

“The student inmates apply for it,” said Public Information Officer Bob Harmon. “It’s taught by a TMCC instructor, and that class is all about, ‘OK, I’m about to get back out. I have to now come up with a plan. How am I going to finance myself? How am I going to juggle my living expenses, my work, my career goals?’”

There’s also a criminal justice class called “Inside Out” that’s taught in conjunction with the University of Nevada, Reno.

“So, it’s half students from UNR, and it’s half students from our inmate population,” Harmon said. “And they meet once a week in the jail together, so you have the inmates and students. So you’re learning about the criminal justice system, particularly for the UNR students, from people who are in the midst of it. The inmates have to write an essay to get into the class, and then they’re responsible for doing all of the homework and the readings.”

At the end of the course, the classmates work together to write a proposal paper on ways to improve the justice system. According to Bailey, Harmon and Clark, the sheriff’s office is open to trying any number of classes, which, for a time, included weekend yoga classes.

“We’re creative and open,” Bailey said. “I mean, most people probably wouldn’t realize that we were doing yoga.”

“The thing that got me about yoga is—because it was a connection I didn’t make until I saw the class, because I don’t do yoga—but in yoga there’s a lot of self reflection and self

empowerment,” Harmon said. “And you’re dealing with a population that often has been given very little empowerment during their lives. There’s been very little encouragement, very little respect. I realized when I sat in on a yoga class how important that was for the ladies to have someone actually telling them, ‘You are strong. You have strength.’”

“It’s no longer just an institutional approach to providing programs and assistance,” Bailey added. “It’s more holistic. ... It’s not a one-size-fits-all-type-mentality anymore. We’re very geared toward individual needs—because everyone is different. ... Their backgrounds are different, the way the process, their needs.”

According to Clark, the new approach is actually a part of a national trend.

“We certainly feel that we’re certainly one of the leaders, nationally speaking,” he said. “But this is something that’s happening across the country. And law enforcement is changing into more of a service-oriented field. And a lot of that is because that’s what society is dictating. With everything that’s going on on a national level, law enforcement is having to change based on community needs. Communities are wanting more from their law enforcement. ... We do have to be the ones who are out there trying to find resources for people. ... We want this to be viewed as a place of hope, where people know that if they’re at the sheriff’s office they can find the help they need. And we do that whether they come in the front, or if they come in the back door as an arrestee.” □

## Party animals



Washoe County Sheriff's Office Deputy Johnson Bradley made balloon animals for kids during the agency's community resource fair and trick-or-treat event on Oct. 24.

PHOTO/JERI DAVIS

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