



NAWJ WIP Committee **Danbury Visit January 18, 2018**

Background

The federal women's prison located in Danbury, CT closed in December 2013. The women prisoners were transferred to various locations. Many were "temporarily" re-located to a floor of the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, NY. A camp for women and a prison for males remained open in Danbury. The women's prison at Danbury re-opened in December, 2016 as a Federal Satellite Low Facility.

We arrived at 10:00 am and left after 1:00 pm. We toured the facility, talked with the women residents without the presence of BOP staff, and ended with a question and answer session with the BOP persons responsible for the facility. Alix M. McLearn, Ph. D., BOP's Administrator, Female and Special Populations Bureau, arranged the visit.

Physical Plant

Since we visited in April 2017, BOP finished construction on a second building similar in appearance to the first and, in addition, a small reception area. The side-by-side structures are one-story warehouse type buildings. The first consists mainly of open living space sectioned off into waist-high cubicles that contain bunk and single beds. Bathrooms, showers and bathing facilities, and washer/dryers are in rooms off to the side.

The kitchen has been moved from an outside trailer to inside the new second building and the women eat at movable bench-like tables in the front of the room. The new second building is used for programming. There is a reception area in the front with a small section for children. We toured a corridor with offices on either side, several rooms for health services, classrooms, a room with exercise equipment, and a "leisure library." There is a legal library in the first building.

The Warden explained that the shortage of hot water is a being resolved. There was talk about newly installed microwave ovens being removed when the hot water problem was solved. The women would like to keep the microwaves.

Female Integrated Treatment (FIT) program

FSL Danbury initiated the FIT program in September 2017.

FSL Danbury is the first institution to introduce FIT (Female Integrated Treatment) Program. This is the BOP's first ever programming facility, where the entire FSL is considered a therapeutic community including a Residential Drug Abuse Program, a Mental Health Step Down Program, a Resolve Program (trauma treatment) and a Peer Support Program, and all inmates housed there are involved in some aspects of the treatment.

FSL Danbury, January 2018 WELCOME

We were told the facility presently houses 100 women, and the plan is to increase to 200. The FIT program has three psychologists and four treatment specialists. The plan is to treat in a gender specific way the key needs of female prisoners: trauma, substance abuse, mental health issues, and employment.

Every woman in the FIT program signs a five-page “Expectations, Rules & Consequences AGREEMENT” governing their personal conduct in the program. Some women told us they wanted to be housed at Danbury FSL but they did not want to participate in the FIT program. The BOP officials said there is no choice. To be housed at FSL Danbury, you have to participate in FIT.

Congress has provided that persons who successfully complete a residential drug abuse program (RDAP) receive one year off their sentence. Not all women at Danbury are designated for RDAP. (43% are incarcerated for drug offenses, 22% for fraud/bribery/extortion, and 20% for sex offenses) The women designated for RDAP who complete FIT will receive a year off their sentence. Women not designated will not participate in the RDAP portion of the FIT program and will not receive a year off their sentence. RDAP is a Congressional enactment and BOP cannot on its own award a year’s credit for FIT. Some of the women we spoke with did not understand this and complained that all women who successfully complete FIT should receive a year off their sentence.

We received an “Overview of the FIT Program” that describes the course work for Phase I – Orientation Phase, months one through four. Phase II – Core Phase, months five through eight, and Phase III – Transition Phase, months nine and beyond. Each day has a series of must attend meetings with a topic.

Health Care

By far the biggest concern was health care. Several women had specific complaints of waiting several months to see a Doctor. Others complained that they could not get necessary prescriptions filled. At least two women described serious, chronic medical conditions for which medications were delayed or did not arrive. The women appear to be receiving little or no dental services.

The women believe that medical services are understaffed.

The BOP officials explained that hiring medical professionals was difficult. Doctors did not find the locations where federal facilities are located to be attractive. BOP officials said they would tell the people in charge of health care that they had to do better and agreed to continue to advocate for additional medical staff, including specialists.

One person noticed a small number of correctional offices and wondered if staffing shortages could contribute to the lack of outside medical visits.

Communications with Family

Several women mentioned that they were promised that Skype would be available in August. BOP explained that there have been problems at the national level in negotiating Skype service. Because of the Skype installation delay, BOP agreed to provide additional phone minutes.

One woman explained that the abbreviated visiting hours at Danbury FSL made it impossible for her family to visit. Warden Williams stated that a woman could request permission to go to another facility at Danbury where Friday visits were possible. The women at Danbury FSL, like all female institutions, receive fewer visits than male institutions.

Preparation for Reentry

The women want vocational and educational programs that prepare them for reentry. The information brochure “FSL Danbury Jan. 2018 WELCOME” lists 17 apprenticeships and 24 programs but many of the programs appear to be part of the FIT program. According to the brochure, a “Culinary Arts/Barista VT (began 1/22/2018)” and “Theology/Women in Leadership (began Jan. 2018).” According to the women, programming is starting to pick up.

Since our April 2017, visit, Dr. Jaimie Meyer has been running a monthly presentation on AIDS prevention inside FSL Danbury that has been highly attended.

Laurie L. Hornbecker, MS, RN, Director, Community and Economic Development, Naugatuck Valley Community College, engaged with BOP folks about the possibility of initiating certificate programs.

Professor Resnik is looking into whether FSL Danbury could participate in Yale’s “Inside Out” prison program.

Attitude and Views of the Women

Given that they had to be incarcerated, most of the women we talked with were relieved to be at FSL Danbury and thankful they were not at MDC Brooklyn. The ambience of Danbury with fresh air, windows, and light makes a huge difference in the living conditions and the women’s frame of mind.

There were questions and complaints but irrespective of the specific complaints (medical services, programming and reentry services) all of the women agreed that the staff treated them with respect and attempted to address many of their requests. In that spirit, BOP officials and staff agreed to follow up and address all complaints.

There was a positive difference in the views expressed in April 2017 and January 2018. In April 2017, the women had lots of questions and seemed nervous about what would happen. In January 2018, their understanding had solidified, and they appeared more comfortable.

All the women are said to have jobs. Higher paying UNICOR or Federal Prison Industries are not available.

Final Observations

If the FIT program has positive results, it could possibly be expanded and improve the lives of many women who move through the system. Through FIT, the Danbury FSL women have a chance to do some good for other women.

Given the way some of the judges were mobbed with legal question, perhaps BOP would be willing to present a legal clinic, periodically.

NAWJ should do what it can to monitor the situation. If we could figure out some way to have a bus travel to Danbury once a month from New York, it would be good but it is hard to know where to begin.

This report submitted by Acting Justice Robin S. Garson, Supervising Judge Cheryl J. Gonzales, Judge Brenda P. Murray (Murraybp1@gmail.com or Murrayb@sec.gov), and Judge Betty J. Williams (Ret.) 1/25/2018

Participants

- **Acting Justice Robin S. Garson**, Supreme Court of the State of New York
- **Supervising Judge Cheryl J. Gonzales**, New York Civil Court, Housing Part; Co-Chair, NAWJ Women in Prison Committee
- **Chief Judge Janet C. Hall**, United States District Court for District of Connecticut
- **Laurie L. Hornbecker, MS, RN**; Director, Community and Economic Development, Naugatuck Valley Community College
- **Dr. Jaimie Meyer, MD, MS, FACP**, Yale University School of Medicine, Section of Infectious Diseases, AIDS Program
- **Judge Benda P. Murray**, Co-Chair, NAWJ Women in Prison Committee
- **Judge Alison J. Nathan**, United States District Court for Southern District of New York,
- **Professor of Law Marisol Orihuela**, Clinical Associate Professor, Yale Law School
- **Professor Judith Resnik**, Arthur Liman Professor of Law, **Yale Law School**
- **Judge Cathy Seibel**, United States District Court for Southern District of New York
- **Anna VanCleave**, Director, Liman Center, Yale Law School
- **Judge Betty J. Williams**, New York State Supreme Court (Ret.)

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- **David Parr, Psy. D.**, Coordinator, Female Integrated Treatment Program, Danbury FSL
- **James Petrucci**, Deputy Director, Northeast Region
- **Patricia Pollard**, Deputy Warden, FCI Danbury
- **Kim Williams**, Warden, FCI Danbury