and Reentry Project grants, probation staff and volunteers were trained to deliver the evidence based Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Programs: T4C, S.E.L.F. and Moving On. Through private donations our partnership with HorseWorks was forged in order to complement and enhance the teaching of our CBT programs. Probation Officers and Prison Staff continue to identify and select individuals who are high risk/high need and have the desire to participate in this combination of classroom and hands-on learning.

The Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program could be adaptably for use in other counties who have the desire to implement CBT Program curriculums. Equine facilitated prison-based programs are currently being implemented in other jurisdictions such as the Berkshire Horseworks (Own it Up) in Richmond, Massachusetts.

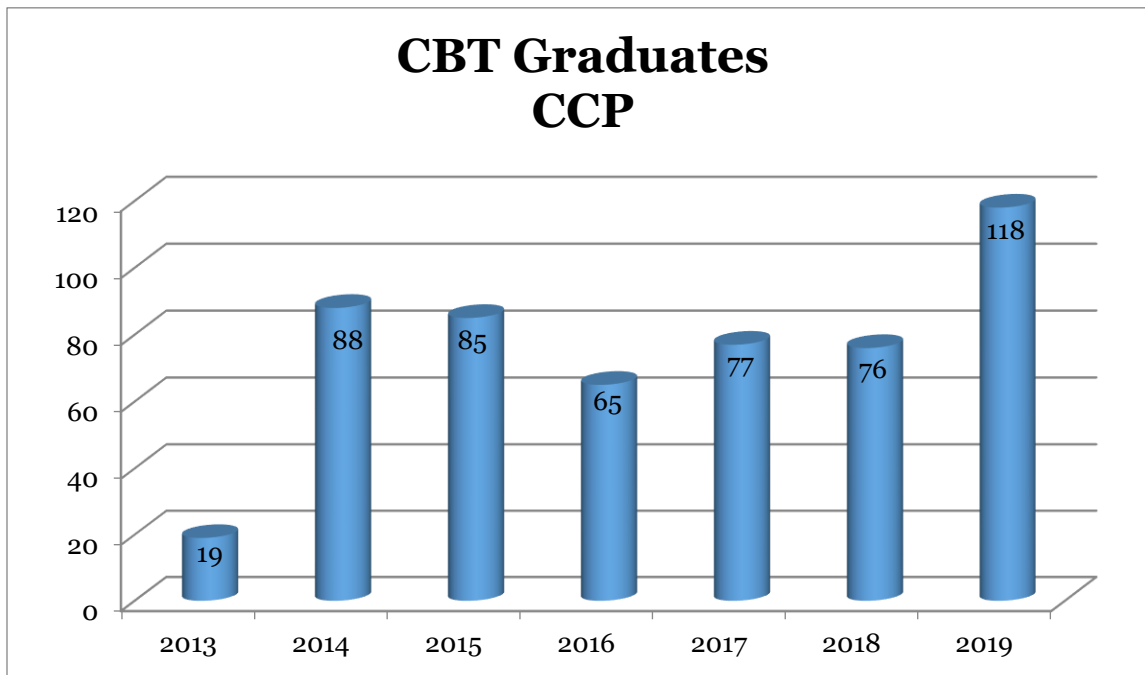
**Expectations and Measurable Goals** – Enter a description of the costs of the project, how it was funded, projected impact, number of inmates diverted or assisted, utilization of risk assessment, impact on recidivism. This section is worth 20 points

The Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program consists of a combination of



classroom and hands-on learning. The National Institute of Corrections Thinking for a Change (T4C) curriculum was funded through a Reentry Strategic Plan Grant. Funding in the amount of \$6,000 for training and \$308 for supplies was awarded. Further grant funded was received through the Women's Reentry Assessment & Programming (WRAP) grant in the amount of \$7,650 and we were able to purchase and train staff to deliver the gender specific Moving On Program for At Risk Women (Orbis Partners, Inc.) along with \$600 to train staff in *S.E.L.F.* Trauma-Informed Psycho-educational Group Curriculum (Bloom). Gateway HorseWorks Stable Pathways is a nonprofit organization that receives funding through private donations. Through private donations a facility was created at Chester County Prison which includes a shed, fenced in area and picnic tables. Chester County Prison bought benches for \$1,160.

Since the implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Programs in Chester County in 2013 until 2018 participation has remained steady. However, 2019 showed a great increase. With the assistance of prison staff making referrals, offenders having interest in participation and Judges adding CBT as a condition on original sentences and violations, we hope to continue impacting more clients.



According to the 2018 update on prisoner Recidivism by the Bureau of Justice Statistics 60.1% of prisoners are arrested two (2) years upon release.

Since the inception of our CBT Programs the two-year recidivism rates (technical and new charges) for all CBT Graduates are as follows:

- ✚ 2014 – 11.9%
- ✚ 2015 – 14.0%
- ✚ 2016 – 10.6%
- ✚ 2017 – 9.4%

The results have been incredible and the overall impact shows that the Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program is having a positive effect on recidivism.

**Evaluation/Sustainability** – Enter details describing the process for evaluating success including assessment methodologies, data reports, continuation, and determination of success. This section is worth 10 points

The success of the Cognitive Behavioral Equine Enhancement Program will be evaluated in the following ways:

- Reduction in write-ups and discipline while incarcerated
- Reduction in recidivism rates (new charges and technical)
- Change in behavior and thinking
- Increase in jail days saved

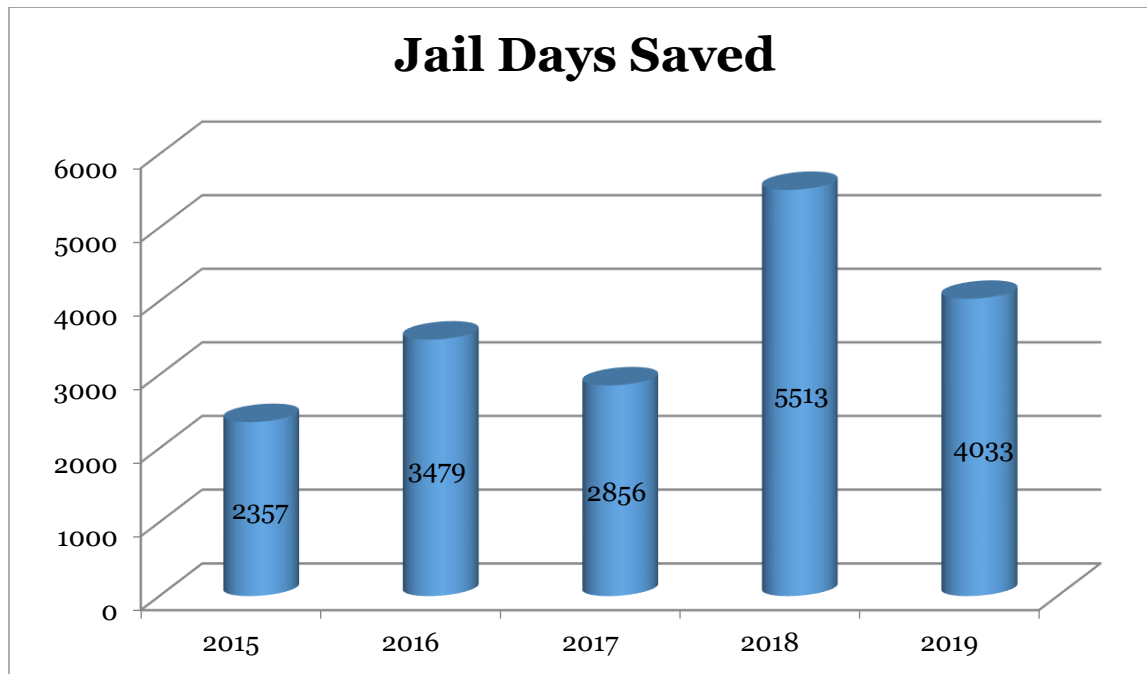
In 2019, 116 male and female inmates completed the T4C or Moving On Programs at Chester County Prison. According to prison officials, of those inmates who completed CBT Programs, 12.9% received write-ups or misconducts post-graduation. This was a significant decrease in write-ups which usually average one write-up per inmate. In 2018, based on the entire inmate population, there were 857 major citations heard before the Disciplinary Board and 825 in 2019.

Based on our original research in 2013, the PA Recidivism Report from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections showed a 45% re-arrest rate in Chester County. Since the inception of our CBT Programs the two-year recidivism rates (technical and new charges) for all CBT Graduates are as follows:

- ✚ 2014 – 11.9%
- ✚ 2015 – 14.0%
- ✚ 2016 – 10.6%
- ✚ 2017 – 9.4%

Based on the above decrease in recidivism rates and write-ups or misconducts, there is a clear benefit demonstrated by offenders in their change in behavior and thinking.

Since 2015 we have been recording the number of jail days saved by completing CBT programs (early parole). With the cost to house an inmate in Chester County Prison being approximately \$100 per day that is significant amount of savings.



Future goals for our Cognitive Behavioral Equine Expanded Program include:

- Inmates more involved with the care of animals
- Building a barn to house the animals at Chester County Prison
- Open program up to clients in our Veterans Court and Mental Health Court Programs.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Please include any supporting documentation to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project. Scoring will be based on factors including the entrant's description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives. Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION SHOULD BE COPIED AND PASTED DIRECTLY INTO THE FORM USING THE BOX BELOW**

Website for Gateway HorseWorks  
<https://www.gatewayhorseworks.org/>

Article regarding HorseWorks with women inmates  
[https://www.dailylocal.com/news/national/women-inmates-helped-by-horses/article\\_2700fc7e-b8ff-5fce-b4a7-a51751ddab9c.html](https://www.dailylocal.com/news/national/women-inmates-helped-by-horses/article_2700fc7e-b8ff-5fce-b4a7-a51751ddab9c.html)

Article regarding prisoners working with horses  
<file:///P:/Awards/Article.Mustang.html>

Picture of Horseworks Session – Off Sight Location



**All forms must contain at least one signature.** Signatures can be entered electronically, or submitted via fax using a separate form. To sign, right-click on the signature line, select "Signature Setup" from the drop down, and follow the prompts. If submitting signatures on a separate form, enter "FAXING" on the signature line.

X 

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County Chief Executive Officer

X 

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Chair of Board of Commissioners

**SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY – To submit the entry, save a copy of this completed form after all information, including signatures and supporting materials have been added. When saving the form, please assure that the document name includes the county name, the type of project and the year – (i.e. FranklinJailAward2020). Address an email to [bpenyak@pacounties.org](mailto:bpenyak@pacounties.org) and attach the award submission.**