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NCIA Newsletter

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Winter 2025 NCIA Newsletter

As we step into 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey we've shared over the past year. Together, we have advanced NCIA's mission to empower individuals, create opportunities, and build stronger, more inclusive communities. Your dedication and passion have been the driving force behind every milestone we achieved, and I am deeply grateful for each of you.

2024 was a year of transformation, resilience, and reflection. We mourned the loss of our beloved co-founder, Herbert Hoelter, whose unwavering vision to reform the criminal justice system and uplift those often overlooked remains the foundation of our work. To honor Herb's legacy and reaffirm our commitment to justice and equality, we are proud to announce the upcoming Criminal Justice Symposium. This event will serve as both a tribute to Herb's life's work and a renewed commitment to the values he so passionately championed: equity, opportunity, and second chances.

As we continue to build on the legacy of our co-founders, Jerry Miller and Herb Hoelter, we are embarking on an organizational culture-shaping initiative this month. This initiative will strengthen our performance, enhance sustainability, and deepen our alignment with the values of equity, compassion, and excellence that define NCIA. Together, we will ensure that our mission endures and evolves, creating lasting impact for generations to come. In 2024, our Youth in Transition program saw new leadership, reinforcing our steadfast commitment to providing the dignity, opportunity, and hope that every individual deserves.



Make sure to like, share, and follow our social media accounts, which are listed below.

Your participation is vital in amplifying our message and connecting with a broader audience. By actively engaging with our social media, you contribute significantly to our mission and help us make a more substantial impact.

Thank you for your continuous support and dedication.

Instagram:
[ncia_changinglives](#)

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[NCIA ChangingLives](#)

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X: [NCIA_Baltimore](#)

Our Adult Services team reached a monumental achievement by transitioning all programs into the State's LTSS billing system—a two-year endeavor that reflects the perseverance and expertise of our staff. At the same time, we expanded our behavioral support services with a dedicated clinical team, ensuring we continue to deliver exceptional care to those we serve.

Our Vocational Training Centers exemplified the transformative power of NCI's mission, training and employing over 250 individuals. These efforts not only opened doors to meaningful career paths but also created real change in our communities, exemplifying our commitment to empowering lives.

Now, as we approach the halfway mark of our three-year strategic plan, the progress we've made is both measurable and inspiring. NCI's innovative programs and impactful achievements have garnered significant media attention, amplifying our reach and inspiring even greater support for the work we do.

Looking ahead to 2025, we face new opportunities to expand our impact, transform more lives, and solidify NCI's role as a beacon of hope and empowerment. Together, we will continue to honor our mission, rise to new challenges, and create brighter futures for those who need us most.

Thank you for being the heart of NCI. Your dedication, compassion, and excellence make everything we achieve possible. Let's make 2025 our most impactful year yet!

With gratitude and optimism,



Carole D. Argo

Carole Argo

Chief Executive Officer



Meet **Kathy Martin**

NCIA is pleased to announce the appointment of Kathy Martin, MA, PHR, SHRM-CP, as our new Senior Director of Human Resources. Kathy brings over 20 years of transformative expertise in human resources management, with a proven track record of aligning HR strategies with organizational goals and fostering inclusive, mission-driven workplace cultures.

Before joining NCIA, Kathy held leadership roles including Vice President of Human Resources at Thompson Creek Window Company and Chief Human Resources Officer at the Board of Child Care. In these roles, she implemented strategic HR initiatives, enhanced operations through automation and compliance, and championed diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her ability to drive organizational growth through talent development, operational improvement, and culture-building aligns perfectly with NCIA's mission of changing lives.

DJ Vail, NCIA's Chief Financial Officer, shared his enthusiasm for Kathy's addition: "We are thrilled to welcome Kathy to the NCIA family. Her deep expertise in human resources, her leadership experience, and her innovative approach make her an outstanding fit for this role. We are confident that Kathy will play a pivotal role in strengthening our HR operations and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for our employees as we continue to grow and serve the community."

Kathy earned her Master's in Human Resources Management from Marymount University and holds both PHR and SHRM-CP certifications. Her broad expertise spans strategic planning, employee engagement, compliance, recruitment, and leadership development, all of which will greatly contribute to NCIA's vision and success.

NCIA Sets 2025 Goals



The NCIA leadership team met for a strategic planning session and goal-setting meeting to kick off 2025.

The NCIA leadership team kicked off the new year with a strategic planning session, setting goals for growth and leadership development in 2025. This gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on past achievements and align on the priorities that will drive success in the year ahead.

The session focused on key priorities, refining strategies, and strengthening leadership. Discussions covered team development and organizational progress. Leaders shared insights, collaborated on solutions, and set clear objectives to enhance overall effectiveness.

A major focus was leadership strengthening, ensuring leaders have the tools, resources, and vision to address challenges and seize opportunities. By fostering adaptability and accountability, the team is committed to a forward-thinking approach that will position NCIA for long-term success.

As we move into 2025, these goals will serve as a guiding framework for our efforts. With a renewed sense of purpose and collaboration, we look forward to achieving milestones together and making a lasting impact.

Empowering Youth NCIA Meets OJJDP



NCIA's Vocational Training Center graduates, Ivan Perez and Darien Brooks, were invited to speak at the 2024 OJJDP National Conference in Washington, D.C.

In November, NCIA was invited to the 2024 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) National Conference in Washington, D.C. Two graduates of NCIA's Vocational Training Center, Ivan Perez and Darien Brooks, spoke on the panel at the annual conference.

OJJDP was established in 1974 under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to lead national efforts in preventing delinquency and improving juvenile justice systems. OJJDP supports local and state initiatives to address youth crime and protect children.

Its mission is to provide leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent youth delinquency and victimization. OJJDP supports the development of equitable juvenile justice systems that empower young people to lead productive lives while fostering safer communities for all.

Through its work, OJJDP remains dedicated to ensuring a brighter future for youth and families nationwide. NCIA is grateful for the opportunity to speak at the 2024 OJJDP National Conference and hopes to help support its mission.

YIT Makes Headlines



TRANSITION STUDENTS LEARN TO COOK

NCIA's Youth in Transition (YIT) School was featured on WMAR Baltimore in November 2024 for its new culinary program, which equips students with basic kitchen skills and ultimately, gives students the opportunity to succeed in their search for employment and independence.

NCIA's Youth in Transition (YIT) School is making headlines for its innovative culinary program. Recently featured on WMAR Baltimore, this initiative is transforming the lives of students aged 11 to 21 with intellectual disabilities and emotional or behavioral challenges by equipping them with essential life and career skills.

Led by culinary instructor Robert Marion, students learn fundamental kitchen skills, including food safety, knife handling, and hygiene practices. YIT students can earn the nationally recognized SafeServe food safety certification, which gives them a competitive edge in the workforce.

Beyond career preparation, the program reinforces academic concepts. Students enhance their problem-solving and math skills by following recipes and integrating education into practical, real-world applications.

The program aims to empower students to live independently and have successful employment after graduation. Khalil Paschall, an 11th-grade student, was featured in the WMAR Baltimore story where he proudly showcased his freshly prepared chicken tenders. Khalil's success displayed the program's impact: it's not just about cooking but crafting brighter futures.

Honoring Dr. King's Legacy



NCIA's Community Living team honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy by preparing and distributing meals within the community.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is more than a celebration; it's a call to action. As we honor the life and legacy of one of the most influential civil rights leaders of the 1960s, we reflect on his unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and nonviolent change. In 1994, the U.S. Congress reinforced this message by passing the King Holiday and Service Act, transforming MLK Day into a national day of service dedicated to uplifting communities.

Embracing Dr. King's vision, NCIA's Community Living team spent the day making a tangible impact by preparing and distributing meals to those in the community, ensuring that vulnerable members of our community felt seen, valued, and cared for. Their outreach took them to Healthcare for the Homeless and St. James Terrace Senior Living, where they provided nourishing lunches. Beyond providing food, they offered kindness and a sense of connection, embodying the compassion that Dr. King championed throughout his life.

As we reflect on this day of service, we are reminded that even the smallest acts of kindness can ripple outward, creating positive change. Dr. King once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" At NCIA, we believe that service isn't just an annual event—it's a way of life. Through our programs and initiatives, we work daily to break down barriers and create opportunities that empower individuals to thrive.



From Student to Mentor

Jim Trocki, a previous student turn instructor at the Vocational Training Center in Baltimore, MD, was featured on WJZ - CBS News to share his story.

Among the many success stories emerging from the VTC is Jim Trocki, whose remarkable journey was recently featured on WJZ. Jim's path to becoming an instructor at the VTC began as a student in the very program he now leads.

After battling addiction, Jim reached a turning point in his life and sought a way to rebuild his future. NCIA's Vocational Training Center provided the structure, guidance, and support he needed to take that next step. Determined to create a better path for himself, he enrolled in the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program, where he not only gained technical skills but also rebuilt his confidence. Inspired by the positive impact the program had on his life, Jim transitioned from student to instructor, using his own experiences to mentor and uplift others who are now walking a similar path.

NCIA's Vocational Training Centers are designed to empower individuals with practical skills and renewed purpose. For Jim, the VTC was a stepping stone to meaningful employment as well as a place where he rediscovered his self-confidence and sense of community.

Today, Jim views his role as an instructor as more than a job. He sees it as an opportunity to inspire others and give back. Through his work, Jim shares his personal story of recovery and transformation.

Trunk-or-Treat Celebration!

NCIA celebrated Halloween by hosting Trunk-or-Treat for our program participants!



Halloween spirit was in full swing as NCIA's programs gathered at our main office for a spooktacular Trunk-or-Treat celebration! The NCIA community came together, decorating their vehicles with creativity and flair, transforming them into festive, candy-filled stations for all to enjoy.

Dressed in their best Halloween costumes, our program participants excitedly made their way from trunk to trunk, collecting sweet treats and sharing plenty of smiles along the way. Events like Trunk-or-Treat bring our community closer, creating moments of joy, laughter, and connection. A big thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this celebration a good time!

The Impact of Training at NCIA

NCIA provides lifesaving training to all staff. Recently, this training proved to be crucial, and we are proud to promote a safe setting for all our individuals.

At NCIA, staff members are equipped with essential skills through CPR and First Aid training, emphasizing the organization's commitment to safety and well-being. On Friday, December 27, 2024, this training proved invaluable during a critical incident when one of our individuals suffered a choking emergency during lunchtime.

Thanks to the training provided by NCIA, a staff member could quickly apply abdominal thrusts to assist the individual. This quick response allowed the individual to breathe again, showcasing the effectiveness of the training that all staff receive.

This incident highlights the importance of NCIA's commitment to providing life-saving training for all staff, ensuring they are prepared to respond effectively in emergencies. NCIA aims to foster a safe environment and make a difference in the lives of those they serve.

Spreading Holiday Cheer



The Career Development Program (CDP) has a holiday celebration with movies, snacks, festive attire, and a special visit from Santa.

The holiday spirit was in full swing at the CDP as we came together for a joyful Christmas celebration! Throughout the week, participants and staff showed off their holiday cheer through creative and colorful attire, leading up to a day filled with laughter, warmth, and fun.

Here are some of the highlights from our celebration:

Festive Fashion Fun – The week kicked off with holiday-themed attire, including Red and Green Day on Monday and Christmas Pajama Day on Tuesday. Participants embraced the spirit of the season with festive outfits!

Seasonal Treats & Warm Drinks – Nothing says cozy like a cup of hot chocolate and holiday cookies. An array of delicious snacks kept everyone warm in the festive flavors of the season.

A Special Visit from Santa – The excitement peaked with a surprise visit from Santa Claus (played by our very own Reggie). Santa delighted everyone by handing out gifts, spreading joy, and making the day extra magical.

Holiday Movie – Everyone gathered in the main room for a cozy screening of Home Alone, laughing and enjoying the classic Christmas film together.

Winter-Themed Games – The fun continued with holiday games, including a snow-themed challenge where participants, blindfolded, had to gather "snow" (cotton balls) with a spoon.

This memorable celebration was a fun way to share in the joy of the season and create lasting memories. We are grateful to everyone who participated and helped make this event special.

From the Court to the Community



Muggsy Bogues, former NBA star, visited NCIA's Vocational Training Center (VTC) in Charlotte, NC. NCIA is excited to continue building partnerships to uplift our communities.

Thanks to the dedication of our Director of Development, Catherine Van Ogtrop, we had the incredible opportunity to welcome former NBA star Muggsy Bogues to the Vocational Training Center (VTC) in Charlotte, NC!

A Baltimore native, Muggsy is best known for his ten seasons with the Charlotte Hornets. During his visit, he met with Earl El-Amin (Vice President of Community Affairs), Walter Billips (Executive Director of Vocational Training Centers), and the Charlotte VTC team to learn more about the center's transformative work.

Beyond his basketball career, Muggsy is deeply committed to giving back. Through the Muggsy Bogues Family Foundation (MBFF), he works to empower underserved youth and families to improve their quality of life by providing food security, access to education, and workforce development opportunities.

We're excited to share that Muggsy plans to visit our VTC in Baltimore, MD, soon! At NCIA, we remain committed to building impactful partnerships that uplift and strengthen our communities.

NCIA's Residents Conquer the Cold



NCIA resident, Joshua, visits the Maryland Science Center!

Joshua, one of NCIA's residents, recently had an exciting adventure at the Maryland Science Center, where he immersed himself in a world of discovery and exploration!

During his visit, Joshua engaged with interactive exhibits, sparking curiosity and excitement as he explored different scientific concepts. One of the exhibits Joshua observed was "Life Beyond Earth," an informative exhibit that examines different aspects of the solar system, galaxy, and universe. From hands-on experiments to fascinating displays, he had the chance to dive into the wonders of science in a fun, engaging way.

At NCIA, we encourage experiences that inspire learning, curiosity, and joy. We look forward to more adventures that evoke enthusiasm for our residents!

NCIA's Residential Program beats that cold by enjoying a Bowling Night!

Winter's chill didn't stop the fun for participants in NCIA's Residential Program! As temperatures dropped, our individuals found the perfect way to stay active, social, and warm—by enjoying a fun-filled Bowling Night together.

The evening was filled with laughter and friendly competition as participants cheered each other on and celebrated every roll. Whether knocking down pins or enjoying the camaraderie, everyone had a fantastic time creating new memories.



At NCIA, we believe in fostering engagement, inclusion, and joyful experiences for our residents, no matter the season. Events like Bowling Night provide a welcoming and supportive space where individuals can socialize, stay active, and most importantly, have fun!

We're looking forward to more exciting outings and activities that keep our community connected.

A Fresh Start

Success at the VTC



Tawana, a VTC participant in Charlotte, NC, has created a fresh start through her dedication to overcoming her challenges.

NCIA believes in the power of second chances. Tawana, a dedicated participant in the NCIA's Vocational Training Center in Charlotte, NC, is proving that resilience and determination can pave the way to a brighter future.

When Tawana enrolled in the Automotive Program on October 14, 2024, she faced overwhelming challenges. During her initial meeting with Case Manager Desiree Mason, she shared her concerns about an impending eviction, which left her at risk of homelessness. In addition, Tawana had recently spent several months incarcerated and was six months into her recovery journey after 45 years of battling addiction. Despite these obstacles, she remained committed to turning her life around.

Recognizing the urgency of Tawana's situation, NCIA swiftly connected her with a community housing resource, where she immediately secured a safe and affordable place to live. With stable housing, Tawana could now focus on what truly mattered: her education, future, and continued recovery.

"The thought of completing the class and obtaining certifications is what helped me push through the difficulties," Tawana shared. With renewed confidence, she is now on track to earning her Automotive Certifications—a step that will give her a fresh start.

At NCIA, we remain committed to empowering individuals like Tawana by providing resources, education, and unwavering support on their journey toward success. We are incredibly proud of Tawana's strength, perseverance, and dedication, and we can't wait to see what she accomplishes next!

Supporting a Healthier Future



NCIA's Career Development Program hosted a Smoking Cessation Information Session for our committed staff.

At NCIA, we are committed to fostering healthier lifestyles, and we are excited to share the success of our Smoking Cessation Information Session held at our Career Development Program (CDP)! This impactful event brought together seven dedicated staff members eager to learn about the benefits of quitting smoking and the resources available to support them on their journey.



Leading the discussion was Dan Young from the Baltimore County Health and Tobacco Department, who provided invaluable insights into the health benefits of smoking cessation and shared practical strategies for overcoming challenges. Attendees were introduced to a variety of free resources offered by the Baltimore County Government, including counseling services, nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, and the medication Chantix—all designed to make the quitting process more manageable and accessible.

The response from staff has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing appreciation for the informative and supportive environment at the CDP. We are especially thrilled that several staff members have already taken the first steps toward a smoke-free future.


At NCIA, we believe that even small steps can lead to big transformations. We are proud to support our staff in making healthier choices and look forward to seeing more success stories emerge from this initiative!

Save the Date!

The 12th annual Hoelter Open will be **Monday, September 29, 2025!** Make sure to mark your calendars and join us for a day on the plains!




To support the NCIA Foundation, visit ncianet.org/ncia-foundation/

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Empowering people with limited access to opportunities to build fulfilling lives and stronger communities through unconditional support.