



the Green sheet

Victim Advocate addresses BTA graduating Class 122

On Friday, June 26, BTA Class 122 graduated 22 new parole agents who are now assigned to the Board of Probation and Parole's offices across the state.

This graduation ceremony featured guest speaker Jennifer R. Storm, the Victim Advocate for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Ms. Storm asked the new agents to "be a role model...a leader...and an agent of change.

"You have the potential to significantly impact the lives of so many who have been taken off course by a variety of factors including but not limited to addiction, mental health, a lack of education and poor family structures. So as an agent of change there are a few things you will need in order to succeed," Storm said.

Storm highlighted five key components she felt were critical for their success on the job.

Clear vision

"You will need to be able to communicate in the most simplest of terms what your expectations are of the person you are supervising," Storm said. "You must be clear with offenders so they fully understand what it is that you expect of them."

Patience and Persistence

"Change does NOT happen overnight and people need to be given the opportunity to make mistakes within reason and have the room and space to grow," Storm said. "This will require a lot of patience and persistence on your part, celebrate even the smallest of successes with your clients as every step forward is major progress for that person and any step back must be treated as a learning tool, even if that means re-incarceration."

Ask Tough Questions

Storm cautioned, "Don't let the offender just tell you their story without inquiry, because their story is the version they want you to know. If you do not challenge it, success won't happen. Focus on their goals and ask hard questions to get them thinking differently."

Lead by example

"You cannot tell an offender that you expect them to report on time or show up on time to work if you aren't doing the same with them during your appointments," Storm stated. "Lead by example."



Jennifer R. Storm

Trust

Storm pointed out that none of her previous comments means anything if agents do not have a solid relationship with an offender. "People will not be motivated to change if they do not trust the person pushing the change," Storm said. "Trust can be built by saying what you do and doing what you say. Don't just talk the talk. You must walk the walk. Be there when you say you will. Hold them accountable when you say you are going to. Be consistent."

Storm then asked the graduating agents to ask themselves: "Why, as the Victim Advocate, do I care?"

"Because you are helping to stop future victimization," Storm explained. "Because you have the ability to ensure the safety of the victims my office serves by effective supervision."

"Our office needs you to assist the victims, return phone calls, listen, make sure the offender is held accountable if they violate a condition involving the victim, require payment of any restitution that is owed, don't let an offender get away with not paying their restitution by making excuses, consider victim needs while their offender is under supervision and engage the offender in a meaningful way that when supervision ends, they will not re-offend," Storm said.

"We realize that one of the hardest parts of your jobs will be having to hear from our victims," Storm said. "You are not going to save everyone. You will not be able to stop every crime or violation from happening. Stay true to these five key principles. You can and will become a seed planter for that offender," Storm concluded. "A seed planter is one who plants the positive and motivating information people need to become informed, educated and successfully change their behaviors."

Deputy Executive Director of the Office of Reentry and Quality Assurance Cynthia Daub performed the Oath of Office for the new parole agents. Together with Deputy Executive Director of the Office of Field Probation and Parole Daniel McIntyre, they presented the badges and graduation certificates to these new parole agents:

Philadelphia Northwest Sub Office: Agents Battle, Braciszewski, Edwards, McCabe and Riddick

Philadelphia Northeast Sub Office: Agents Flickinger, Jones, McCole, Natale, Neifield, Rotkowski and Spain

Class Valedictorian



Agent Woodward receives the BTA Class 122 Valedictorian Award with a seven written test average of 99.143%. Pictured with him are (Left to right) BTA Training Director Lou Perez, Director of Training Greg Young, Agent Woodward, and Deputy Executive Directors Cynthia Daub and Daniel McIntyre

Class Top Gun – Marksmanship Award



Agent Flickinger receives the BTA Class 122 Top Gun-Marksmanship Award. Pictured are (Left to right) Mr. Young, Mr. Perez, Ms. Daub and Mr. McIntyre

SCI-Coal Township: Agents Straub and Paul

Allentown District Office: Agent Blankenhorn

Erie District Office: Agent Evans

North Shore Sub Office: Agent Goolsby

SCI-Chester: Agent Mattia

Lancaster Sub Office: Agent Rhine

SCI-Frackville: Agent Russell

SCI-Fayette: Agent Upton

Reading Sub Office: Agent Woodward