

# KANE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER



## A Note from the Superintendent

Spring is the season of renewal and growth and we at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center are embracing that adage. In our ongoing effort to promote a safe, warm and nurturing environment, we are taking steps to improve the aesthetics and functionality of our facility. This includes everything from installing a new security system to painting murals on the walls. This is also the approach we take toward hiring. We have been fortunate to welcome several new staff members who embrace our kid-focused approach. We are also literally growing, as in herbs and vegetables, with the addition of our classroom garden towers and construction of several raised beds for our outdoor garden. In the end, our ultimate goal is planting seeds of change, with the belief that what we are doing will someday make a difference in the lives of the kids we work with.

*Mike Davis*

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## Meet Supervisor Corey Harris

I was born in Rockford, Illinois. I am the youngest of nine children; five sisters and three brothers. My family is the biggest inspiration in my life. I attended Boylan Catholic High School in Rockford, Illinois, where I played 3 sports and also made the Honor Roll. I went to Aurora University and graduated in 2003. While at Aurora University, I was a four-year Varsity Football Team member. I started working with Kane County at the Clerk's Office in 2006. Working in Juvenile Court fueled my passion to work with juveniles. That same year, I started my career at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center. I just recently got married to the love of my life, Surita Harris, who also works for Kane County. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with my family and friends, and traveling. I've enjoyed working at the JJC these past thirteen years and I look forward to continuing to grow and retire with the County.



### [Swearing-in Ceremony](#)

On April 15, 2019, Chief Judge Susan Clancy Boles swore in our newest Youth Counselors: Ronald Torkilsen, Patricia Monarrez, Bryan Hillman, Heather Hoffmann, Sara Simpson, Alyssa Beavers, Joseph Caballero, Quincy Owens, Erika Edwards, Yesenia Rangel and Shamika Gould. They have all done a great job for us and would like to welcome them to our team!

## Garden Club

These two alien-like towers are part of a federal grant awarded to the JJC to encourage the Farm to School Program for the residents at the JJC. The intent of this program is to encourage and expose the residents as to how food goes from production to your table. The indoor towers are cared for by two residents and two staff, Mr. Weiser and Ms. Herrmann, who will be tending the towers and the plants along with the assistance of Ms. Sloan, JJC Biology Teacher.

The towers are a small part of the overall Garden Club activities that are a part of the larger grant. The indoor garden towers use a process of growing called “aeroponics”. This system uses nutrient-rich water that is contained in the bases of the towers. In the base is a pump connected to a hose that shoots up through the center of the towers. The water is suctioned up through the hose to the top of the tower, where it fills another reservoir that has holes in the bottom that allows the water to fall like raindrops onto the roots of the plants that are entwined in a medium called “rockwool”, a spongy-like material that allow the seeds to grow.

The kitchen staff determined which plants would be useful in the kitchen. The hope is that enough produce will be grown to allow for meals in the kitchen and possibly for taste testing for the residents. The following herbs and vegetables were planted: sweet cherry tomatoes, cilantro, sweet basil, and another variety of tomato. All students are able to watch as these herbs and vegetables grow into a source of food for the residents.

Ms. Sharon Sloan, JJC Teacher





Thank you to the following people for sacrificing their weekends to help with the garden project:

Amy Sierra, Pam Ely, Durin Caplan, Stephanie Sauriol, Lisa Aust, LaTanya Hill, Emily Saylor, Mike Roman, Julie Goodwick, Sharon Sloan, Ricki Chaidez and Liz Whittaker.

## Meet JJC Math Teacher Zach Steffes

Zach Steffes has over 10 years of experience as a creative and enthusiastic math teacher, joining the team at the Juvenile Justice Center in 2014. He previously worked at various public and private high schools and middle schools in Milwaukee, WI and Rockford, IL, where he first began making math music videos. In addition to creating math music videos, he has also written motivational songs and recorded music videos to aid in teaching CBT to our residents. During his time at the JJC, Mr. Steffes has collaborated with math experts and colleagues to develop engaging math and health curriculums. He has also presented his teaching strategies from the JJC at education conferences; presenting alone, as well as with the JJC School team. He is the proud father of 4 children; 3 of which were born during the past 5 years since he started working at the JJC.



## *Creating a Nurturing Environment*



Thank you to the Tilly Family, the members of Chapelstreet Church and the residents for helping with the beautiful murals.

While there is little that can be done to change the physical layout of the facility, by adding lap desks and chalk boards to all of the rooms, we're hoping to add warmth and further assist the kids in dealing with the stress of being detained.



## My Time at the JJC by Resident R.B.

We asked one of the kids who has been with us the longest if he would be interested in writing a letter about his experiences at the JJC for our newsletter. He was told he could write whatever he wanted, in his own words. We're proud of the progress he has made during his time with us and we are excited to share his original, unedited letter with you.

My time here at the JJC is coming to an end. I will soon be departing from here, but let me tell you about my experiences. Over the eight months I've been here, JJC has had a lot of opportunities and programs you can get into to make your time here the best it can be.

First off, the level system: there are three levels when you first get here you start on level one and move up levels every week level two then three. You level up based on your behavior level three being the best it has many perks. When you are on level three you get a radio in your room commissary everyday level three dinner every other week and movie night every Friday in the gym with popcorn. There's a CBT program the JJC uses (Cognitive Behavior Training) it's a program to change the way you think about things before you act. The program encourages rational thinking we also have focus groups on CBT two times every day.

As you can see level three is the place to be. There are many more programs in the JJC not just for the level three residents. Building assistant, book club and garden club there many additional clubs you can get into. Building assistant helps make the clothing rolls for everyone in the building as well as folding the laundry. You do it for a week every night and you get paid at the end of the week on coupons there are many other ways to earn coupons like in school and helping out the staff that's how you buy commissary.

Then there's book club, book club is when you and a group of other residents meet every Tuesday in classroom and read a book for an hour. Everyone gets their own copy and you have group discussions and sharing thoughts on the book based off what you read and there's snacks included. Another program is garden club you get to plant and water all kinds of plants outside in the garden area there's always something nice growing.

You have opportunity to be part of ECC the Elgin Community College classes it's two weeks and if you complete it you get a college credit, and half a high school credit there's three different class rotations college 101, career searching, and resume building/interviews. All of these classes tie into each other so it's best that you try to take all three. Finally a pizza party to end off each of the classes.

There's a ceramics class you get to paint ceramic plates and send them home to your family or even give them to staff. You can also make bowls out of clay the volunteers take them and bring them back once they've been fired. So they look real nice then you can send those to your family as well it's usually a once a month thing.

As well there's the summer programs like the cooking class a lady comes in and cooks meals and little snacks for the residents so they can learn. Music class is a fun one a music teacher comes in and teaches up how to play the guitar and African drums. Last but not least feed my starving children which is usually once a year thing. The whole JJC gets together and packages food tons of fun and great opportunity to help the kids in need.

Thankfully, I got to do just about all of these programs and have all these opportunities. As you can tell the JJC wants to help the residents that come in and make it the best experience for them during their stay here. Maybe with the help of some funding there could be many more programs to come. Thanks for making my stay at the JJC the best it can be.

## Meet Supervisor Stephanie Sauriol



I have lived in Batavia most of my life. I think I have a pretty decent sense of humor. I often find humor in most situations and feel it is a good way to blow off steam. I graduated from Batavia High School in 2006 and was accepted into Western Illinois University. I spent three and half years on campus and completed an internship at the Juvenile Justice Center to complete my college career. I graduated in 2010 with a degree in law enforcement and psychology. Shortly after graduating, I was offered a position at the JJC. Over the years, I was a youth counselor, Senior Youth Counselor and finally made it to supervisor. While working at the JJC, I found that I have a passion for the detention environment and the all the people involved. When I am not at work, I spend the majority of my time with my three-year-old daughter, who is extremely active! We spend most of our time doing activities outside the house, such as trampoline parks, parks, the zoo and so forth. I recently signed her up for gymnastics, which is so much fun to do together. Finally, when I get an opportunity to relax, I spend my time with my two mastiffs, Paul and Ringo (yes, I am a Beatles fan) playing catch and tug of war. My favorite time of year is fall, mainly because it's football season! I love the Bears and have since I was younger. My daughter and I also have so much fun at the apple orchards and pumpkin patches. At the end of the day, I love my job and have the most amazing family. As stated before, I always find humor in situations and try to enjoy life as much as I can.

## Coretta Scott King Book Donation Grant

The Kane County Juvenile Justice Center is a proud recipient of this year's Coretta Scott King Book Awards Donation Grant.

The Coretta Scott King Book Donation Grant is presented annually by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Community of the American Library Association's (ALA) Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table.

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards encourage the artistic expression of the African American experience through literature and graphic arts. Since 1969, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards annually recognize outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values.



Thank you to Pam Ely, Ellen Schmid and Brandon Buckley (not pictured), who wrote and submitted the grant. Also pictured are Mike Davis and Amy Sierra.

## Seed Bombs



In an effort to reintroduce local vegetation and wild flowers (and it's just fun!), the kids launched seed bombs into the area surrounding the JJC's recreational area. Thank you to Diane and Holly of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for providing the materials.



## Computer Lab

Thanks to the federal Title I Grant, the Kane County Regional Office of Education purchased new student computers and seating for the JJC's Computer Lab and new student iPads. The Title I Grant provides technical assistance and support to the schools identified with students at risk of academic failure, in order to improve student achievement and assist with school improvement efforts. These upgrades will allow us to serve our students more efficiently and innovatively.