

TRANSITION TIMES



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Great Falls Pre-Release – A Great Place to Work

With another year passing and my completion of 6 years of employment at GFPRS, the government shutdown has caused me to appreciate my job here now more than ever. The Board of Directors truly cares about each of its approximately 75 employees. Our benefits are second to none with high quality health insurance, paid leave, a 401(k) plan, and many, many others. For those of us working at the Great Falls Pre-Release, you know exactly what I am talking about. We should appreciate what we are provided as we examine our mission and the very reason we exist as an agency - to help others who are less fortunate. I think about those who are currently struggling with unemployment due to the shutdown or the many challenges faced by the population we serve. Are we appreciated for the work we do? The Resident population appreciates us as well as the Board of Directors and Management. Do we ever let them know how much they are appreciated?

By Brenda Demers, Newsletter Editor and Administrative Assistant

Commitment to Excellence

The following staff members were recognized for their Commitment to Excellence as employees of Great Falls Pre-Release at this year's staff Christmas party held at the Heritage Inn. Individuals are selected by written recommendations from the previous year Commitment to Excellence winners.



Andre Carrethers began working for the GFPRC in November of 2015, and hit the ground running, sometimes literally. His previous experience in law enforcement gave him many tools which he immediately modified and used in our re-entry setting. Andre has taken the training of new COs as a part of his job very seriously, and ensures the newer ranks know the policies and procedures of the Center.

In early 2016, Andre accepted a position as the UA Tech. Andre works in the UA lab every Monday, and learned many functions and contracts of the UA program here at the Center, despite only being scheduled to work one day a week in the lab. Andre completed most of the in-house federal testing, which was, at the time, quite daunting. Andre continues to handle the testing and screening of the in-house Federal program. Additionally, Andre records most of the Federal Probation participants reporting, and deficiencies.

Andre continued to further his education while balancing his personal life and workload here at the Center, completing his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice in June of this year. Andre continues to have a positive attitude about the work he is doing, and believes in the difference he can make in the resident's lives. Andre is always willing to help his coworkers complete any given task. His laugh and smile are infectious.

Commitment to Excellence - continued

When it comes to dedication and teamwork, this year's recipient of the Commitment to Excellence Award goes above and beyond. She was hired in August of 2015 and delivered twins in November of that year. She never missed work during that period of time and was quick to return back. She has a busy family life with a six year old and 3 year old twins as well as a business of her own. She never complains of being tired and not wanting to be on the job. She is positive and cheerful. She is reliable and supportive of fellow staff members. She treats residents with respect and compassion, yet is able to establish boundaries with them. She never asks anyone to do anything that she is not willing to do herself. She communicates well with both staff and residents. In her free time, when she has some, she enjoys outdoor activities and spending time with her family. This recipient is **Julie Sangster**.



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Since starting as a CTS on October 30th, 2017, **Kyle Steger** has continually demonstrated dedication to professionalism, team work, and to the residents of the Great Falls Pre-Release.

Kyle has never backed down from helping the Compliance Officer staff; answering questions about policy, conducting additional room or person searches, and maintaining a healthy line of communication. To help his fellow CTS's, Kyle has taken an additional four on call weekends during his first year of employment. During his on call duties Kyle has successfully managed five walk-a-ways. A stressful task to be sure, but one he has shown skill and competence with time and time again. Kyle has quickly developed a rapport with residents that enables him to guide their program to a positive conclusion.

Currently Kyle is developing the new Montana Veterans Reentry Program. Building this program from the ground up is no small task. It deals not only with the normal addiction, criminal thinking, and health factors of regular residents but also requires combat and service related PTSD to be taken into consideration. As an Army veteran himself however, Kyle is best suited for this challenge.

Kyle Steger has been and continues to be a valuable and welcome addition to the Great Falls Pre-Release family.

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Things to think about - Quotes from residents

There are 2 types of pain: 1 that alters and 1 that hurts. Remember when you're down and out, you're not really alone. If you take God out of the equation, you will fail. God can't bless a mess, but he can make it manageable. – Michael Madplume

You have to want structure and stability. If you don't, you will fail. Those that keep coming back are not eager for stability. I have never had stability in my life so I crave it. –Kaylub Burns



NEWS FROM SHEENA JARVEY, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Pizza and Pop and Presents, Oh, My!

The spirit of giving was in full force during our annual Christmas pizza and pop parties. These sparkling events were hosted by volunteers Debbie Olson, Diane Kliever and Julie Saenz. Thanks to the generosity of these lovely ladies, all three campuses were treated to a pizza dinner, pop and presents. Residents and staff alike made sure that no pizza slices were left uneaten.

On the ladies side, the celebration was taken a step further, with games and prizes. Julie made sure that everyone followed the rules for the games (including volunteer Diane!) and when Julie sets down a rule, she means business. There was much hooting and hollering as folks competed against each other in various games, including the chop stick marshmallow pick up. Everyone was a good sport, including volunteer Debbie, who swished her attached tail to knock down empty pop cans. Let's just say you had to be there to really appreciate this!

The good feelings generated by these events made us all more aware of the spirit of the season and the power of simple pleasures such as sharing a meal and exchanging greetings of good will. As Lyndsey Temple expressed in thanking the volunteers, "...for all your time, hard work and very creative games and fun we had at the Christmas party. All the ladies are still taking about how much fun we had, the prizes we won, and how it warmed so many of us with the thought and care that went into that party."

In addition to Diane, Debbie and Julie, I would like to thank all the volunteers and community members who donated items to make these parties special. Thanks to kitchen supervisor Char, and the staff cooks. Finally, many thanks to the kitchen Inmate Workers for all of their extra help prepping yummy sides and serving the meals.



George Walker



Volunteer Julie



Volunteer Diane
Phillip Friscia
Volunteer Debbie



James E. Smith

NEWS FROM SHEENA – Continued

Great Falls Pre-Release Volunteers Honored at Christmas Luncheon

Our annual Volunteer Christmas Luncheon was held on December 19th. We were delighted that longtime supporter of the Pre-Release, Lyle Sheets, once again did his amazing magic on the keyboard. If there is a tune that Lyle can't perform, we have not yet run into it. All of us are proud to have been a part of Lyle's success, and if you didn't catch him at our lunch, Lyle plays at the Country Club and other venues around town.

Volunteer Julie opened the lunch with a prayer, followed by words of appreciation from staff members Jeff Barnhart and Ron Spry. Jeff has been a longtime backer of the volunteer program and did a nice, brief (thank you, Jeff!) welcome. Ron has made quite a name for himself in the past few years doing numerous staff training talks and speaking at functions. We were very pleased to have Ron's words of encouragement and support.



Ron Spry

Prior to our keynote speaker, Sheena presented each volunteer with a small gift and an acknowledgment of their time, devotion, and talents. We then had a short moment of chaos when staff and volunteers drew for door prizes.

Our keynote speaker, Lyndsey Temple, wears several hats. She is currently an Inmate Worker in the kitchen, making sure the women have healthy meals. In addition, Lyndsey will be returning to her professional position working in Public Relations for the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Billings.

In her speech, Lyndsey graciously thanked each of the volunteers she has worked with by name, talking the time to recognize their unique gifts of service. As Lyndsey noted in her speech, "...please know how appreciated and thankful we are for all of you. You all make a difference to each of us in so many ways and it truly means so much to us how much work, time and effort you all put in....and we all know how valuable time is."



Volunteers Julie and Diane and Inmate Worker Lyndsey Temple

Kristi Rydeen, who presented the letter of appreciation, recently transferred from Inmate Worker to community employment. Kristi was at work during the lunch, but kindly left a sweet home made card and a

perfect message for all the volunteers:

"I hope you have some idea about how special you are You show up for us. I so appreciate you making the Center feel less like punishment and more like hope. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

We wish everyone a happy, hopeful and successful New Year.



Volunteers Maxine, Diane, Sandy, Joan, Juanita, Darlene, Julie, Karyl, and Volunteer Coordinator Sheena

EDUCATION PROGRAM

By Dave Nelson, Education Coordinator

Residents Receive their HiSETS

Congratulations from the entire staff at the Transition Center and much continued success in your future!



Brie Baker, CTS Shellie Babinecz



Sioux Necklace, CTS Kathy Pitkanen

“NEVER STOP LEARNING BECAUSE LIFE NEVER STOPS TEACHING.”

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STAFF NEWS

New Staff: We are pleased to announce the following new staff members:

Compliance Officers **Ruth Coles** and **Bobbie Maberry** ; Staff Cook **Nancy Martin**; Veterans Reentry Program Specialist **Brett Blasdell**

In-House Staff Movement: Compliance Officer **Andre Carrethers** was chosen to fill the vacant Screening/Disciplinary Hearings Officer position.

Milestones:

10 Years - Karen Conley works with the female residents as a Correctional Treatment Specialist. She gets the most reward out of her job when “the resident wants to change and understands she has the power to do it herself.”

Karen grew up the oldest of 5 children across the bay from San Francisco in San Leandro, California. Her life revolved around youth activities in her church. She played the trombone in both the church and school bands. Karen recalls how embarrassed she was at a junior high school concert -- the only girl playing the trombone wearing a hot pink dress next to 6 guys in black suits! She also played in a young women’s tambourine group. Other things Karen enjoyed doing in California included touring museums in San Francisco and going to the beach.

Karen’s church involvement continued on into her adulthood. She and her husband spent a total of 16 years as ministers in California, Washington, and Montana. Prior to coming to Great Falls Pre-Release she worked at a gift shop and at Gateway Recovery. Karen’s hobbies include crafts, interior design, watching mystery movies, and spending time with her 9 grandchildren.





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Brenda Demers, Editor
Great Falls Pre-Release Services, Inc.
1019 15th Street North
Great Falls, MT 59401
brenda@gfprc.org
406-455-9323

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Curtis Thompson: Attorney, Thompson Law, P.C.
Kathy Van Tighem: Counselor, Great Falls High School

MISSION STATEMENT

Great Falls Pre-Release Services, Inc. provides a cost-effective alternative to incarceration for offenders through a variety of community-based correctional treatment programs. Great Falls Pre-Release Services, Inc. is dedicated to public safety and trust through professional, quality services which facilitate personal growth through positive change and individual responsibility of assigned offenders.



gfprc.org

Vision Statement

Dedicated to providing resources and opportunities that safely and successfully restore offenders into society.

Statement of Values

- *Motivation:* A desire to help others reach their full potential.
- *Professionalism:* Maintain proper interactions with staff, residents, and the community.
- *Accountability:* Take ownership for successes and shortcomings, to ourselves and others
- *Equality:* Ensure equality by expressing, in attitudes and actions, respect for all.
- *Dignity:* Model behavior in a respectful manner to instill a sense of self-respect and to bolster a positive self-image.
- *Community:* Develop a positive environment that facilitates healthy change as the residents integrate into the broader community.