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Journal Gazette

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## Longtime Community Corrections director retiring

*Statement as issued Friday by the Allen County Public Information Office:*

(October 11, 2013) — For 28 years, Sheila Hudson used her talents to help people who've been in trouble with the law prepare for reentry into society. Now, she's ready to begin a new chapter in her life by developing the skills gained through her hobby – gardening – to help people grow.

In a letter submitted today to the Allen County Board of Commissioners, Hudson announced she will retire as executive director of Allen County Community Corrections on December 13.

"Since 1985, I have witnessed many wonderful events unfold," Hudson said in her letter. "Most importantly, it was my pleasure to guide the staff as they worked and grew together."

When Hudson started working for Community Corrections, the operating budget was a \$129,000 grant from the Indiana Department of Corrections with a staff of four. After four years on the job, Hudson became ACCC's executive director. The program now consists of 95 full and part-time employees and the budget is over \$6 million.

Community Corrections is responsible for the operations of Allen Superior Reentry Court and the Allen Circuit Restoration Court. The department consists of twelve divisions, including clinical, research and evaluation; communications; case management; and programs, which features an intensive outpatient substance abuse treatment program and life skills such as a GED testing and preparatory program. Community Corrections operates two facilities – a Day Reporting and Treatment facility and the Kelley House, a modified therapeutic community for 48 dual-diagnosed male felony offenders.

"Sheila was able to create the most effective community corrections agency in the state," said Allen Superior Court Judge John Surbeck, Jr., chairman of the Community Corrections Advisory Board. "She was a full partner in creation of the Reentry Court. She will be missed."

"Sheila has long been recognized as the leading community corrections director in the state of Indiana," added Allen Circuit Court Judge Thomas Felts, vice-chairman of the advisory board. "Her innovative work in establishing the Restoration Mental Health Court and the Kelley House will serve as a legacy to her vision and leadership. Allen County and the state of Indiana will miss her dearly."

Allen County Commissioner Therese Brown, who also serves on the advisory board, said a search for Hudson's successor will begin immediately, but no timetable has been established.

"The emphasis for the advisory board is to choose the right person for the job," Brown said.



Hudson

"Sheila has told us she is fully committed to preparing the operations and the staff for a smooth transition." The advisory board will make its recommendation to the Board of Commissioners, which must approve the choice.

Since 2003, Hudson has served on the Indiana Sentencing Policy Study Committee and is a founding member of the Criminal Justice Partnership of Indiana, which addresses state-wide criminal justice reform, evidence-based interventions and standardized performance measures.

She was an advisory board member of Blue Jacket, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides an employment services program for ex-offenders; a member of the Indiana Judicial Center's Problem Solving Courts committee; and a member of the faith and character-based Department of Correction task force.

She received a "Hidden Heroine" award from the Fort Wayne Women's Bureau; the "Liberty Bell" from the Allen County Bar Association; and a Community Achievement Award from the IPFW School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Currently, she is participating on a task force established by the Indiana Department of Corrections to review the state's grant formula for community corrections programs.

Hudson has also been involved in the Allen County Purdue Cooperative Extension Service's Master Gardener Program as an Advanced Master Gardener. She has applied to the Chicago Botanic Garden's Horticultural Therapy Certificate of Merit Program and is awaiting acceptance into the one-year program. Horticultural therapy uses plants and gardens to help clients reduce stress and stay engaged in therapy. Horticultural therapists practice in hospitals, rehabilitation and vocational facilities, nursing homes, senior centers, community gardens and other settings.