

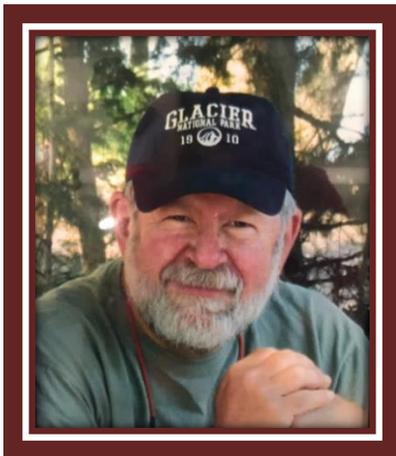
TRANSITION TIMES



VOLUME 21, ISSUE 2

2nd QUARTER 2020

Loss of an Icon



We are saddened to announce the passing of our Executive Director, **Paul R. Cory**. His entire career consisted of helping those struggling with addiction and crime. His obituary stated in part, "One of his first jobs was with the Wesley Teen Outreach program where he taught teens who committed minor crimes to use their time constructively with skills for camping, fishing, helping others, repairing clocks, vehicle maintenance, etc. Later, many of those he helped would see Paul in the community and thank him for his assistance in changing their lives. Paul went on to work for the State of Montana as a child protection social worker. Neihart and Glacier were his favorite places to be with the healing mountains." Paul also enjoyed skiing and playing golf. He patronized his hometown and was very knowledgeable about the local history and always kept his eye out for vintage items.

In 1989 Paul was hired at the Great Falls Pre-Release Transition Center as the Counselor Supervisor, a position then second in command. He supervised three counselors, did all of the screening, handled the disciplinary actions, was the Hearings Officer for Class II incident reports, and scheduled the Resident Advisors (now called CO's). He even had to do maintenance because there was no maintenance man or facilities manager. Only thirty-five residents lived in the Center then. There were no inmate workers; the residents and staff had to chip in to cook. In 1995, Paul advanced into the Administrator position. Through the years Paul and the Board of Directors facilitated and oversaw the growth of Great Falls Pre-Release Services, Inc. with the opening of a Women's Center in 1996 and the men's East Campus in 2007, providing a total capacity of over 200 people.

Paul was especially proud of our Aftercare Program for the graduates of the Treasure State Correctional Training Center (TSCTC or Boot Camp). Paul always believed that if you could help people while they were still young you could help them to turn their lives around. When discussions began to close the Boot Camp, and thereby eliminating the GFPRC's Aftercare program, Paul was a tireless defender of both programs. He had witnessed firsthand the turnaround made by the men and women who completed both programs and Paul fought until the end to keep both programs in operation. Unfortunately, the Boot Camp was closed and then the Aftercare program closely followed. This was one of Paul's biggest regrets in his professional career.

Shortly afterwards, under Paul's leadership, the Great Falls Pre-Release Center designed and implemented a Veteran's program to help those who have proudly served our country make a smooth transition from incarceration back to living in the community. Paul was very proud that the Great Falls Pre-Release Center offered the only Veteran's program in the state.

Above all, Paul took great pride in his integrity. He never compromised his core belief that we must be true to ourselves. He tried to instill this in each staff member and use it as his basic rule. He always stood up for what the Center was about and took stock in the saying *it's not a matter of who's right, but what is right* when making decisions. He took pride in what he was able to do for the residents as well as the community and the Center. Thank you, Paul, for sharing your wisdom and experience with the board, staff, and residents of Great Falls Pre-Release for the past 31 years.

Honors Program

by Sheena Jarvey

The Great Falls Pre-Release Honors Program began in the fall of 2019. So far nine female residents have earned the distinction of being an Honors Program member. During my interviews with Marissa, Sarah, Jacque and Michelle, they gave such enthusiastic replies that I had to scramble to get their observations on paper. My thanks to Brenda Demers, our editor, for her reporting on Rachel, Adrienne, and March. In addition, a special acknowledgement goes out to Jordan Butcher and Tonya Cummings who were early Honor members. Watch for interviews with our male Honors members in the next newsletter.



Marissa Cole became a member of the Honors Program in March, 2020. Marissa stated that she liked the Honor Program because, “We get acknowledged for our good works.” She elaborated, “Getting acknowledged gives me so much motivation. It motivates me to continue to do good and then to do even better.” Marissa noted that recognition and congratulations, “made me so happy.”

Marissa recently made contact with one of her Licensed Addiction Counselors and thanked her by saying, “You saved me and I want to be around you and learn.” In response, her LAC acknowledged the good work that Marissa is doing. The LAC told Marissa that with her genuine and positive personality, her insight and determination and her journey in recovery, that Marissa will soon be running her own recovery group. Marissa was beaming with pride as she told me this news. Congratulations, Marissa, we are so proud of you.

Sarah McDonnell became a member of the Honors Program in April 2020. When asked what motivated her to apply for Honors, she said that she wanted, “To complete this program the best I could.” Some of the perks of the program are temporarily suspended re: lockdown, but Sarah looked at the big picture and observed, “Just to know I qualified made me feel good. That’s what I like about Honors – to know I qualified.”

So how did her friends and family react to the news? Sarah said she told everyone as soon as she got on Honors. She reported, “They are super proud of me. I have a lot of family and friend support. And they told me’ right on – you got this’.” We agree: We are very proud of Sarah, who is also an accomplished poet.



March Becker: March described her journey, “Arriving in July of last year and completing the Inmate Worker program I am expected to complete my residency in August. My release plans are to stay here in Great Falls, my home town. I will continue to work at Wheat Montana, where I recently have been given the opportunity to become a baker. I don't mind the early 4am shift as mornings are peaceful and I still have an entire day left after my work shift has ended.

Once out in the community, I want to become involved in Alliance for Youth and volunteer my time to help and support the youth in our city that struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, homelessness, and basic life skills by sharing my own life experiences. I'm a huge supporter of the LGBTQ community, especially among the youth. My success on being accepted into the Honors Program came through goal setting, determination, but mostly my acceptance of the program entirely. Acceptance is one of the first keys you need to successfully complete this program. Once you can do that it all falls into place for you!!!” Congratulations to March for her many accomplishments.

Honors Program – continued



Jacqueline Black (Jacque) was equally pleased to be an Honors Program member. When asked what motivated her to apply, she quickly replied, “Just so that I knew for myself that I was able to do this. I’m truly so proud of myself.” She became a member in April, 2020.

Jacque has every reason to feel proud. She has put the work and effort into her program. She attends nightly Zoom AA meetings (not letting the shutdown stand in the way of her recovery). Jacque’s commitment is noticed by her peers and she was told that she has the ability to empower people and that she is a terrific asset to the recovery community. She watches out for her core triggers and has downloaded a mindfulness app.

Jacque’s release is coming up and she told me, “I’m so excited; I’m so nervous, but I am excited.” She is excited to know that she can manage her sober life. And how is this sober life? Jacque shared, “I’ve never felt more able bodied in my whole life. I’m glad to be here. I have never left more blessed. Happiness is a real thing in my life.” We are very proud of Jacque and her happiness is contagious.



Rachel Jager was born in Temecula, California. When she was 7 years old her parents brought she and her brother to Montana where they were left to be raised by their grandparents. She remembers being ridiculed in school since her “parents” were older than most of her classmates’ parents. Rachel was raised as a strict Catholic, so of course it was only natural to rebel. She fulfilled her pre-requisites at the MSU College of Technology with the goal of obtaining a nursing degree. She changed tracks and instead went to cosmetology school and earned her certificate in that field.

Rachel became an Honor member in May of 2020. During her Pre-Release stay, Rachel received four positive incident reports for her ongoing volunteer work in the Women’s kitchen. Rachel pitched in when she saw the need and worked as a team with other kitchen workers to make sure meals were prepped and served on time. We are proud of Rachel and thank her for her commitment to making life better for those around her.

Adrienne Perry was born and raised on a ranch in Fort Belknap. She enjoys rodeos, pow-wows, carpentry work, fire-fighting, and anything to do with the outdoors. Adrienne enjoys spending time with her 7 grandchildren. One of her many goals when she started the program was to become an Honors Program member. She is proud to have achieved that goal. Adrienne is ready to get back to raising her 4 year old grandson when she releases. She would also like to help with suicide prevention on her reservation, as they have lost a lot of young people to suicide. We are very proud of Adrienne and applaud her care and dedication to the wellbeing of the younger generation.



Michelle Lowe said that she was motivated to apply for Honors as it represents, “Another thing to prove to myself that I’m doing well.” Michelle shared that two years ago she wouldn’t have imagined she would be so strong and stable. She was struggling with a variety of life issues and had been on disability. Michelle identified major factors in her success: gratefulness, motivation and accountability. Michelle stated simply that she is grateful for everything. Her motivation comes from the fact that, despite the challenges, this is what she wants to do. Accountability means that Michelle takes responsibility for her choices without excuses and recognizes that in Pre-Release, as in life, it is only as hard as we make it.

Michelle loves her job at Town Pump and credits this job as being a factor in her success. She gave her advice on running a clean program: “Pre-Release is not hard – it really isn’t. Just do what you are supposed to do.” Michelle stated that another pivotal point for her was when she found peace of mind, “by turning everything over to God.” We are so proud of Michelle and wish her continued success.

New Mental Health Counselor

By Sheena Jarvey



We are so pleased to introduce our new mental health counselor, **Robin Castle**. Robin has a broad background in working in mental health, including working with children and young adults with PTSD and trauma – emotional, physical and/or sexual. She also has a wide educational background, including work in Pre-Med, teaching degrees for both Special Education and public school teaching K through 8. She has advanced degrees in Public Administration and Educational Leadership Specialist from the University of Montana, as well as a M.Ed degree in Counseling from MSU/Northern. Robin's tribal affiliation is Assiniboine.

Robin said that she is really pleased to work with adults (after her many years as a therapist for families and children) and sees her skills and abilities as a good fit. Robin said when she works with a client, she gives them a safe space to, "puke out feelings" (gotta love that phrase!). Then they take the pieces of what they have gotten out and figure out coping skills. The end goal is to help her clients stay on course, get out of the system and stay out of the system. Her mission is clear; the way to accomplish this mission is complex and will vary with each unique client.

Robin also understands how difficult it is for the families of the incarcerated and the ways they experience anger, grief, guilt and other complex emotions. Her own brother has been incarcerated for 27 years.



Robin's office is a beckoning place – colored pens, bright paper, a candy bowl and games. And, yes, there is a purpose here. Think of it this way – first scenario: a therapist is inches from us, staring at us and demanding answers. Makes us feel tense, right? OK, next scenario: now we are having a conversation about the same issue, but we can color the edges of the butterfly with just the right shade of orange and suddenly our mind is in the zone and we are much more easily able to make contact with what we really want to say. The creative process, with games, colors, and drawings, has a calming effect which opens up the channels of communication. Breathing becomes deeper and more relaxed. A more genuine conversation starts to happen. As Robin notes, "the answers more easily pop out."

We are very pleased to have Robin on board. She replied the feeling is mutual, as everyone has been really nice and helpful. When I asked Robin about the rewards of working here, she said she is, "satisfied knowing I helped someone get a hold of their feelings so that they can move on. I'm a catalyst."

New Staff and Staff Promotion

We would like to welcome **Robin Castle** as our Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and **Sheyenne Grenier** as a Correctional Treatment Specialist. Congratulations to Compliance Officer **Andy Anderson** for being chosen to fill the new position of Federal Accountability Monitor.

Employee Milestones

20 Years: Compliance Officer - Mike Hopp

Mike was born and raised in an industrial city in Rhode Island of about 40,000 people located in southern New England. After high school Mike ventured across the country to California. He joined the Air Force with his first duty station being Great Falls, a place he had never even heard of. In his job with Security Police, he spent four years in England where he traveled all around the world. Mike returned to Great Falls for his last duty station and discharged after 10 years of service.

Obtaining a college degree was Mike's next goal. He gained a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services and also earned credits towards a Criminal Justice degree. Immediately after graduation, he was hired at Great Falls Pre-Release as a Resident Advisor, now referred to as a Compliance Officer. Mike commented, "I didn't plan on staying here long; then I found out how fast the time goes." When he started in 2000 the East Campus did not exist; only the West Campus and Women's Centers were in operation. "Everything was done on paper. There were no computers and a lot less residents." Mike was selected to work at the newly constructed East Campus building when it opened in 2007.



Mike related that just like anything, the job can be challenging and sometimes difficult. He likes making a difference in peoples' lives and seeing the reward. In this business the difference isn't always evident. "The tough part is seeing a lot of people come back so many times. They aren't catching on." Mike stressed the importance of teaching and showing the residents how to do something for the first time and referred to the proverbial wisdom, give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime. "They are often resistant, but it teaches them to solve their own problems. You aren't helping if you are doing for them." The saying inscribed on a plaque in the West Campus CO office is instilled in Mike's memory: it's not who is right, but what is right. Mike concluded, "Do what's right, don't make it personal, and you will never have to worry about anyone saying you did something wrong."

Compliance officers work with a variety of personalities. Mike stated, "It helps to understand that everyone has their own way of looking at things." He explained that it's always a balancing act since they have to deal with a number of things simultaneously. Just a few of the things Compliance Officers are in charge of: answering the phones, new resident intakes, inputting schedules into the computer, signing residents in and out of the Center, visitors, taking in resident income, distributing budgets, disbursing meds, taking breathalyzers and UA's, doing pat downs, room searches, assigning chores and verifying their completion, and confirming that each resident is at their said location. Oftentimes the CO's are on the receiving end of a resident's frustration.

When all is said and done, Mike likes his job here. "We can never give up on the repeaters. It's not how many times they get knocked down, they have to keep getting up and moving forward no matter how small the progress is." Residents have come back to Mike years after they have been in the program and thanked him. They told him that his toughness helped and challenged them. "It might have been a little way to me, but to them it was the biggest way." The best reward for Mike is seeing a resident in the system get out and stay out.

On a personal side, Mike is a father to a 10 year old girl. He likes to travel and enjoys riding his Honda Gold Wing motorcycle and participates in local rallies and events.

Employee Milestones - continued



5 Years: Registered Nurse - Gail Hopewell

Gail has actually worked at Great Falls Pre-Release for a total of 10 years with a few years' break in between. Gail was born in Havre, the middle of three girls. The family moved to Billings where she attended school from the 3rd grade on. Her dad was in the oil business and her mom was an administrative assistant.

After graduating high school, Gail wasn't sure what she wanted to major in, so she took care of the general courses in her first two years of college. She originally thought about a degree in literature because of her love for reading, but couldn't figure out something concrete to do with it. Gail's younger sister and her cousin were nurses, so she gravitated to that profession. She attended MSU Billings and MSU Bozeman, and then completed her clinicals here in Great Falls.

Gail made her home in Great Falls with her first job being a medical surgical nurse at the Deaconess hospital. She went on to work for the City/County Health department as a public health nurse. Gail ended up spending most of her career in long term care as a coordinator in home health settings and in skilled care centers. She most recently performed assessments on long term care residents.

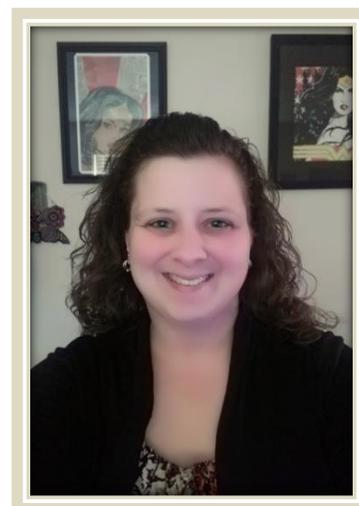
Gail met her husband of 34 years, Burt, at Neihart, after a day of skiing. Their daughter, son in law, and granddaughter live in Helena. In addition to reading, Gail enjoys skiing, boating, and the outdoors. She and Bert also spend time at their ranch in Wisdom. They are looking forward to doing a little traveling in their recently purchased RV.

What does Gail like about working here? She enjoys the variety of issues that come up in working with the residents and the problem solving. She feels she has a lot of autonomy, is not micromanaged, and can do her thing. She enjoys interacting with the residents and staff as well as with the people in the medical community.

5 Years: Compliance Officer - Brandy Burton

Brandy grew up as an Air Force military brat. Her dad was stationed in Great Falls where she was born. When Brandy was five years old, the family transferred to England for a period of three years. They then moved to Grand Forks, North Dakota. Brandy attended school there until her freshman year when their family moved back to Great Falls where her dad retired. Brandy related how difficult it was leaving an air force base school where everyone knew each other and attending a school where there were so many cliques. She commented, "We didn't see the colors in others. We were all friends and hung out."

After high school her mom told her she had to get a real job with insurance, and she did just that. Brandy's working career includes two grocery stores, a daycare, and a company that owned gambling machines in town. She went on to find a job she really enjoyed at Quality Life Concepts working with developmentally disabled adults in a group home setting. However, to pay the bills, she was forced to seek out a higher paying job. She found the right fit here as a full time Compliance Officer. "I had no clue what I was getting myself into and struggled at first. At QLC it was about making people happy. Here it is totally different – we work with people that fight addictions. I didn't think it was for me and didn't think I would make it." Fellow CO, Shawna Paranteau, eased the learning curve. "She really helped me and taught me a lot." Brandy also credited her supervisor, Dawn Adams, who continued to encourage and coach her.



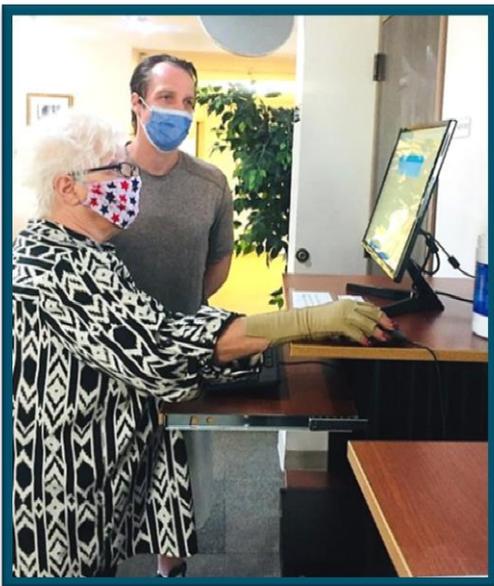
Employee Milestones - continued

Brandy Burton - continued

Why does Brandy like working here? “I like seeing the residents be successful. I hope the best for all of them. It is awesome to see them complete the program and be happy.” Brandy sees how hard it is for the new residents coming in and having to learn the bus schedules and all of the Center rules, so she does her best to help them through until they feel comfortable.

What does Brandy find challenging about working here? “Seeing a resident go down the wrong path and fail. Within days we can see a change in their personality.” Brandy explained that it works out best to have consistent staff on each campus. That way staff gets to know each resident on the campus they work on and catch unusual behavior. Brandy will talk to them and try to steer them in the right direction.

New Position



Sandra Bearchum helps federal resident Phillip Friscia navigate the job program

With our new federal contract, **Sandra Bearchum’s** job title has changed from that of Social Services Coordinator to Employment Placement Specialist. She shared the following about her new position:

“I assist the federal residents with resume and interview techniques and show them how to use the computer for job leads. This gives them an idea of what types of jobs are trending and what companies are hiring. Many times an individual has several different skill sets. The goal is for them to get the job they enjoy doing and not take the first job that comes along. So many come through the center and seek the same old jobs they have always done. If a person does not have a specific skill in a good paying career, they will stick to the same jobs that have little or no advancement. This mindset can limit them from their full potential. The first thing the resident does is go through a skills match process and build a resume on the Career One Stop website. From the skills match program they get different ideas of the jobs they can apply for using the skills they already possess. They will be able to use various job search engines to find jobs that are available in Great Falls. It is especially important to expand the resident’s perception of their value in the workforce. The goal is for stability in whatever endeavors they choose to pursue and give them the confidence to look forward to a possible career change they would have not otherwise thought of.”

Staff members were surprised and honored to find these signs hanging at each campus, compliments of the Board of Directors. We are so privileged to have a board that cares about each employee.





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TRANSITION TIMES

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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.