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NEWS RELEASE

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SHERIFF GOLDEN PROUD TO ANNOUNCE S.M.A.R.T.

Freehold: Positivity coming out of our correctional institution is something to be extremely proud of and those who have created this momentum are to be commended. On April 20, 2020, the S.M.A.R.T (Streets Making A Right Turn) Way Newsletter made its debut at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution.

“This newsletter is comprised of short stories, poetry and artwork submitted by inmates currently housed at MCCI,” said Sheriff Shaun Golden. “It came about amid COVID-19, when safety protocols had to be implemented in every section of the jail, and inmate interaction was severely restricted for the safety of the inmates and staff.”

S.M.A.R.T. was an additional step to help reduce stress and anxiety during the pandemic which, due to the extraordinary measures taken by the medical, social service and correctional staff, helped maintain a safe environment through exceptional safety and screening protocols and through the expanded use of video communications capabilities.

Social Services/Substance Abuse Services Supervisor Stephanie Ruane and her team received much positive feedback from the inmate population when the idea for a newsletter created from contributions from the inmate population was initially discussed.

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Twenty submissions were received out of which fourteen were chosen for inclusion for the first edition of the S.M.A.R.T. (Streets Making A Right Turn) Way Newsletter.

Inmates may submit their stories, poetry or artwork through Social Services or Substance Abuse Services. The newsletter is seen by all inmates, staff and administration and is printed bi-monthly. Submissions must be approved, must have a positive message and be free of negative or derogatory comments.

In the formative stages of the SMART Way Newsletter, Ms. Ruane provided two books to the inmates participating: *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, and *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne. Inmates were asked to read the books and then asked to share their thoughts on ways that they could apply what they learned in those two books to positively influence each of their own lives.

A special thanks to Supervisor Stephanie Ruane and her Social Services and Substance Abuse teams for creating the idea of the S.M.A.R.T. Way Newsletter and providing this unique forum for expression combined with motivational readings that positively impact the participants. More importantly, these articles illustrate and prove to our contributors the truth to what novelist George Eliot once said, "It's never too late to be what you might have become".

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