



**Richmond City Sheriff's Office**  
**Sheriff C. T. Woody, Jr.**



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **SHERIFF ACCEPTS 1 MILLION MOHAWKS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE**

Richmond, VA— In recognition of May being Mental Health awareness month, and to bring awareness to, and support those with mental health issues, Sheriff Woody has accepted the 1 Million Mohawks for Mental Health Challenge. The challenge was issued to the Sheriff by John Shinholser with the McShin Foundation. This evening, Sheriff Woody, along with members of his agency and REAL Program alumni, will gather at the REAL House to fulfill the challenge. On Tuesday, May 23, 2017, members of The REAL Program in the Richmond City Justice Center will join to support the cause and also receive Mohawks. **This will occur at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow; media is invited to attend.**

“I’m always happy to get a haircut,” said Sheriff Woody, “and this time, I’m especially happy because it will go to a good cause. Bringing awareness to mental illnesses and mental health issues has been a staple of my tenure as Sheriff. The mentally ill do not belong in correctional facilities; they belong in hospitals where they can receive the proper treatment for whatever particular illness they suffer from. I always glad to do whatever I can to bring awareness and attention to this important issue, and I will continue to do so as long as I am Sheriff.”

Currently, there are 1.2 million individuals living with a mental illness behind bars in the United States. In the Richmond City Justice Center, 22 percent of residents have been diagnosed with at least one mental illness and are on psychotropic medication; 87 percent of this number are repeat offenders. As a response, the Sheriff’s Office worked hard to apply for a grant through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, for which we were awarded over \$670,000 to pilot a program for those in custody with mental health diagnosis. This program has a goal to reduce recidivism among individuals that have a mental health or low functioning diagnosis. Participants will have access to quality care prior to and after release. Some key components of this pilot program include: Case management pre and post release (up to 6 months), medication, housing and transportation assistance, groups and one on one therapy facilitated by an LCSW, and education on increased independent living skills. While incarcerated, participants will be housed in a secure, therapeutic setting with trained effective staff.

The 1 Million Mohawks for Mental Health Challenge was conceived by the You Rock Foundation, an organization whose mission it is to spread awareness about mental health by interviewing popular music artists about their own experiences, and stimulate discussion. The goal, as stated on the challenge website [www.1millionmohawks.com](http://www.1millionmohawks.com), is to “use the attention your hair gets to talk about the brain beneath it!

*The Richmond City Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining a secure jail and a safe court system, along with seamless inmate transport and civil process to preserve public safety. We remain committed to performing these duties with unsurpassed integrity and professionalism, with progressive training that incorporates best practices and technology. While partnering with the community, we strive to lower recidivism by providing faith-based and community-based programming that empowers ex-offenders to become productive members of society.*