A big WELCOME goes out to William Norris (aka "Norris), our newest pretrial officer. Norris hails from The Tar Heel State, where he obtained his Bachelor’s degree from University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Norris previously worked at Tabor Correctional as a Corrections Officer and prior to coming to RCJA, at State Probation in North Carolina as a Gang Specialist!! When not working, Norris enjoys hunting and fishing and is a Huge Carolina Panthers fan!! Norris plans to work forever, yet hopes to retire (one day) to beautiful mountains of North Carolina!! We are thrilled to have him as part of our RCJA team!

Spotlight: Norris (AKA) Mr. William Norris

We have several upcoming events as we end the year. In November the RCJA Criminal Justice Board hosts a Legislative Breakfast to honor those that work so hard in our community to help make our communities better places. There are also two sets of awards that are also done on that day. One is the CIT awards where first responding staff are acknowledged for the hard work they do as part of the Crisis Intervention Team. The second one is the RCJA staff awards where those we partner with us in the work we do (Judges, Police, Counselors, Clerks, etc.) can nominate staff for awards to show appreciation for the work we do.

Upcoming Events
Drug Court Graduation

On August 13, 2018, The Hopewell Prince George Surry Drug Court celebrated another Graduation. There were two graduates in this class; Jonathan Talbert and Michael Parker. You may have seen them noted in a previous newsletter. The Drug Court programs in Virginia take a comprehensive approach to the blend of judicial restraint and treatment. Each participant attends a series of groups and programs that include but are not limited to Substance Abuse Treatment, Relapse Prevention work, Anger Management, Clinical Process Groups, Life skills Group, Moral Reconation Therapy, Budgeting, Job seeking development as well as Mental Health evaluations and individual counseling. These participants receive rewards as well as sanctions and many times both are immediate and behavioral focused. Group cohesion and teamwork is amongst not only in the Drug Court Team but amongst the participants. Many times the participants become very close through groups and build each other’s recovery support system. The participants become a Family and as a Family enjoy celebrating successes. This day the team and the participants gathered as a family to share the joy as Jonathan Talbert and Michael Parker Graduated from an intense and highly supported program to forge ahead to the next step of their life and recovery. Join me in saying Congratulations and all the best for the future to Jonathan and Michael.
On September 20, 2018, Riverside Criminal Justice Agency held its Third Annual Recovery Night event. September is the national SAMSHA Celebrate Recovery Month. This year was a smaller and more intimate gathering of those who have or are attending treatment at the RCJA office. Just as last year we had our guest speaker Tony from the Center for Therapeutic Justice lead the event. His love and passion for people and his dynamic presentation and fun approach help to make a successful Recovery night. Officer Harold Shreves, joined us again as our Chief Grill Master. Those attending the event were treated to hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hotdogs, water, soda, and chips for dinner. Many times on most days there are several participants that come in with a pack lunch or snack before group because they come straight from work, so having food provided and cooked for them show more than a simple gesture it shows them that people care. Let’s remember and celebrate those that have entered recovery and those who work so hard daily to help others maintain their recovery from the peer who supports them to the Directors of Agencies.
Has anyone ever wondered how RCJA continues to provide quality supervision and continues to be helpful to the Courts, People and Communities it serves? Well, here is one of the many answers. Teamwork! In an effort to foster continued teamwork and help our staff think outside the standard box that the criminal justice system can often find itself in; every year we have a teambuilding event at Camp Hanover. We as a team face many obstacles that challenge our perceptions, help us to push out of our comfort zones and to get much closer to each other professionally and personally. Many are physical but all are a thinking work out as well. Plus it gives us the added bonus of getting out of the office and getting in to the outdoors seems to refresh the group and help us return more able to serve.
Here are 20 straightforward strategies to help improve teamwork in your startup today:

1. **Lead by example** - If you want your team to communicate with each other, work hard, produce strong results and keep the business moving forward then you must lead by example and do the same. Treat your own roles, responsibilities and relationships with coworkers the same way you want others to.

2. **Build up trust and respect** - Nothing is going to get done within a team, or company as a whole, if there isn’t mutual trust and respect among employees and with management. Team members must trust each other to do their part as well as trust their leaders to be guiding them in the right direction.

3. **Encourage socializing** - Set aside time for team members to get to know one another on a more personal level to increase mutual trust, respect and understanding. This can be as simple as after-hour drinks or a laid-back office party, just get people talking!

4. **Cultivate open communication** - Encourage team members to speak open, share ideas, make suggestions and voice their opinions across all aspects of the business. Communication is a two-way street and employees should feel like they can add to the conversation both with superiors and peers.

5. **Clearly outline roles and responsibilities** - Everyone in a team should have a crystal clear understanding of what their role and responsibilities within the group are. This will help limit confusion or time spent organizing and delegating work so individuals can simply focus on their task at hand.

6. **Organize team processes** - Along with establishing clear roles, there should be set team processes in place for working on a project, mitigating setbacks, communicating with each other and providing feedback. Again, these guidelines will help employees spend less time on logistics and more on their actual work.

7. **Set defined goals** - Each team should know exactly what they’re working toward including what goals they need to be hitting and when. Set measurable goals within a specific timeframe that group members can measure themselves against both individually and as a team. Knowing where they stand in relation to the outlined benchmarks will provide added motivation and incentive to work together.

8. **Recognize good work** - Praising and recognizing a job well done will boost confidence and morale, encouraging teams and individuals to keep up the good work.

9. **Mediate conflict quickly and efficiently** - It’s normal for conflict to arise in a team setting – there may be a communication breakdown at some point or people may have personal issues. How conflict is managed should be clear under the team processes. If a team member has an issue, how should they handle it? Who should they speak to first? Make these practices and expectations clear from the beginning then handle situations quickly to help a team move on and maintain a good working environment.

10. **Allow team members to actively take part in decision-making** - Having a sense of personal involvement in the decision-making process will solidify individuals’ connection and investment in the team, making them feel like they are an integral part of something rather than just a piece of the puzzle.

11. **Use task and time management techniques** - Collect and streamline team tasks, progress, deadlines and updates with a project management system.

12. **Maintain the balance of work** - Of course different team members will be working on different tasks, but try to ensure that everyone still has similar workloads. There shouldn’t be any single person bearing the brunt of the work. The point of being in a team is to work together to share the load and create something one couldn’t do on their own.

13. **Meet regularly... and mix it up** - Meetings shouldn’t get in the way of productivity or be a waste of time, but teams should still meet regularly to touch base, check in on progress and goals, throw ideas around and build awareness about what each member is working on. Plan regular meetings to reconnect, but make sure the time is used efficiently and effectively and consider switching things up by trying a walking meeting or meeting in a different place, like a coffee shop. Taking things outside of the workplace has been shown to increase productivity and let communication flow more naturally.

14. **Don’t micromanage** - While teams should be meeting regularly together and with their supervisors, it’s still important not to micromanage. Give your team the time, space and independence to produce work on their own without feeling like they’re always being watched or judged.

15. **Create space** - Give your team the physical and mental space to create and work in peace. This may mean setting specific times where group meetings happen, giving people space to work alone or are not allowed to send or check email. Things can get done more quickly as a team, however individuals still need their personal time to focus on their part of the project.

16. **Start team traditions** - This goes for teams and the company as a whole – create traditions to help bring people together and establish a sense of unified culture and solidarity. They can be silly and simple, such as a running inside joke, or serious and elaborate, like offering a large incentive for when a team has reached their goals, but find a way for the team to connect on another level that isn’t just work-related.

17. **Use size to your advantage** - Both big and small teams have their own advantages. Larger teams have more manpower, but smaller groups often tend to show more personal investments and take individual responsibility for getting things done. Whatever the size of your team is, consider what it needs to work best and use its size to your advantage.

18. **Make hiring a team responsibility** - When adding someone new to the company or team, have the existing team weigh in on the final decision, especially if they’re a small group. One person’s skills, attitude and work ethic can easily affect overall group dynamics. By having the opportunity to weigh in on newcomers, the existing team will be able to help choose the best fit.

19. **Give frequent feedback** - Teams should receive frequent feedback from their leaders and each other. This can mean feedback on completed work but also include sharing any questions, insights, praise or problems the team may be having.

20. **Take time to celebrate** - Acknowledge and honor team wins. Not only is celebrating simply fun, but it also helps reinforce a team’s willingness to work together and work hard for the company when their effort is clearly appreciated and celebrated.