

ERIE COUNTY *connection*



Shifting Gears: *Bike Around the County* promotes *Safe Routes to School*

Friday, September 18th marked the County Executive’s third annual Bike Around the County. Twenty-five cyclists joined County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper on the 37 mile trek, including County and State employees, cycling advocates, small-business owners and Erie County constituents.

The route took participants through parts of Erie, Millcreek, Lake City, Fairview and Girard, with stops at various elementary and middle schools to meet with students and faculty. One of the focuses of the ride was to promote the County’s participation in the Department of Transportation’s *Mayor’s Challenge for Safer, People, Safer Streets*. The program’s focus for Erie County is to identify and develop [Safe Routes to School](#) for kids in our region. These meetings gave the County Executive the opportunity to learn first- hand what transportation challenges exist for our students.



Students at Elk Valley Elementary school tell County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper how they practice bike safety

The Safe Routes to School initiative is funded and managed by the Erie County Department of Health and the Erie County Planning Department. The project involves mapping and inventorying existing conditions and

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Riders take a break to visit the Lincoln Community Center Library

barriers, parent and student surveys, community outreach, site views with District and Municipal Officials, and action plans for each District. The County has also assisted local officials in identifying and applying for funding sources to implement the plans.

The riders also enjoyed visits to borough and township offices, the Lincoln Community Center/Library, lunch at M Café and a ride on the water taxi from Presque Isle back to downtown Erie. The group looks forward to next year's ride!



Director of Administration Attends National Security Seminar

Gary N. Lee, Director of Administration, recently attended the 61st annual U.S. Army War College National Security Seminar. Lee was nominated to participate by U.S. Senator Pat Toomey.

Each academic year at the U.S. Army War College concludes with a symposium during which students and civilian guests (or "new members"), such as Mr. Lee, critically examine national security and defense issues affecting our nation. The National Security Seminar is designed to heighten military and civilian understanding of the society they serve and the trends that influence national security policy.

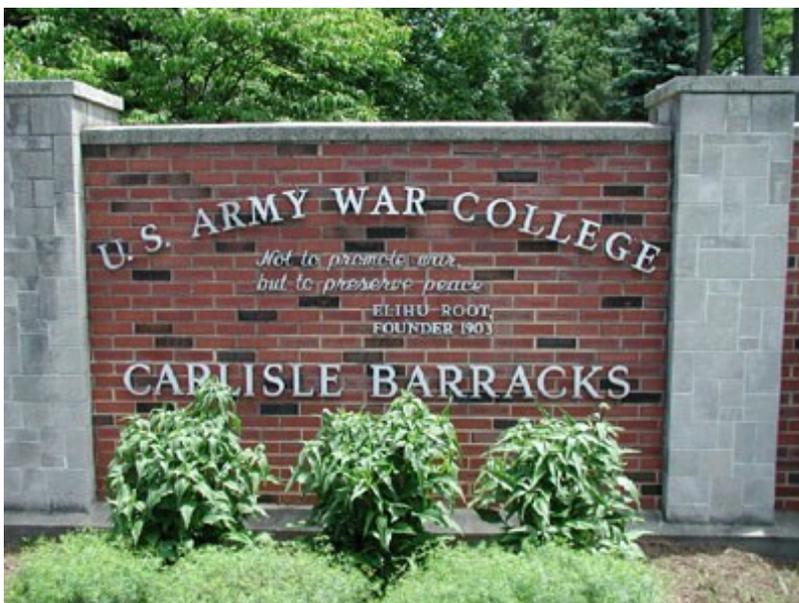
The War College, located in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, is the Army's center for strategic thought and delivers senior-level professional education to members from all the Armed Forces and select national



strategy professionals. "I

am honored to have been selected as a new member to attend such a prestigious event... This will allow Erie County to receive a global perspective on national security initiatives," stated Mr. Lee.

This outreach program specifically invites new members who do not have a close affiliation with the military. Civilian members come from across the country and represent a broad range of occupations, geographic regions, and a cross-section of American perspectives.



Welcome to the Team!



Join us in welcoming the newest member to our team, Sabrina Fischer, who has recently been appointed as the Director of Human Resources. She earned a Master of Arts degree in Management from the Antioch University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Resources from The Ohio State University.

With more than twenty years of experience in Human Resource Management and expertise in the areas of employee relations, human resource metrics, compensation and benefits, and recruitment, we welcome her talents with confidence.

Reinventing the Library: The *Idea Lab*

Libraries have long served as a community and educational resource for the public. Whether it be studying, researching or recreational reading, libraries provide easy access to the necessary resources. The obstacle, then, is the inevitable advancement of technology and community demands. In 2015, these advancements occur rapidly. So how does a library stay relevant in an ever-growing and adapting technological age? Mary Rennie, Director of the Erie County Public Library, has a plan to reinvent the concept of the Library to reflect our technological age and provide for the community it serves.

The idea behind the project, termed the “Idea Lab”, is a transition from a book-based, collection centered building to an incubation space for exploring creativity, encouraging natural curiosities and creating opportunities for learning and growth through hands-on experiences. Such opportunities include public technology expansion, business-centered support and experiential learning. Projects like the Idea Lab have been implemented in other regions of the country. Rennie notes that the nearby Cleveland Heights Library's Knowledge and Innovation Center is one of her inspirations for the proposal. They have integrated technology and personal support, and revolutionized their library by adapting to new, collaborative environments and a contemporary mentality.

Partnerships with local individuals, community groups, businesses and non-profits will ensure the success of the Erie County Public Library's project. These partnerships will provide support in many ways for the Idea Lab. Partners can provide assistance with new technologies including social, educational or technical support for small businesses. It will also provide entrepreneurs and other individuals with networking opportunities and collaborative spaces to meet and work. Classes and workshops will also be offered.

Public meetings will be held on October 13 at 6 PM and October 16 at 10 AM to discuss the Idea Lab and the redesign of the Blasco Library. Representatives from Bostwick Design Firm and library staff will be present. Find out more by visiting the Erie County Library's [webpage](#).



Educating the Community in Unconventional Classrooms: Students visit the Erie County Prison

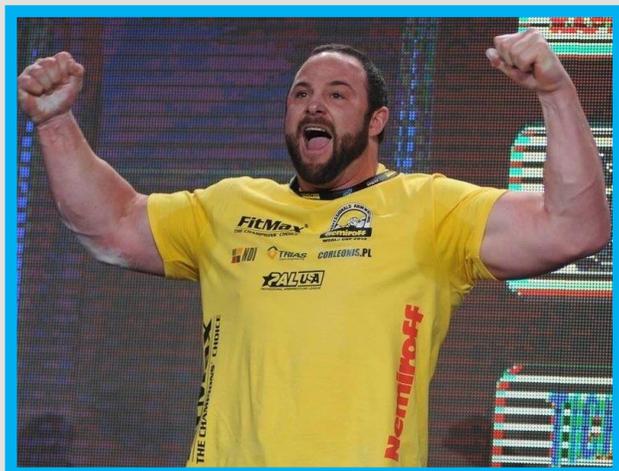
Education happens in and outside of the classroom – sometimes on topics and in places students would never expect. For local Erie County students, that place could be the Erie County Prison. The Erie County Department of Corrections has been conducting forums to educate the public about the work that is done behind their walls every day. These forums include Career Days, the 2015 Veterans' Resource Expo, Erie County Days and public tours.

Over 800 high school and college students have toured the Erie County Prison so far this year. These tours serve as an outlet for the Erie County Department of Corrections to increase community awareness of prison operations. The tours provide the public, public officials and local students a glimpse into the inner workings of a secure detention environment and clarifies any preconceived notions some may have regarding prisons. For one student from Girard High School, the tour opened her eyes and changed her perception: "[The staff] was so nice. I thought they would be mean because they worked in a prison!" Oftentimes, such misconceptions are due to the way correctional facilities and correction officers are portrayed by the media – specifically through television and movies.

Through their initiative, the Erie County Department of Corrections is educating the community about the realities of the Prison and the highly trained, professional staff who work diligently to keep Erie County citizens safe. They explain the process of incarceration and emphasize the hardships on family relationships caused by incarceration. Reasons for incarceration, particularly drug use, are discussed with the visitors.

The tours seem to help deter students from practicing behaviors that may lead them to eventual incarceration. A teacher from Girard High School noted, "The bus ride back to school was filled with conversation about the students 'never wanting to go to prison,' which is obviously one goal of such a trip."

It is the intention of the Erie County Prison Administration to have all individuals who tour the facility leave with a clearer and more realistic understanding of incarceration and prison operations. And for many, the tour does just that. An eighth grade student from Roosevelt Middle School said, "It got me thinking about a career in law enforcement... Captain Carman and Lieutenant Kitts gave us some really good information about the prison and cleared up some misconceptions." ■



Chaffee Takes the Championship... again!

Erie County Corrections Officer Dave Chaffee recently won his second straight World Armwrestling League right-handed super heavyweight championship. Congratulations, Dave—we're very proud of you!

Watch Dave's win [here](#).



Employee SPOTLIGHT

Q: What is your job title?

A: Administrative Officer II; primarily coordinate an array of communications – both internal and external in the Office of the County Executive, Director of Administration, and the County Solicitor

Q: What do you think is the most important quality needed for success?

A: Humility

Q: What is your most proud moment from your career?

A: Shaking the hand of Congressman John Lewis in 2010.

Q: Have any “hidden talents”?

A: Observing and coloring!

Q: If your life story was pitched for a movie, who would you cast as your role?

A: Audra McDonald – her voice is amazing!

Q: You're a new addition to the crayon box - what color would you be and why?

A: Modesty – a grayish, violet hue with a hint of blush! I'd color the world with it! A little goes a long way.

Q: If you were on an island and could only bring three things, what would you bring?

A: Vitamin E

A waterproof blanket

Swiss Army Knife

Q: What would you do if you won the lottery?

A: Buy a home in Ravenna, Italy, start an image consulting firm for young professionals, and self-publish short stories with my daughter as the main character!

Q: If you could have dinner with one famous person, living or from history, who would it be and why?

A: Judy Smith – the real Olivia Pope. She is the ultimate gladiator.

Q: If you had a time machine, what time period and/or event would

you go to? (past or future)

A: The future – never look back!

Q: What is your favorite time era for music?

A: Definitely the 80s! Michael Jackson, Hall and Oates, Phil Collins, Prince, Madonna, Whitney Houston... the list goes on!



Olivia Pope (played by Kerry Washington) and Judy Smith, who inspired the role

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