

# Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office

2900 University Parkway Lawrenceville, GA 30043

**Sheriff Butch Conway**



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## **For immediate release:**

Inmates assigned to The Barracks therapeutic program at the Gwinnett County Jail will spend their time sorting books tomorrow to support the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services literacy program.

Last month, off-duty deputies loaded and transported over 2,000 pounds of donated books for the Gwinnett Reading Exchange & Art Transforms Little Minds (G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds), a program that aims to increase literacy by placing book exchanges in areas of our community where books are scarce.

The donated books were brought to the Gwinnett County Jail, where inmate veterans and Gwinnett Coalition volunteers will sort them tomorrow in preparation for distribution throughout the county.

"Amazing community partnerships have emerged through participation in the G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds project," said Ellen Gerstein, Gwinnett Coalition's Executive Director. "The Gwinnett County Sheriff Office's new veteran's housing unit is proving to be a significant partner. The collaboration of sorting and storing donated books allows veterans in the justice system to be included in programs that positively impact their community."

The Barracks is a therapeutic, 70-bed unit focused on providing the type of support crucial to helping incarcerated veterans make a successful transition back into the community. Sheriff Conway approved the program last November after Chief Deputy Lou Solis approached him with the idea. Chief Solis, a retired Army Ranger, developed the program to provide therapeutic services for incarcerated veterans to address trauma associated with military service that can lead to serious pitfalls such as substance abuse, alcoholism and mental health issues.

"Military service should always be remembered. We're committed to helping these veterans get their lives in order by creating a program to provide them with resources to increase the likelihood they won't return to jail once they're released. This program benefits much more than the inmates who participate. Our whole community benefits when these veterans get the help they need to get their lives back on track," he says.

This event is open to media. Please RSVP and plan to arrive at the jail lobby on Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> by 9:30 am if you plan to attend.

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