

RESIDENTS OF THE MONTH

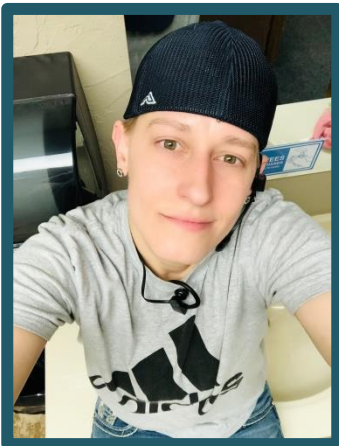
East Campus

Nominator States: David Azure is a quiet guy and easy to overlook. He is incident free and keeps to himself. He completes his RBA's without incident as well as his assigned programming. He also attends his assigned programming and comes prepared for group. He does not spend much money and continues to save as much as possible. He has worked at Holiday Inn since his arrival and is not a management concern. David always has a smile and a "Hello" without needing more words than necessary in a conversation. He also pays on his restitution without objection. David is doing an excellent program.



David Azure

Women's Center



Nominator States: Lindsey Jaeger has been doing very well. She is a hard worker at Service Master. She has been saving up her money. She has a positive attitude and she shows respect to others. She had unexpected struggles in her life but she is showing a determination to not let any problems take away from her goals to be successful in her recovery.

Lindsey Jaeger

West Campus

Nominator States: Mr. Kohl has been in the program for 154 days and has not received any negative incident reports. He works full time and has established an impressive savings budget. He spends most of his free time with his kids and is becoming a strong part of their lives. Mr. Kohl recently made a solid decision to become a USPO rollover and will remain at the center after his release. He plans to use the time to save extra money and find a place to rent for his family. Mr. Kohl has been promoted to a leadership position at Big Iron Truck Wash and his supervisors rave about the work he does. He is a pleasure to work with and is always polite. He is on time with his paperwork and makes responsible choices. Mr. Kohl is running an excellent program and setting himself up to be successful in life.



Scott Kohl

Diversity

The world is a big place filled with all sorts of wonders, not the least of these is the diversity of the human race. According to the American Dictionary of the English Language, diversity is “difference; variety or multiformity.” When considering diversity, it is more than race or ethnicity. One should also think about gender, disability, body types, age, religion, socioeconomic status, politics, cultural traditions, and values. Cultural diversity helps us recognize and respect “ways of being” that are not necessarily our own, so that as we interact with others we can build bridges to trust, respect, and understanding across cultures.



Sandra Bearchum

Diversity gives you access to a greater range of talent, not just the talent that belongs to a particular world-view or ethnicity or some other restricting definition. It helps provide insight into the needs and motivations of all, rather than just a small part of it. The key to dealing successfully with diversity is open, honest communication. In a diverse world, we should all feel free to be ourselves — while treating others with respect. We should be able to tell each other when something bothers us — without overreacting.



While you are in the center, you come into contact with a myriad of diversity. People come from all walks of life. This is an opportunity to think about all the differences that you see among your peers. Your roommate may follow a different faith, they may be older or younger than you, or they may be disabled in some way. Some diversity you come across may not be your view, but that's okay. Remember while it is not yours, it is theirs, and you have no pressure to adopt it. This is your opportunity to learn tolerance and acceptance of others that are not like you. This is your test for successful reintegration into society. The world is filled with diversity and you can navigate it using tolerance, and acceptance to your advantage.

Congratulations to **Dave Van Hovel** on his 10 year milestone at Great Falls Pre-Release! Dave started out as a Compliance Officer and worked his way up to be selected as the Compliance Officer Supervisor. Dave consistently has a calm, steady persona about him and can be counted on to tackle unexpected issues that arise or any job asked of him. It is understandable why he was chosen by his peers for the Unsung Hero award in 2018. Dave is pictured with his supervisor, Jeff Barnhart.



They are Proof That You Can Overcome and Be Successful



Shanna and her husband, Kevin Peterson shared this beautiful photo with us. Shanna was a resident at GFPRC and Kevin completed Boot Camp at MSP followed by Aftercare at Great Falls PRC and has been sober for 14 years. Alan Scanlon met Shanna, the Clinical Director at Elkhorn, when he recently visited there. He asked if she would be willing to share her story, and she accepted.

Change started when I was lying in a cold jail cell, in withdrawals, thinking of ways to end my misery because I could not keep living this way. I was on my way to federal prison for the second time, my fiancé left me, my daughter's father was questioning whether I was going to be able to see her anymore and my family was beat down, hopeless and over my continued behaviors. I had cross addicted since my last prison stay and my opiate addiction proved to be far scarier than my meth addiction. In that moment, I knew that ending my life was not an option, not because I did not want to, but because I had hurt my

loved ones enough and that would not be fair to them.

I have a heart condition, which is likely from meth use, and my family has already almost lost me once to that. My only option was to be sober and figure out how to stay sober. While in jail, I made a list of things I am passionate about. Things that I would enjoy doing. I knew that boredom and the monotony of going to a job I dislike would be a trigger for me if it was long term. I thought that I needed excitement in my life, and it turns out, I just needed to figure out how to enjoy my life whether I was on vacation, at work, engaging in hobbies or at home. I needed to do something that gave my life meaning.

I completed Great Falls Pre-Release for the second time in 2015 and enrolled in the addiction studies program at the University of Montana immediately afterwards. While in school, I did work jobs I was not passionate about, but I also volunteered at the Seeley Lake Fire Department and was able to become an EMT. I was helping people rather than being a menace to society. It felt good.

I graduated college in 2018 and went on to become an LAC in Missoula. A job opportunity came up in Boulder, Montana, at Elkhorn Treatment Center. This was ideal as it would allow me to be closer to my daughter, I would have benefits (this is important with a heart condition) and I would be able to work with women who are exactly where I have been. It was scary applying for this position as it was under the Department of Corrections, and I had no idea if I was hireable with my criminal background. It was a long process, but I stuck it out and it paid off. I was hired as an LAC in 2019.

I have since been able to move up in the company to Clinical Director. When I tell people where I work, I tell them proudly as I am giving back and helping the community. I am passionate about my work, it is rewarding and something I can see myself doing until retirement. I enjoy my life no matter what I am doing and have found peace, happiness and confidence in my 7.5 years of sobriety.

**Shanna Peterson
Clinical Director
Elkhorn Treatment Center**

What's Your Freak-Out Face?

What do you do when you are triggered, flooded with intense emotion or “freaking out”? In a nutshell, you get triggered or freak out because you get programmed to react that way by your deep brain. Simply, your amygdala, located there, records every experience you've ever had and stores it by emotional significance. When something in your present looks sufficiently similar to something in your past that has hurt or threatened you, it immediately sends an all-out alarm through your whole body/mind complex.



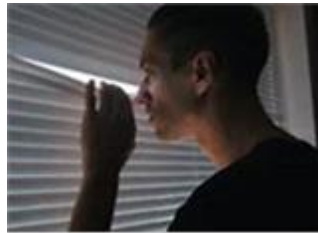
Anxious



Sad



Angry



Avoidance

Don't be Naïve to the Dangers of Fentanyl

The Montana DPHHS reported that there were 28 fentanyl overdoses resulting in 8 deaths, all within a 10 day period in January. The most common form of fentanyl comes in a pill. Usually, the pill is blue and has M 30 pressed into it. People can die within minutes of ingesting the drug. Rainbow Fentanyl is also making its debut. M 30 is also pressed into it and is available in numerous colors.

Tidbits from Robin



Robin Castle

Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

455-9333 robin@gfprc.org

Get Your Self Together (GYST)

Set a goal that will improve your life and use these 3 simple tools to help you achieve it:

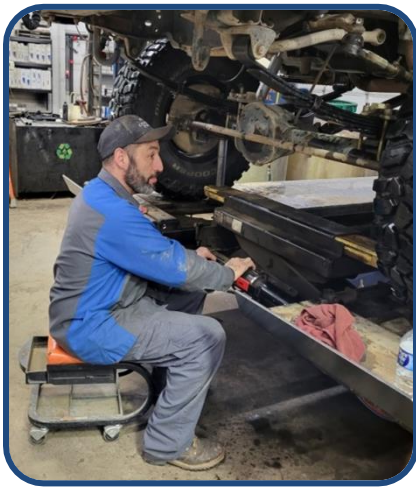
- 1. Motivate Yourself:** Write down a challenging, yet achievable goal.
- 2. Break it Down:** Write down small, manageable steps you can take to reach your goal.
- 3. Commit:** Do something every day that points you towards achieving the goal.



TRANSFORMATION



John Skinner loved his long hair and didn't want to get it cut, but with Joe's insistence he did it, and it has made a positive difference!



Travis McLaughlin - Honors Member

New Honors member Travis McLaughlin is focused, productive, enjoying his life and looking forward to his future. He is entering what he terms his golden years and you better believe they are going to be golden. One stabilizing factor is his career. He entered the tire industry in 1989, and Big Sky Tire-Rama, where he now works, has been his home shop. He has known and worked for his boss for a long time. Travis wanted to specifically express his gratitude to his boss who has been so great. His boss has helped Travis by showing him loyalty, trust and respect. And the work that he does all day? Travis smiled, "I get to do my passion in life."

Travis is enhancing his work passion by taking an online course from NAPA to receive his Master Mechanic Certification. Travis explained, "The course is not easy, but it allows me to incorporate my work life and my recovery life." Even better, the online course is free. Travis told me that NAPA picked two guys from each Great Falls shop for the free course. He told me he was lucky to be chosen, as he was in the right place at the right time. True, the timing was lucky, but Travis was clearly chosen for his skills, his dedication, his work ethic and his overall enthusiasm for the career that is his life's vocation.

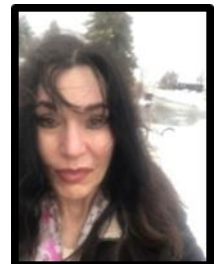
**Travis at his place of work
doing an alignment on a truck**

Not only does Travis have the satisfaction of getting up and going to a job that he is fully invested in, but each morning he gets a text from his much loved brother telling him, "I love you, brother, have an amazing day." His brother is eight years sober and Travis describes him as, "a rock star single dad". And it gets even better. His niece, who is now 9 and has autism, combined with a heart of gold, leaves messages for Travis. "I love you. I give you 30 kisses!" Travis continued, "She wakes up every day with a smile. So much love. She fills my heart with so much joy."

In fact, his whole family has been phenomenal and supportive. Travis proudly stated, "I am such a momma's boy. She is a rock star. My mom is my rock and I put her on a pedestal. My mom has always been there. I have mad love for her." He stops for a minute and grins, "She is an Italian mom - so don't piss her off. I rate my mom a 15 out of 10." All of Travis's family members are present in the circle of mad family love Travis embraces. Travis's daughter is following in his footsteps and is a mechanic and his son lives in Billings. His ex also lives in Billings and he speaks of her in glowing terms. "She is a truly beautiful woman who stole my heart and I will always love her." Travis also has a grandson. He radiated happiness when he talked about his little guy, "My grandson is so amazing. I will show my grandson the things I know so he can say, 'my grandpa taught me this.'"

It wasn't always like this for Travis, this joy, this hopefulness, this life he is now experiencing. Travis started doing time in 1994. "I was so rigid, so hard, so alone. I've worn so many masks." One factor that drove him to such a negative place was the death of his dad, "My dad was my best friend. I spiraled. That was the day of my downfall. I didn't know how to go to others and tell them about my pain. So drugs were all that made me feel good. As an addict I inflicted pain inward. "

His chemical use joined with his inward pain that kept him cycling in and out of incarceration, in a loop that seemed endless. Then this: In the Fort Benton county jail, Travis met a pastor. He listened in stunned amazement as the pastor, "spoke about what I was going through." Travis felt an instant connection and a life line. After a lifetime of being weighed down by stigma, unease, pain and guilt, Travis listened as this pastor told him that bad decisions don't define him. Travis turned this wondrous new phrase over and over in his mind, repeating to himself, "Bad decisions don't define me." For months, Travis was nourished by this message. And yes, the pastor had also done time and lived a difficult life - he knew what he was talking about. The pastor was authentic. This was real. Travis was finding his higher power. He was baptized in a stock tank, in the cold, at the Fort Benton jail. Also very real.



NEWS BY SHEENA JARVEY

Travis McLaughlin - Honors Member – continued

By Sheena Jarvey

This spiritual power has stayed with Travis and he prays morning and night. At New City Church, Travis said, “The message always hits home. It is what I need to hear.” We shared a laugh, giving us a break from the intensity of our conversation, when Travis joked that maybe he was actually wearing a big sign indicating what the message should be! He explained further, “My higher power is always with me. We aren’t the only ones going through things. We all have problems and this fact needs to motivate us to keep going.” Travis referred back to all the masks he had previously worn. “I didn’t know who I really was. I do know today. I know my self-worth. I don’t need anyone’s approval to make it.”



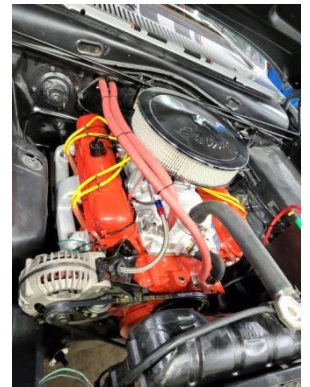
A '65 Ford Travis is restoring

While Travis wants to emphasize that he is a work in progress, he does acknowledge that he has the vantage point from his years of experience. Guys do come to Travis for support and advice. While he usually sticks to himself, “away from the noise”, still he is definitely there for anyone sincere in their search. Travis continued, “I see the young men here and I don’t want them to be where I am at 50. I will give advice, I will help anybody. There is not anything we can’t overcome, as long as we stand beside each other. We need to focus on doing.” Travis’s priority, first and always, however, is his recovery, “I have learned, no matter what, to set boundaries. If you want to sit and talk, my door is open, but I won’t play games. The reality is that being an addict was easy, but recovery is hard.” Along with setting boundaries, and doing the work, setting goals is another essential tool. Travis shared that one goal is his recovery Harley. And yes, that goal will happen.



Travis rebuilt the motor in this Barracuda

Our time for the interview was coming to a close. Still, there was something else that we hadn’t talked about. I could sense it and soon found out it was not something, but someone. Travis had a son, named Travis Jr., who was his constant sidekick. In 2003, an impaired driver ran a light, hitting their vehicle and Travis Jr., six years old, died in Travis’s arms. The shock of the sudden death of his child tormented Travis. “I was alone, scared and traumatized, so drugs and alcohol ‘filled’ the gaps.” He saw Travis Jr.’s death as a punishment and he was filled with ‘what ifs’ for a scenario that was impossible to fix or change. All Travis could experience was negative, dead space. And he became this same dead space.



“It took me 16 years to go to his grave, but I want to say this: the day I went to his grave was the day I was willing and wanting to change and the day I made peace. I went to his grave looking for acceptance of what had happened. But I know now that I couldn’t change the outcome. Instead of using his death as a punishment, I will now use it as a blessing.” Travis stopped for a minute and continued, “God took the best one. God needed the best one. And I am not alone. I think of Travis Jr. every day. He sits in my mechanic’s chair every day and he is proud of me and is waiting for me. His presence brings me peace and joy.”

“Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you will get.”

Travis quoted the famous line from one of his favorite movies, Forrest Gump. “So appreciate what you get, because others don’t always have that option. When I interact with others, I want them to know that somebody does care. I want people to know that. We all can change. Before, I didn’t allow others to enjoy the person that I am, but now I do.”

Reflecting further, Travis stated, “There is life after trauma, you just have to find it.” The other thing Travis now finds is Travis Jr’s hand gripping his and telling him, “Don’t worry, dad. I’ve got you.”



Travis installed a 6” lift on this Dodge

Inmate Worker Completes Program and Transfers to Resident

By Brenda Demers



Don Ritchie describes himself as an easy going guy and a social butterfly. When he was younger, he would walk up to strangers just to say hi. He was a happy go lucky kid, but now as an adult he found balance in his life.

Don explained that he is cognitively delayed and slow at catching on to things, but once he gets the hang of it, it's easy. Don said he is best at hands-on stuff and enjoys taking things apart and putting them back together. He first realized his talent when he took a vacuum cleaner apart and got it working again.

Growing up in an abusive home, Don found his escape in drugs. It started out with smoking weed with friends, who introduced him to meth. Before the drugs took over his life he liked to skate board and play video games. Don wanted to be like his friends and drop out of school so he could stay home and play video games, but with the insistence of his mother he persevered and graduated from high school.

This is Don's first time at a pre-release. He was okay with being an inmate worker. "I just wanted to get on with my life so I could make better decisions and go down a healthier path." Always focusing on the bright side, he commented, "It wasn't bad. I learned how to cook and did my best to make sure it turned out good." Don said he surprised himself by making it through because he is not a morning person.

Don tries not to stress out about things. He has no reason to worry about getting through pre-release because he has no write ups and nothing to hide. One of the challenges of being a regular resident was figuring out the weekly schedules. He worked through it by asking other residents, and they were good about helping him.

Don has a goal to get his driver's license for the first time. He is looking forward to getting his own place and having his mom and daughter come visit. What will he do differently this time? "I'll check in with my P.O., be responsible, and pay my bills." Don said he is ready to focus on himself and get back into the lives of his children. He likes adventure and being outdoors so he hopes to get a job doing landscaping and get back into hiking, biking, camping, and fishing.

Don related that he typically finds it easy to work with other people. However, when he comes across someone that annoys him, he copes by just ignoring them. He said, "I don't do negative – I can't. It just gets me irritated." Don has a special gift of being able to recognize the aura in people and distance himself from those that are negative. His perspective is to always look at the bright side, and his advice is, "Don't live your life focusing on the negative. Take it one day at a time and things will work out."

PRE-RELEASE PRESS

Editor: Brenda Demers



Brian Dolatta
beaded this
beautiful owl
keychain.



Residents: You are encouraged to submit something for the next newsletter - a drawing, poem, song, article, quote, advice, etc. Please turn it in to the CO desk with your name or contact Brenda. Any suggestions are also appreciated.



Heidi Hunter, RN

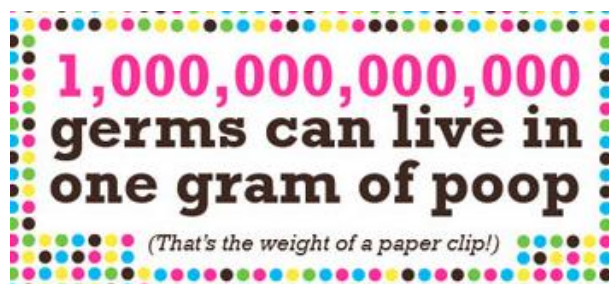
NURSE'S STATION

Wash Your Hands.....and make your mother proud!

According to a survey from the American Society for Microbiology, 1 out of 3 adults did not wash their hands after leaving public restrooms. YIKES!!

Why Should you wash your hands for 15-20 seconds with soap and water?

1. To be healthy. It's logical. Hand washing has proven to be the best way to keep you healthy against flu, dirt, biological hazards, etc.
2. To handle foods safely. 1 out of 3 food poisonings worldwide takes place because of dirty hands or incomplete hand washing!
3. To avoid killing somebody! 3,000 souls in the U.S. are lost because of food poisoning (Source: CDC)! 351,000 people are dying because of food poisoning globally (Source: WHO)!
4. To avoid sending somebody to the hospital. 128,000 persons are hospitalized every year in the U.S. (Source: CDC) because of food poisoning.
5. To be the example! Scientific studies have shown that hand washing behavior of seniors plays a crucial influence on other staff. In other words seniors act as role models!
6. To minimize the risk! Everybody says that!
7. To honor the effort of your parents! It's not a small thing! Just think about it! Assume a family with 1 kid. Assume the kid starts to wash hands at the age of two without any help. Assume that a parent advises the kid each day for lunch / dinner / supper until the age of 12. Do the math!!!
8. To boost your organization's reputation on hand washing! That counts double if you are working in the food sector! When customers actually see restaurant's personnel washing their hands, not only do they feel more safe to consume the prepared food, but also they spread the word to their friends (ok not as fast as a bad experience but they do it!)
9. To reduce your company's cost from possible food poisoning! If a food company is responsible for food poisoning their insurance costs are elevated! According to [The Huffington Post](#) food poisonings costs roughly \$70 billion dollars a year in the U.S. alone!
10. To shine on! It's like a smile. Clean hands give you the feeling of a morning shower! We get a clean slate when we wash our hands, and we also wash our minds clean.



Brent Cloward - Honors Member

By Brenda Demers



Brent's heart was heavy as he talked about this past year. He said it has been the hardest year of his life. Shortly after his arrival close to a year ago, his son was in a terrible car accident that left him paralyzed. High hopes that he would regain his ability to walk were crushed. A short time later his grandpa passed away, and just recently he lost his other grandpa. "Everything inside of me was telling me to run." That's how Brent handled the stresses of life in the past, but he has gained a lot of maturity since those days. He doesn't run from the things in life that are difficult to deal with. Brent explained, "I just know it's going to make everything worse and I'd lose everything I worked so hard for. At this point in life I have way too much to lose and I'm not willing to give it up."

A turning point in Brent's life happened while he was in prison and lost parole because of a dirty UA. He didn't realize the impact his actions had on his children until he heard the heartbreak in his daughter's voice when she found out. Since that moment he has been clean and sober. Brent smiled and remarked, "It feels good!" Brent beamed as he spoke about his kids. "I'm proud of myself, and my kids tell me they are proud of me." He credited his three nieces for supporting him as well.

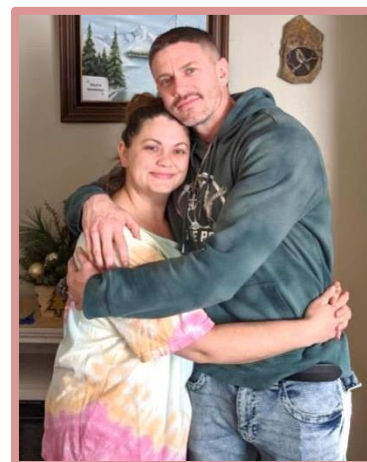
Brent has been in the system since he was young. He admits it's been challenging "stepping out of my comfort zone and staying away from the type of people I gravitated towards. I'm focused and I stay away from anybody or anything that's going to deter me from my goals." Being accepted into Honors shows that Brent is reaping the rewards of staying clean and working hard and he appreciates the chance to get his life back. Brent's CTS commented that he has learned to seek out help from others when he feels his situation is too much.

Brent is a quiet and reserved individual who takes pride in what he does. This was evident in his 6 months here as an inmate worker. "If I have my name on something, I want it to be right. If I don't understand something, I will figure it out." The word is out that Brent is the go-to-guy if you need a hair cut. He has been doing it for a long time and he enjoys it. He plans to get his cosmetology license and make a career of it. Brent finds it rewarding making people feel good about themselves.

Brent closed with, "I just want to get home to my family and stay out of prison for the rest of my life." I see that Brent has proven himself thus far and is definitely on the right track to do just that.



Brent with his aunt, grandma, sister, nieces, and girlfriend



Brent with his sister

Education Center Schedule for the Month of February 2023

Special Note: HiSET testing is conducted on Tuesdays, and TABE testing on Mondays and Wednesdays at GFCMSU. Ed Center hours will be adjusted pending resident registration for testing day and time.

Monday 2/6:

Computer Learning 0830 – 1030
Connections Check @ GFCMSU 1100 – 1200
East Campus 1300 – 1430
Women's Campus 1430 – 1600

Tuesday 2/7:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 0930 and 1300 – 1700

Wednesday 2/8:

Ed. Center Hours 1000 – 1200 and 1300 - 1700
Computer Learning 0800-0930
New Resident Intake 1300 - 1330

Thursday 2/9:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 0930 and 1600 - 1700
East Campus 0930 - 1100
Connections Check @ GFCMSU 1300 - 1400
Women's Campus 1430 - 1600

Friday 2/10:

Ed. Center Hours 1200 – 1300 and 1600 - 2000
Life Skills – Retirement Plans
 East Campus 1330
 Women's Campus 1430
 West Campus 1530

Monday 2/13:

Computer Learning 0830 – 1030
Connections Check @ GFCMSU 1100 – 1200
East Campus 1300 – 1430
Women's Campus 1430 - 1600

Tuesday 2/14:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 0900 and 1300 – 1700
Staff Meeting 0930 - 1030

Wednesday 2/15:

Ed. Center Hours 1000 - 1200 and 1330 - 1700
Computer Learning 0830 -0930
New Resident Intake 1300 - 1330

Thursday 2/16:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 0930 and 1600 - 1700
East Campus 0930 - 1100
Connections Check @ GFCMSU 1300 – 1400
Staff Meeting 1400 - 1500
Women's Campus 1500 - 1630

Friday 2/17:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 -1200 and 1300 - 1700

Monday 2/20:

President's Day – Ed. Center Closed

Tuesday 2/21:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 1200 and 1300 - 1700

Wednesday 2/22:

Ed. Center Hours 1000 – 1200 and 1330 - 1700
Computer Learning 0800 - 0930
New Resident Intake 1300 - 1330

Thursday 2/23:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 0930 and 1600 - 1700
East Campus 0930 - 1100
Connections Check @ GFCMSU 1300 – 1400
Women's Campus 1430 - 1600

Friday 2/24:

Ed. Center Hours 1100 - 1330
Life Skills – Budgeting Strategies
 East Campus 1400
 West Campus 1600
 Women's Campus 1800

Monday 2/27:

Computer Learning 0830 – 1030
Connections Check @ GFCMSU 1100 – 1200
East Campus 1300 – 1430
Women's Campus 1430 - 1600

Tuesday 2/28:

Ed. Center Hours 0800 – 1200 and 1300 - 1700

Education Center Schedule for the Month of February 2023 - continued

- 1) If you need any assistance prepping for, beginning, continuing, or completing the HiSet, please contact Allen Heisler - Education Coordinator to schedule with Great Falls College MSU, and discuss the necessary steps.
- 2) The above schedule is not all inclusive and is subject to change. If you need to use the education center, or discuss anything with the education coordinator, please call 406-455-9346 or stop in to schedule availability.
- 3) The Life Skills sessions will be conducted in the following locations unless otherwise noted.
West Campus: The Ed. Center or the Downstairs Classroom./Counselor Conf. Room
East Campus: Downstairs Class Room
Women's Center: The Great Room
- 4) If you wish to discuss any post-secondary options for pursuing college courses, training, etc. please feel free to contact Allen Heisler - Education Coordinator. 406-455-9346.
- 5) Computer based learning opportunities are available to all residents through the Ed. Department. This includes everything from Hiset preparation, to online courses, as well as career exploration and pathways. Interested individuals should visit the Ed. Center, or contact the Ed. Coordinator for more information.
- 6) Life Long Learning through the Great Falls College MSU offers many opportunities to participate in courses ranging from wood and metal working, to finance, computers, wellness, cooking, business, etc... These courses vary in days and times as well as cost. Interested individuals should contact the Ed. Coordinator for course availability. Also, the Life Long Learning Scholarship is available to help fund the cost of these courses. Applications are available through the Ed. Center.



**By Allen Heisler,
Education Coordinator**

The Step Poem Submitted by Jon Wallace

I took Step One, began to moan.
I can't do this one on my own.

I took Step Two, began to pray
Restore me God, please now, today.

I took Step Three, gave up my will
Maybe God could love me still.

I took a Fourth, I looked inside
Nothing more would I hide.

And on the Fifth, I said aloud
I've done some wrong, and I'm not proud.



I took Step Six, and got prepared
To lose the defects, I was scared.

Now I am at Seven, take them away
My God, for this I do pray.

And on an Eighth, the list was long
Amends to make for all the wrongs.

I took Step Nine, put down my pride
Amends made, I will not hide.

Step Ten I take, each day I pray
I make amends along the way.

And on Eleven I pray to know
Each day His will, which way to go.

I take Step 12, I'm like a bird
To others now, I spread the word

Inmate Worker Completes Program and Transfers to Resident

By Brenda Demers



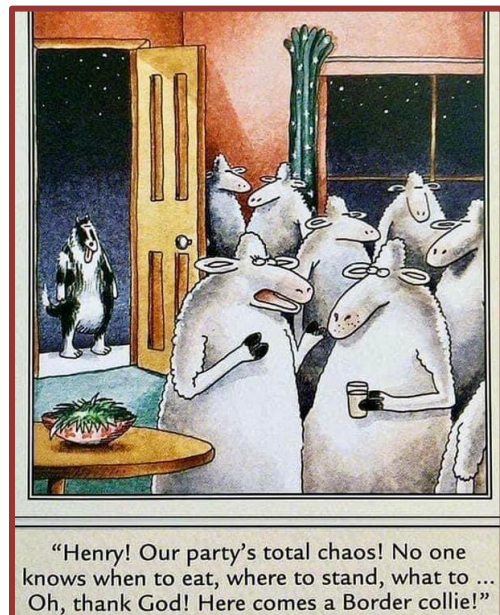
Anyone that has been in contact with **Jason Skaw** appreciates the breath of fresh air he brings with his consistent smile, fun energy, and positive attitude. He explained that he is already in a tough situation and that won't change, so he might as well have a good attitude. "Your mood rubs off on others, so there is no need to bring everyone else down."

Jason was raised in Hamilton by his biological grandparents, whom he refers to as his parents. He started riding steers as a youngster and before long made his way up to riding bulls. He was also good at boxing, finding it a way to release his energy.

Growing up, Jason said that he consistently spent time in juvenile detention for his rebellious behavior. This is his first time at a pre-release. The challenges that come with being an inmate worker include not being able to leave the center and dealing with people you don't necessarily want to deal with.

I found out that Jason is creative when I saw the carrot man standing inside a half eggshell that he made. He said, "I can't draw, but there are certain times if I see an opportunity to make someone laugh or have fun I'll do that. In school I was the class clown. It's just always fun to laugh." In life Jason has learned to "always be in a good mood even when you aren't really happy. Stay positive. Stick to yourself. Don't get wrapped up in drama." Some additional words of wisdom from Jason: "I feel that the harder you try the easier it gets, whether it be in life or work or anything you do. Some people try too hard to get out of things. This program is not hard; you make it hard on yourself. Just do what you have to do."

What makes Jason sad? "The thought of not being home with my kids – that's the one and only. Once you are away from your kids all you want to do is get back home with them." Jason's big goal is to continue staying clean and sober. As of this interview, he is proud to have 16 months of sobriety under his belt. I asked how he will continue his sobriety under stressful situations, and he responded, "I'll just think about how far I've come from being 110 pounds. The thought of losing my kids - that's a big one. I don't want to get locked up again and go to prison and lose my family."



Charlie Armstrong - Honors Member



**Charlie Armstrong and Jeremy Bunnis
Top OSL Sales Team for Montana - North Dakota**

Charlie Armstrong, Honors Member and Jeremy Bunnis, Honors Member, recently received an award for being the top OSL sales team among all of the Wal-Mart OSL stores in both Montana and North Dakota. Twice in the last two months. This award is given for greatest volume of phones sold and transactions completed. OSL, or Outsourced Sales Leaders, is a third party business that sells cellphones and service plans from select Wal-Mart locations nationwide, specializing in AT&T and Verizon products. Charlie and Jeremy are so deserving of this award, as they work professionally with customer after customer, in person and taking phone calls. Congratulations to both Charlie and Jeremy for this distinct honor recognizing their hard work, ability to problem solve, attention to detail and outstanding customer service.

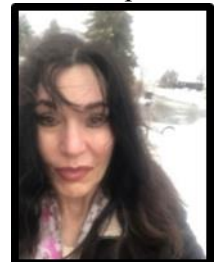
Charlie has had professional careers previously and is making a very welcome return to what he termed, “regular life fulfillment and the life balance that I used to have.” What’s different this time is that Charlie is keenly aware of how high the stakes are. Now in active recovery, Charlie said that he has way more clarity and much less confusion, without the addiction destroying his ability to show up for his life. “I’m now a normal citizen, not a part time, cocaine using citizen.”

After four years of incarceration, Charlie is actually pretty okay with being in a transitional facility. Why? “Because now it’s time to grow up.” Charlie explained that being in the Center allows him to be in a stable situation where he can continue his journey back to adulthood, and coming in stronger and better this time around. Charlie continued, “I need to be successful, but not just for me.” Charlie has two beloved nieces, Kayde and Kayci. He wants to be there for them in a meaningful way and be the family member they can count on. As he expressed this in a loving statement, “I want to ease up the burden of life for them.” But building back bridges of trust can be rough. Charlie knows that this means constant follow through, staying in recovery and continuing to make good decisions. “I have to keep doing the right thing and build a track record of consistency”. Charlie is very aware that the power of his love for his nieces needs to be combined with strong and consistent actions, patience and understanding.

Additionally, there is the very real issue of staying in recovery. Charlie is more than ready to put family before addictions. Even the power of cocaine to artificially produce a brain reaction has lost its appeal in the face of the reality of what chemical use can and can’t do. Charlie said that now he knows how to be genuinely happy, not a temporary, high sort of happy, which he characterizes as “exhausting.” That’s how he wants to feel now, to have those honest feelings of contentment and joy that doesn’t wear off when the chemicals do.

Charlie equated the steps he is taking in his life to building with Legos. I pounced on that analogy immediately. It’s so true! A Lego creation can only happen in a progressive step formation, using the interlocking blocks. A life journey also involves taking one step at a time with intentional focus. Also, carrying on the Lego analogy, the step formations need to interlock, i.e. another key factor of success lies in relationships. In this regard, professional, effective contacts while transitioning plays an essential role in Charlie’s program. Charlie noted,

“My Pre-Release journey would not be nearly what it is if certain staff members didn’t go above and beyond in their jobs. I give them credit for positively impacting lives. The front desk staff on East are always there with answers and help.” He gave a special shout out to Dan, Liz and Steve. Mental health counselor Robin figures prominently in Charlie’s circle of support and he has high praise for her (bless you, Robin, can we clone you?!) as well as group facilitators (thank you). Charlie noted that if this program were simply one of control, devoid of any insight, support or human understanding, he would not have made it. The help and direction made all the difference.



NEWS BY SHEENA JARVEY

Charlie Armstrong - Honors Member – continued

By Sheena Jarvey

“My walk is an opportunity to treat people how I want to be treated.” Charlie knows that the power of connection extends to everyone he comes in contact with. For example, Charlie and Jeremy provide a touchstone for residents going to Wal-Mart. I often see it on our Inmate Worker escorted trips, where our first stop is usually to buy phone cards and say hi “to the guys working at the back”. This may seem a small thing, but it is not. For residents who have been away from outside society for years and then are thrust into a busy store, they can quickly become overwhelmed and disoriented. Charlie and Jeremy understand this and they provide that friendly face, that funny joke, that wave of hello and acceptance that can make all the difference. Their presence, their professionalism and greetings signal, “I see you, I get you and you matter. You will be alright, you can do this. We are in the same situation (yes, we are also residents) and we are working in the community, working our program, dealing with life problems, and we are okay.” Jeremy and Charlie also provide support for each other. “Jeremy and I get along so well, it’s like being with family, this friendship we have.”

Charlie is a thoughtful, insightful person who knows his positive journey includes the importance of elevating others. His dry sense of humor is a delight. We are so proud of Charlie and wish him and his family happiness and continued success.

CO **Liz Drahos** recently traveled to Washington to celebrate the 100th birthday of her dad, Harvey Drahos. Mr. Drahos was recognized and honored at the state capital in Olympia for his many years of active community service and leadership to the state. Liz’s dad is a WWII veteran and the last living member of his unit. As he fought on the front lines in Okinawa, Japan he vowed that if he survived he would help the people. As a combat infantryman, one of the times Harvey scrambled for cover under machine-gun fire, he looked down and noticed a family photo album. He kept the album safe for 74 years until, with the help of his caregiver, they found the family in Okinawa it belonged to!

Liz commented that her dad is a retired medical doctor and a doctor of BS (lol)!

Four generations of the Drahos family are pictured below. Liz poses with her dad, her children, and her youngest grandson.



Standing up for What's Right

By Brenda Demers



While interviewing **Jon Wallace**, I found it a bit challenging to keep up with his fast paced sentences. He had a lot on his mind and was ready to share it.

Jon's dad taught his children to stand up for themselves, and for each other, so if it meant throwing punches, that was okay. As a teenager he worked to help support his large family. Jon has an identical twin, and they are very close.

Jon has always cared about other people. He doesn't like bullies and is known to stick up for the underdog. For example, Jon didn't just stand by as the seniors in his high school snapped wet towels at the freshman, and he wouldn't let anyone get away with taunting his family members. Jon commented, "I like to help people and I go out of my way to help, but sometimes it bites me."

Jon graduated from high school and found himself on and off the streets and in and out of jail. He commented that it has been a long road and he is tired of that life. He doesn't put the blame on anyone besides himself and pointed to reverting back to his old ways and making stupid choices. "I was bad; I was really mean. I was for fighting back then. The cops told me if I want to get back in the ring I need to do it legally. I tend to get too high and mighty – my mouth gets myself in trouble. I say things I shouldn't say and don't realize it until it's too late. I know right from wrong, but being me sometimes gets me in trouble."

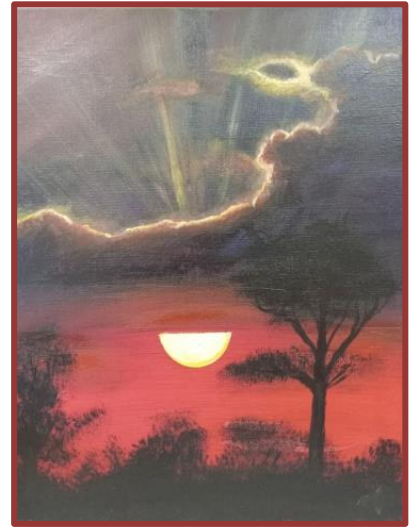
Jon related that pre-release was hard at first because he fought the program even though he knew better. He said he had the mentality that he could get through doing things his way. Jon is true to himself. He's not one to go around being someone he's not and refuses to "fake it to make it." "Some people don't like me, and that's okay." Jon finds it is way easier now that he's following the program and not associating with people that are on the wrong track. "I know what I'm capable of doing." Jon has a great attitude and takes pride in making sure things are clean in the kitchen here at the pre-release, watching for anything that needs to be done. He doesn't want to eat from dirty utensils or trays, and he ensures that others don't either.

Jon has a steady job and mentors the younger employees. He is spiritual and prays before he goes to work. He has read the Bible from front to back and can quote a number of scriptures. He completed the Great Falls Rescue Mission Christian Discipleship program. Jon talked a lot about the Great Falls Rescue Mission and the part he played in building the women and children's shelter and being part of the discipleship program, working lead in the kitchen, cooking, and directing the volunteers.

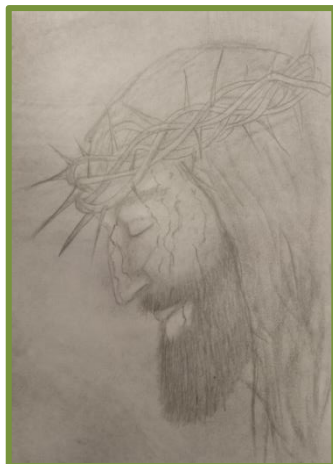
Jon's advice is to "keep your head up, be positive, and mind your own business. Stay true to yourself and you'll have nothing else to worry about. Make sure you are doing what you are supposed to and follow the rules or you'll be like me and still be here long after you are supposed to get out. It's not that hard."

Some things Jon enjoys is being outdoors, going to the movies, and helping his family members shine up their classic cars for car shows. Reading and journaling help keep him focused and prevent him from thinking negatively. "Whatever I'm thinking about I can revert back and can see if I'm going astray and realize it's not worth going down the dark and painful road leading to misery."

Jon looks forward to getting his own place and staying out of trouble and not coming back. There is no doubt in my mind that he will continue to serve others.



Artwork by
Arthur Windyboy



Travis Poor – Honors Member



Travis Poor, new Honors Member, has now become an official member of Fairview Baptist Church and he couldn't be more proud. The Elders and Deacons vote on all potential new members, using exemplary criteria. Becoming a member of Fairview Baptist Church is an accomplishment.

Reformers Unanimous, also known as RU, is an integral part of the Fairview Baptist Church. Travis explained that RU is an intensive, interactive living Faith Based program that goes way beyond the two hour meeting on Friday night. Travis said that the support, caring and spiritual sustenance is absolutely amazing. Also amazing is the pastor, who, coming full circle, was Travis's childhood pastor. Members of the RU support team are only a text or call away and will respond quickly, without judgment.

However, this intensity of RU can be very challenging and overwhelming and Travis said he struggled at first, not sure if he could commit to the program. But once it took hold, and Travis surrendered to the process, he was all in. "If God's against it, so am I" is a guideline that Travis applies to issues large and small. Now, RU is his stability, his lifeline, his direct connection to spiritual power, which keeps him away from self-destruction. "Other things I tried but they fade away. When I do RU, I do good." As Travis said, "I have no more chances. This is literally my last chance to do it right." Travis credits RU with truly transforming his life and letting his soul find its home.

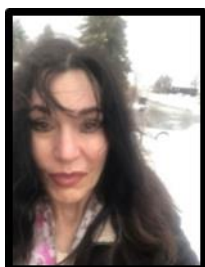
But prior to the life he has today, Travis had struggled hard with his addiction which had spiraled out of control around 2015. By 2021 he and his wife, who had been together for a number of years, divorced. The day of his divorce was horrible. Travis realized his mistake right away and said, "My divorce was the biggest regret I ever had. I knew I had made a mistake, so, of course filled with shame and regret, I dove further into my addiction."

His addiction eventually led to incarceration and subsequent treatment. Then something remarkable happened: Travis and his wife started talking and writing. Letters began arriving with pictures. Travis realized that the family that he loved and cherished was coming back into his life.

Travis and his wife have now reunited. There is so much joy in this family reunion and Travis glowed with happiness as he spoke about his love for his family. Travis and his wife are the proud parents of Breanna who is 10, Braydan who is 9, and Bristol who is 6. As joyful as their family reunification is, there are still many issues to work through and bridges of trust to rebuild. So, in addition to the support at Fairview Baptist Church, Travis and his family attend counseling at Green Apple. One problem they don't have is their love for each other. "My wife has unconditional love. She has always wanted us. Since I got here, she has been rock solid. I know now what I want. I want my family back."

Another leg of his journey back to his family, and to himself, is his Pre Release program. Travis had doubts at the start of his program. Under the influence, problems become muted. With his new sobriety, however, the fear was real. Travis explained, "I was scared to come to Pre Release because I was terrified to fail. I didn't want to come out and be the same." Travis held onto one of his favorite quotes, "Only

I can change me; no one else can do it for me." Letting God take the lead in his change was key. Travis said, "God knows what I want and need and I follow God's direction." Travis said he is now experiencing, "God's blessings for being obedient."



Travis Poor – Honors Member – continued

By Sheena Jarvey

Travis said his mom is super proud of him and super supportive and they share devotionals every morning. His dad is an awesome grandpa. His sister is a big part of his support network and Travis basks in their approval and their willingness to always “pick up the phone.” He told me, “To hear my parents say they are proud of me is pretty cool. My family knows who I really am.”

The better Travis’s life becomes, the further he moves away from his addiction. He said thoughts of using are not appealing and cravings are dimming. Along with his spiritual and family wellbeing, Travis prioritizes health. He and some friends on East do a circuit training each morning at 5:00, getting up at 4:30 to make this happen. Honors is another thing he made happen and Travis shook his head and smiled, “I would have never thought I would make Honors.”

When asked why God saved him and showered him with all these blessings, Travis was quick to respond. “This is my calling. I had hit the rock bottom of the rock bottom, so that is why people can relate to me. I believe I am destined to help a lot of people. I want to help more people through God’s grace so He can save them.” Before, Travis was distant from his faith, or worse, he was actually ashamed. Now he states, “My faith is who I am and what I am about. I proclaim my faith.”

With God’s blessings, Travis is creating the life he wants and needs, for as he shared, “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” To further create his future, Travis will attend MSU College of Great Falls for his generals, with the goal of becoming an LAC. In addition, Travis wants to become a pastor, with his sights set on being a youth pastor. Travis’s commitment to his calling, his sense of humor, easy going manner, life experiences and profound faith will guide him so he can pass this inspiration on to the next generation.

We are so proud of Travis and the life he and his family have created. We wish them many years of happiness and joy.

BREAKING THE CHAINS
OF ADDICTION

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

FIND INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT TODAY

RU is a faith-based recovery program designed to help those struggling with stubborn habits and addictions. Join the thousands around the world who are “breaking the chains” of addiction today.

RU
RECOVERY PROGRAM

locate chapter | residential program
recovery resources | 866.733.6768
f rurecovery.com

Fairview Baptist Church
4428 2nd Ave N – 406-761-3654
Joe Williams – 307-752-9583
Terri Williams – 307-752-9584
Meets every Friday at 7:00 pm

RU has just been approved as a recovery based activity and rides are available, so check with CD staff Robert or Karen if interested.

Inmate Worker Completes Program and Transfers to Resident

By Erin Seidler and Brenda Demers



I believe that all of my wisdom was gained in my struggle. I have learned so much about myself over the past year -- things that I probably never would have discovered had I not been afforded the opportunity to be in this program.

I'm probably not alone in thinking that the system treated me unfairly. But by changing my perspective, I realized that I am exactly where I need to be, and I got exactly what I needed to become the person I know I'm supposed to be.

I was terrified when I learned I had to do the Inmate Worker program! Once I got here though and found my niche in the women's kitchen, I learned that I enjoy baking and can do it quite well! I loved seeing my fellow residents happy, and thoroughly enjoyed taking care of everyone with my love of cooking. Although I miss my kitchen dearly, I am overjoyed to continue my journey in the next chapter of my life and the next step of this wonderful program.

Erin has moved on to the next step of being a resident in the program. The only incident reports she has are positives, and she has accumulated 5 of those. Being a social butterfly, Erin shines at her job as a hostess and receives compliments on her phone etiquette.

Erin knows the ins and outs of addiction and has her sights set on becoming a Licensed Addictions Counselor. She has found strength and determination in herself, something she struggled with in the past. She commented that now it's easy for her to lay down boundaries and stay focused to follow through and finish whatever she sets out to do. ***"I like that I don't have to give up anymore."***

We are proud of you, Erin, and wish you the very best!

Erin with two of her children



Erin finds joy in her creativity. This is one of her pieces of artwork.



Brightening up the entry to the Women's Center are all of the rocks Erin painted

What is something you have done that you think no one else in the center has done or accomplished?

Chantel Cooper: I have been to school for drug and addiction counseling. I was a case manager at a 3.5 inpatient treatment center.

Christy Atakenu: Climbed the bell towers and sang in the sanctuary at Notre Dame in Paris.

Heidi Hunter: Lost a finger from a rope/horse incident. Candy's Buttercup, my palomino mare, now goes by the name of Elmer's Glue.

Jesica Pedersen: Trained for the Ice Breaker. I run down River's Edge Trail and go to the gym.

Kayla Williams: I swam in a pool with Sean Astin (Sam from Lord of the Rings).

Jeff Barnhart: Danced on the road with American Bandstand in Philadelphia back in the mid 60's.

Nicholas Guardipee: Raced cross country on horseback in New Zealand in 2015.



Robin Castle: I don't think anyone was silly enough to go to school for 5 degrees. (Pre-Med, Teaching, Masters in Administration, Masters in Counseling, Specialist in Educational Leadership)

Roxi Stroh: I shot myself in the foot and it took 7 years to heal.

Shilo Bill NightShoot: Nailed advanced yoga on the first try and never went back.

Steve Rogers: Having been deployed on submarine, I have done a lot of things no one else in the center has done that I can't talk about and something I can name is I have deployed on three classes of submarines.

What song reminds you of a current or past love?

Chantel Cooper: *When the Drugs Don't Work* by Doubie, *Hate Song* by Doubie

Christy Atakenu: *Fishing in the Dark* by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

Heidi Hunter: *Mama's Broken Heart* – Miranda Lambert

Jason Skaw: *Get you the Moon* by Kina and *Ride Slow* by Russ

Kayla Williams: *Leaving on a Jet Plane* by John Denver

Nicholas Guardipee: *Delirious* by Soulja Boy

Roxi Stroh: *Moody Blues* (Elvis)

Shilo Bill NightShoot: *Until it Sleeps* by Metallia

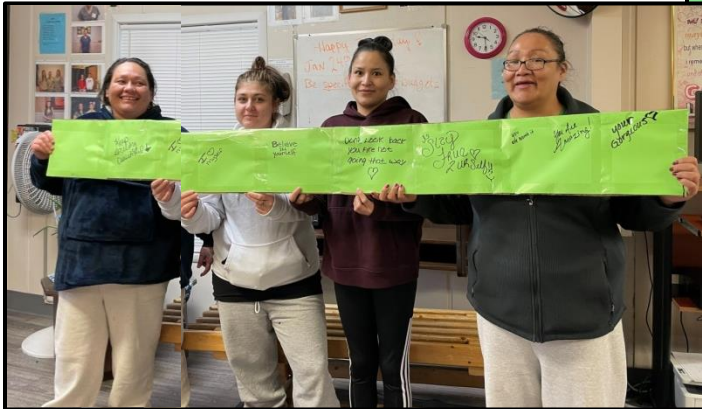
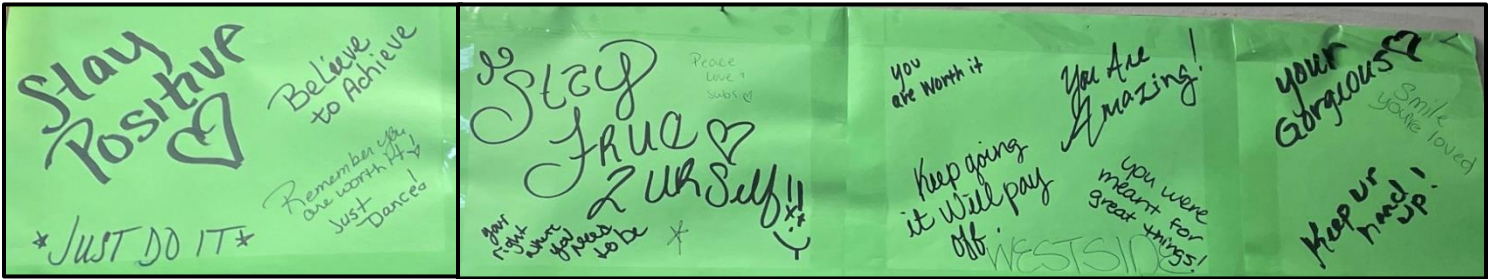
Steve Rogers: Florida-Georgia Lines song *Simple* reminds me of my daughter

Jamie Lund: *Torn* by Natalie Umbrugh

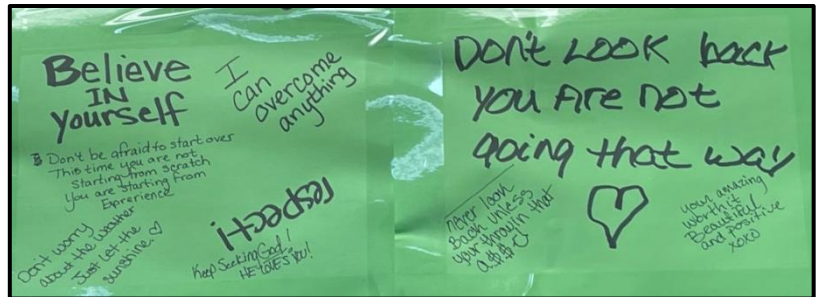
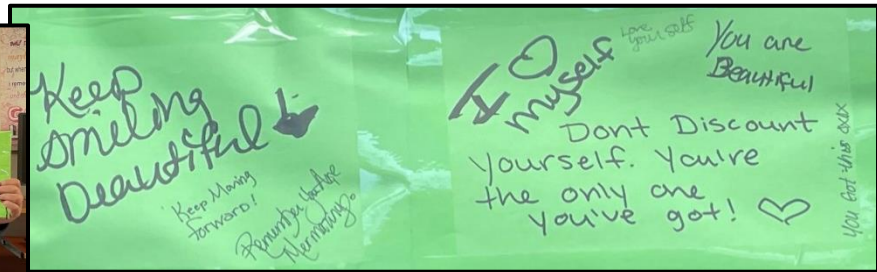
Robin Castle: *Vincent* by Don McClean



Thanks to CO Danni Altenburg the women made a very cool positive panel!



Serene McClure, Jordan Schmitt,
Megan Yellow Owl, Darnell Champagne



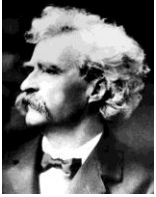
What's in your cup?

Submitted by Roxi Stroh

"You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere.
 Why did you spill the coffee?
 "Well because someone bumped into me, of course!"
 Wrong answer.
 You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup.
 Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea.
 Whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.
 Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out.
 It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.
 So we have to ask ourselves... "What's in my cup?"
 When life or business gets tough, what spills over?
 Joy, gratefulness, peace and humility?
 Or anger, bitterness, harsh words and impulsive reactions?
 You choose!
 Today let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation; kindness, gentleness and love for others."

JEFF'S TRIVIA, SCIENCE, AND SAFETY CORNER

DID YOU KNOW Do you believe in coincidences? Try and figure these out.



Mark Twain's birth and death coincide with Halley's Comet.

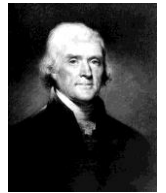
Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known more popularly by his nom de plume, **Mark Twain**, was born in 1835, the same year that Halley's Comet made its first appearance. The comet made a second appearance in 1910, the year that Twain died, and the author, according to the *New York Times*, famously predicted that the two events would coincide. He's quoted as saying, "The Almighty has said, no doubt, 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together.'"



Jeff Barnhart

Political adversaries Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died within hours of each other—on July 4th.

The relationship between former presidents Thomas Jefferson and **John Adams** took quite a few twists and turns over the years. They began as allies, then gradually grew into adversaries as their politics divided them. As the last two surviving members of the American revolutionaries from the British Empire, they eventually reconciled and corresponded by letter until their final years. They famously died within hours of one another on the same day in 1826: on the Fourth of July.



A meteor hit the Commette family's home.



National Geographic reports that your odds of being killed by a meteor are 1 in 1,600,000. So the odds would seem infinitesimally small that a meteor—which had been flying through space for more than four-and-a-half billion years without hitting a target—would hit the home of a family with the last name "Commette." According to *Time*, in a bizarre case of cosmic synchronicity, that is exactly what happened to one family in France. Thankfully, no one was hurt, and the Commettes are now the proud owners of their own extremely rare extra-terrestrial rock.

John Wilkes Booth's brother saved Abraham Lincoln's son from death.

John Wilkes Booth and Abraham Lincoln reportedly had a coincidental family connection long before Booth shot Lincoln on that fateful day in April in 1865. Booth's brother, Edwin, was a somewhat famous stage actor who ardently supported the Union during the Civil War. While in a train station in New Jersey, Lincoln's son, **Robert Todd Lincoln**, leaned up against a stopped train, nearly falling onto the tracks as it started up again. **Edwin Booth** grabbed him by the collar and saved him just in time. The younger Lincoln recognized his hero and wrote about the incident, but it wasn't until years later that Booth found out who he had saved.



And that same son of Lincoln's witnessed three presidential assassinations.

While it would be rare to be present for the death of any president, Robert Todd Lincoln was in some way present for not one, not two, but *three* presidential assassinations. Though he wasn't there at the theater during his father's fateful shooting, he was rushed to his deathbed and sat by his side until the elder Lincoln passed away. Later, he was an eye-witness to the killing of **President James A. Garfield**. Finally, in 1901, Lincoln was nearby in Buffalo, New York, at the invitation of **President William McKinley**, when the president was fatally shot.



One woman survived the *Titanic*, *Britannic*, and *Olympic* shipwrecks

Violet Jessop was a nurse and ocean liner stewardess who earned the nickname "Miss Unsinkable" by surviving both the accidents of the *Titanic* in 1912 and its sister ship, the *HMHS Britannic*, which met the same fate in 1916. Jessop was also reportedly on board a third boat, the *RMS Olympic*, when it hit a war ship—but fortunately, the *Olympic* stayed afloat.



JEFF'S TRIVIA, SCIENCE, AND SAFETY CORNER - continued



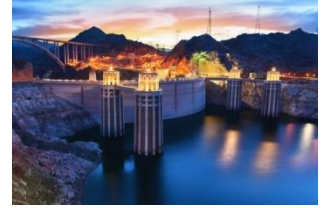
One man missed two Malaysian Air flights that crashed.

In 2014, there were two tragic plane crashes involving Malaysian Air flights. The first was shot down over Ukraine, and the second disappeared without a trace somewhere over the Indian Ocean in the greatest aviation mystery of all time. Beyond the fact that both incidents involved the same airline in such a short time span, there was another striking coincidence: Dutch cyclist

Maarten de Jonge was scheduled to take both flights, but cheated death by bumping his ticket at the eleventh hour, when cheaper options became available.

A father and son were the first and last casualties during the construction of the Hoover Dam—14 years apart.

According to the United States Bureau of Reclamation, out of the estimated 21,000 people that worked on the building of the Hoover Dam, there were 96 deaths on the job site. Among the first was **J.G. Tierney**, who drowned along with his colleague on December 20, 1922 while conducting a geological survey prior to construction. Fourteen years later, on the exact anniversary of Tierney's death, the final death of the project was recorded. It was his son, **Patrick Tierney**, who, according to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, fell from an electrical tower.



A woman's husband found a dollar she wrote on, hoping to find a husband.

As told on an episode of NPR's *This American Life*, **Esther** and **Paul Grachan** had been seeing each other for a short time when Paul decided to ask her to be his girlfriend. That day, while paying for a sandwich, he noticed that a dollar bill he was about to hand the cashier had the name "Esther" written on it in pencil. How strange, he thought, that this should happen right when he was

thinking about their relationship. He kept the bill and decided to frame it and give it to her as a gift. She was "speechless" when she saw it, but told him to ask her about it later.

Years passed, they got engaged and then married, and the framed dollar resurfaced in their home. Apparently, Esther had written her name on the dollar and a few others after a breakup, and said to herself at the time that she would marry the man that brought it back to her. She didn't tell him why she was so speechless because she thought bringing up marriage so soon in the relationship would scare him off. But she believed in that moment he was "the one."

10-Year-Old Laura Buxton released a red balloon—and another 10-year-old Laura Buxton found it.

In a story told on the WYNC podcast *Radiolab*, in 2001, a 10-year-old girl named **Laura Buxton** stood in her front yard with a red balloon. On the side of the balloon, she had written the words, "Please return to Laura Buxton," along with her address. She then released it into a strong wind.

The balloon traveled roughly 140 miles south before descending, and finally landed in the yard of another 10-year-old girl. The second girl's name? Also **Laura Buxton**! After getting in touch and explaining the coincidence, the girls decided to meet, and discovered a whole range of uncanny similarities. Not only did they look and dress alike, but both girls had three-year-old chocolate labs, a grey rabbit, and a guinea pig, and both had brought their guinea pigs to the meeting, unplanned.



The Simpsons predicted Donald Trump's presidency.

It's not the only accurate prediction to come out of *The Simpsons*' writer's room, but it sure is the most extraordinary: in 2000, the show ran an episode that saw **Donald Trump** as President. While some may argue that the show's predictions can be explained let's also keep in mind that pundits, pollsters, most of the American population, and even Donald Trump himself were all astounded by Trump's win. Whether writers for *The Simpsons* have a fortune teller on speed dial or are uniquely in tune with the pulse of the American people, this was a pretty remarkable prediction (unless, of course, the cartoon gave him the idea to run).

FUN & GAMES

♥ Valentine's Day ♥

14 Feb.

Across

- 3. What cupid shoots.
- 5. A Valentine's Day treat.
- 7. Valentine's Day color.
- 9. Something you wear on your finger.
- 10. He shoots love arrows.
- 12. Something often written on Valentine's Day cards.
- 14. Touch lips.
- 15. The symbol of love.

Down

- 1. An emotion.
- 2. A day for love.
- 4. The flower of love.
- 6. People often exchange these on Valentine's Day.
- 8. Go on a _____. Go somewhere with your boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 11. Something a poet writes.
- 13. Present.

