

# Press



# Release

## PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM

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Michael A. Nutter, Mayor  
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### **Opening Ceremony – Correctional Employee Week**

#### **Mayor Nutter Dedicates Mural Celebrating Prison Employees**

May 5, 2008 -- Mayor Michael A. Nutter joins Prison Commissioner Louis Giorla and the staff of the Philadelphia Prison System for Opening Day Celebration of Correctional Employee Week at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility. Honoring the 2,200 city employees and over 600 contract employees who work at the Prison System, Mayor Nutter Proclaimed the Week of May 5-12 “Correctional Employee Week in Philadelphia.”

“Correctional Officers, Maintenance Workers, Social Workers and Administrative Staff work in concert with contracted employees to foster values of Respect, Service and Integrity, while protecting our communities, and ensuring the safety, security and well-being of over 9000 inmates,” said Mayor Nutter.

Nutter joins Commissioner Giorla, Mural Arts Director Jane Golden, former Prison Commissioner Leon King and mural artist Michael Webb in dedicating a 200 foot-long mural entitled “The Team,” which represents many of the different workgroups at the prisons. Created by lead artist Michael Webb working with inmates over the past year, the design for the mural was conceived by then-Commissioner King, who is now Director of Legislation for Councilman Frank Rizzo. The mural includes vignettes of medical staff, perimeter (bicycle) patrol, drug treatment, education, religious services, correctional emergency response team (CERT), “line-staff” and the Honor Guard as representatives of the many different units that contribute to a successful workplace.

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*Correctional Employee Week, continued...*

“The ten panels of the mural depict just a portion of the work performed by the Correctional Employees of the PPS,” said Commissioner Giorla. “For example, our Information Technology staff, Food Service and Maintenance Divisions, though not pictured, are also integral parts of our operation. But when visitors walk by the ten paintings of the different prison staff, we hope they’ll understand that prison isn’t the reductive, limited, one-dimensional environment that the people imagine. Corrections is an invisible profession. This mural helps make us more visible.”

The Prison System has collaborated with the Mural Arts Program for over 5 years. There are now 28 murals in the jails, most of them located in inmate housing and recreational areas, painted by inmates in collaboration with project artists. Ann Northrup’s “Going Home” (2006) at Riverside Correctional Facility was the System’s first exterior mural – visible to visitors and staff.

Inspired by the success of that project, then-Commissioner King conceived of the idea of creating a mural that would feature and honor the staff of the Prison System. “I thought about how most taxpayers and visitors to our jails had no idea about the breadth of experience and specialization among our staff,” said Commissioner King. I wanted a project that would showcase our staff and provide vocational training to inmates in a useful skill with the possibility of employment upon re-entry.”

Mural Arts Program Director Jane Golden has worked with inmates in Philadelphia and in the State Department of Corrections for over 10 years, and speaks daily of the value of arts programs that offer empowerment and employment for ex-offenders. “We are so excited to be working with the Prisons on this project,” said Golden. “It expresses the very human qualities of this extraordinary workplace, where people care tremendously about making a difference in individual lives.” Mural Arts has built into its contract with the Prisons a post-release employment feature, as an incentive and opportunity for inmate program participants.

Correctional Employee Week is the national week of recognition for workers in jails and prisons. The Philadelphia Prison System celebrates with a full schedule of activities, including picnics and fairs, art exhibits, athletic contests and a formal awards banquet on Friday, May 9, 2008. Please call 215 685-7888 for more information.