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RESIDENT STANDOUTS



Veteran Isaac Holland is always willing to do what needs to be done, no matter what the task is. He is a great help to the CO staff and to other residents around the center. He always has a positive attitude and brings joy and laughter to anyone he talks to. He constantly makes the CO staff laugh with his crazy outfits and dance moves.

Isaac commented, "I'm taking advantage of all of the opportunities here, and there are a lot more than I realized."

April Chiefstick does well in her program. She is a really hard worker and never misses a day at her job. She does what's asked of her without any issues. She is always joking or smiling with staff and she is never disrespectful.





Jesse Brennan follows the rules and runs his program by the book. He has a good attitude, he always does his chores, he doesn't complain, and he has zero IR's.

Jesse commented, "I've just been doing my program. I signed up for my classes on my own. I've been through other pre-releases and haven't made it through. I'm tired of going in and out of prison, so I just want to do the program to get back to my life."

Reflections from Mike Scott, Retiring after 30 Years at GFPRC



Five years ago, on the 25th Anniversary of my employment with Great Falls Pre-Release Services I shared the story of how life led me to Great Falls and a career in the corrections industry. As I am now looking forward to a second and final retirement, I was once again asked to pen a few thoughts. I will not bore you with gems from my distant past but will try to focus on the last thirty years. Forgive me if I repeat some of my tales but I will try not to bore you.

I started this adventure in March 1994 and would not say that the Great Falls Pre-Release was in its infancy, but we did have just one building and less than fifty male residents. Back then all residents came in from either Montana State Prison or Federal Institutions. As the holder of a brandnew diploma from the University of the State of New York and twenty plus years saving the free world from cold war horrors I was eager to land a position in management.

Unfortunately, the economy was unfavorable and the job market bleak. After weeks of searching for a comfortable civilian desk job, I opted to accept a position with the Great Falls Transition Center as a part-time Resident Advisor. Today we call them Compliance Officers. Do not get us old-timers started on how hard it was back then ... no email, cell phones were a luxury for the rich, but we did have push button land-line phones and a couple spiffy IBM typewriters. There were two RAs on morning and mid shifts, and three on the day shift. The CTSs were called counselors back then. When I started, we had five. Four were easy to work with and immensely helpful and one took pleasure in making my life miserable, an older woman with a raspy voice and ever-present lit cigarette with two inches of ash dangling out of her mouth. As the lowest rung on the employee ladder, I stayed as far from her talons as possible. I consistently kept my calm, and, in the end I prevailed when she resigned, and I was selected as her replacement.

Due to a shift in the counselor hierarchy, I was asked to take over as Counselor for the Boot Camp Aftercare Program. What an amazing program that was! To this day I still hear from our former Booters, and I am humbled but proud to know that I helped so many overcome obstacles in their lives. Fast forward to twelve years later when we started construction on the East Campus, and I was selected to provide oversight for our growing programs and to fill a management presence at the new campus. Then, in 2020 the Center had need of a new Director of Treatment Services for which I applied and was given the opportunity to serve in that capacity. I have to say there has not been a dull moment since that day, but it has been a real privilege to serve with upper management and the Board of Directors in such an amazing and successful organization.

A few years back at an annual Christmas Party, GFPRC Board President Jon Boutilier, while presenting the Commitment to Excellence Awards. told all gathered that we were extremely fortunate to have a job where we can make a difference in people's lives. He is right about many things, but he was spot on with this wisdom! When you think about it, this is one of the most exciting and important aspects of our jobs. I recall an adage about making a difference that has stuck with me for many years. After a storm, a man noticed thousands of starfish washed up on a beach and in danger of dying. One by one he would pick them up and tossed them back into the ocean. A passer-by stopped to say, "Hey, you are wasting your time, there's too

Reflections from Mike Scott, Retiring after 30 Years at GFPRC - continued

many, you are not going to make a difference here." Without pause or hesitation, he picked up another starfish, tossed it into the water and said, "For that one, I made a difference."

The last three years have flown by very quickly. I have always had an idea of the best time to begin my next adventure and that time has now come. I have worked hard my entire life, and it is time for me to spend some quality time with my family, with an occasional adventure or two to stave off any boredom. My last day at the Pre-release helm and making a difference here will be March 1st.

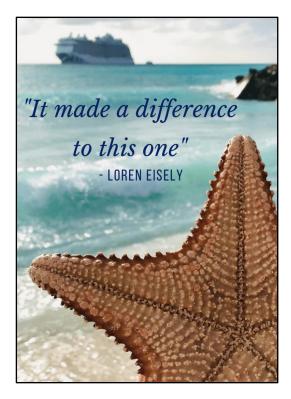
I will dearly miss the staff and Board of the Great Falls Pre-Release who comprise its very heart and soul. Taking leave of them is the hardest task I face. I wish them all the absolute best and thank them for all that they have done to further the success of our Center and its residents; past, present, and future! Please be aware that I never, ever say goodbye, so do not expect one. Those clearly in my favor can expect a hearty, "See you later!"

As with my twenty plus years of service with the United States Navy, I have no regrets and many happy memories. I like to think that I played a small part in the growth and success of the Great Falls Pre-Release Center, and as I cross the gangplank for the last time, I will hold my head high even though this time without a Bosun piping me ashore under a crossed cutlass salute. If asked if I would do it all again, my answer would be the same I stated on my 25th Anniversary, "Absolutely, every minute of every day!"

Take care, so long, try to make a difference and "See you later!"



Editor's Note: Mike has truly been an asset to GFPRC. Just a few adjectives that describe him include kind, fair, humble, an attentive listener, techy, and creative. I would also like to note that Mike played a significant role and spent countless hours developing the first Veterans Reentry program in the state.



IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR SLEEP

Sleep is essential to your health. The optimum sleep time for adults is 7 to 9 continuous hours. Here are the sleep cycle stages:

NREM 1 (Non Rapid Eye Movement 1): starts when you nod off and lasts about 7 minutes. The body has not fully relaxed but brain activities start to slow. It is easy to wake someone up during this sleep stage, but if a person is not disturbed, they can move quickly into stage 2.

NREM 2 (Non Rapid Eye Movement 2): The body enters a more subdued state including a drop in temperature, relaxed muscles, and slowed breathing and heart rate.

At the same time, brain waves show a new pattern and eye movement stops. Stage 2 sleep can last for 10 to 25 minutes during the first sleep cycle, and each N2 stage can become longer during the night. Collectively, a person typically spends about half their sleep time in N2 sleep.

NREM 3 (Non Rapid Eye Movement 3): is a deep sleep, and it is harder to wake someone up. Muscle tone, pulse, and breathing rate decrease as the body relaxes even further. The brain activity during this period has an identifiable pattern of what are known as delta waves. Experts believe that this stage is critical to restorative sleep, allowing for bodily recovery and growth. It may also bolster the immune system and other key bodily processes. Even though brain activity is reduced, there is evidence that deep sleep contributes to insightful thinking, creativity, and memory.

REM (Rapid Eye Movement): The brain activity picks up, nearing levels seen when you are awake. At the same time, the body experiences atonia, which is a temporary paralysis of the muscles. During atonia paralysis, there are two exceptions, the eyes and the muscles that control breathing. Even though the eyes are closed, they can be seen moving quickly, which is how this stage gets its name. REM sleep is believed to be essential to cognitive functions like memory, learning, and creativity. REM sleep is known for the most vivid dreams, which is explained by the significant uptick in brain activity. Dreams can occur in any sleep stage, but they are less common and intense in the NREM periods.

Under normal circumstances, you do not enter a REM sleep stage until you have been asleep for about 90 minutes. As the night goes on, REM stages get longer, especially in the second half of the night.

Sleep stages are important because they allow the brain and body to recuperate and develop. Failure to obtain enough of both deep sleep and REM sleep may explain some of the profound consequences of insufficient sleep on thinking, emotions, and physical health. Sleepers who are frequently awoken during earlier stages, such as people with sleep apnea, may struggle to properly cycle into these deeper sleep stages. People with insomnia may not get enough total sleep to accumulate the needed time in each stage.

How Can You Have a Healthier Sleep Cycle?

Focus on improving your sleep environment and sleep-related habits. Aim for a consistent sleep schedule, get natural daylight exposure, avoiding alcohol before bedtime, and eliminate noise and light disruptions. Your mattress, pillows, and sheets can also contribute to how comfortable your sleep environment is.

If you find that you have excessive daytime sleepiness or otherwise suspect that you might have a sleep disorder like sleep apnea, it is important to talk with a doctor who can most appropriately guide your care. Addressing underlying issues may pave the way for more complete and restorative sleep cycles.



Robin Castle Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor 455-9333 robin@gfprc.org

Tidbits from Robin

Jessika Houle – Honors Member

Congratulations to one of our newest Honors Members, Jessika Houle. Jessika agreed to share some of her journey. She said she first heard about Honors when she read the Center handbook in Passages and there and then made Honors a personal goal. She laughed when she told me this was a totally new thing for her. Before, making plans to succeed would have made her scoff, because why bother, when her only plan upon getting out of jail was doing, "Usually just bad stuff. Before I know it, I'm already back in jail for more dumb stuff, bad stuff."

Jessika is good now: happy, content, hopeful. But those are not her only feelings: she is also sometimes regretful, sad, and has messy confused feelings. The beauty of this is that now Jessika has the whole range of feelings, and she doesn't try to avoid them, which helps her thrive. She explained, "It feels good to feel. Even the bad stuff feels good to feel. Good and bad – it's okay." She also said she feels more aware.



What Jessika doesn't feel is the intense depression that came with her addiction. She said her addiction and subsequent depression brought her to the lowest possible point, a point where no existence seemed better than feeling what she felt. And now? "There will be bad days, but my bad days don't compare to what I used to feel."

Jessika's transformation began in Passages, when she began to take treatment seriously. She was doing required homework for MRT when it struck her, "Maybe it's me that's the problem." She worked harder, getting to know herself and realized, "There is a reason why we have to do the things we have do here. I don't have to stay stuck forever." She was excited with this revelation and began to give the program and herself a chance. "I never had this kind of help before, although I needed it." Jessika kept on and after the first month of treatment came another realization, "If I actually applied myself, it would fix my life."

When asked how she continues to fix her life, Jessika said she is a writer, which helps her stability and is a way to express her feelings and her creativity. She attends NA and goes to church at New City. This will stay the same, as Jessika knows the value of routine and plans to keep her schedule upon release. She actively looks for ways to improve her life and has taken two parenting classes on her own. Jessika has good friendships, as well. "A lot of my friends have gotten sober." She paused and smiled, "Sober is becoming kinda cool." Another powerful part of Jessika's life is her quality start to her mornings. "I wake up every day happy and that alone carries me through my day."

At the end of the interview, Jessika paused for a moment and then shared, "There is hope. It gets better if you get better. I'm glad I lived long enough to see myself sober, because a lot of people don't."

Thank you, Jessika for sharing your story and your writing. We wish all good things for you and your family and are proud of your Honor's achievement.



NEWS BY SHEENA JARVEY

GOODBYE ADDICTION

By Jessika Houle Seeking some peace from the war in my head, I'm at war with myself and I want the old me dead. The me that is weak, addicted, and cold. It's been too long, and this lifestyle's gotten old. I loved everyone who has ever hurt me. Held on too tight to people who didn't deserve me. I woke up for years wishing I didn't. I was everything a good mother isn't. Regrets, I have many, I was filled up with shame. I've met the devil and addiction's his name. My judgment was cloudy, I ran around like a freak. I muted my mind, I was nothing but weak. They said, "You're just a junkie, you'll never get sober." Now I've finished treatment and my using is over. Now the only war I'm fighting is waged against my past. That last folly will be my last. So goodbye addiction, you were NEVER my homie. Consider yourself lucky to have gotten to know me.

NO EXCUSES By Brenda Demers



There is no stopping **Tarran Mathews**. Since he's been at Great Falls Pre-Release, Tarran has never made an excuse that he didn't have enough time to do more than the requirements of work and programming. He took the TABE test and attended classes at the college to prepare him for the HiSET. He passed all of the tests and earned his HiSET.

Since then, Tarran was awarded a grant to take part in the structural welding internship in collaboration with the Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Montana Vocational Rehab, ADF, and Allied Steel. Tarran said, "They don't just each us welding. They teach us soft skills to be a professional person. It's been a good opportunity to get myself on the right track and I will take full advantage of it this time. These courses open up more doors for grants for people willing to go the extra mile."

By the time this is published, Tarran will have started working full time at

ADF and enjoying the many benefits the company offers. Tarran said that he loves welding, and he will be doing structural welding at ADF. He has a goal to eventually own his own business and travel specializing in pipeline or field welding.

Tarran, you are a great example of what a resident can accomplish while in this program!









Crystal Moore Art













NEW HONORS MEMBERS



Congratulations to **Nicole Half** for being accepted into the Honors Program! Staff that work with her commented that she runs an honest program and that she has been extremely resilient when faced with difficult issues. She reaches out for help when needed and she is one of the few that obtained and works with a sponsor.

Congratulations to **Travis McLaughlin** for being accepted into the Honors Program! Staff that work with him commented that he is active in his support groups and church. His strength is that he is guided by good principles and has the ability to get himself back on track and keep trying.





Congratulations to **Nicole Webster** for being accepted into the Honors Program! Staff that work with her commented that she reaches out to help other residents. She avoids drama and has made some tough decisions to put her recovery first.

	Our Storm
	By Melvin Vogt
It would see	em we all do time;
In our own v	ways and in our minds,
Some days a	are hard, and some are not;
Some lie eas	sy, while others plot.
Some watch	n the sky, and others dirt;
Some focus	on God, still others their own hurt.
We all must	weather our life this storm,
That feels so	o wet and cold.
Life, it does	feel bitter; months sitting in this cell,
As hours go	by like days and weeks; our hearts grow cold as hell!
We sit and c	Iream of better days;
That will go	by like minutes!
While loved	ones on the outside pray,
We keep the	e faith still in us!
Oh, this time	e we have been given;
Let it not pa	iss in haste.
For we must	t learn to weather this storm,
Or our life it	will waste
A storm driv	ven by winds of time;
Guided by th	ne Lord of Hosts!
Bow we mu	st to His will;
Or surely we	e'll be ghosts!
	v His love through His Son;
Lest we be o	dumb as posts!
For He is ou	r God who created all;
And still love	es us the most!



Cody ManyWhiteHorses – Honors Member

Cody ManyWhiteHorses, new Honors member, is excited about his new life. His happiness was evident when he said, "I feel like I'm a different me." Not only does he feel different, but others notice, as well. Cody continued, "It feels good to be sober. It's a different life when people see that side of me."

For over 10 years Cody's addiction had locked him into a destructive loop, a loop without a future, a loop without an exit. As Cody characterized it, this loop was dragging on endlessly and all it offered was more b.s. He felt suffocated and unable to move forward. No doors appeared, therefore no doors could open.

Cody ManyWhiteHorses - continued

The cost of his addiction was finally too much for Cody to bear. Being under the influence had taken years away from time with his daughter and that hurt. He knew he was creating so much damage with all the bad things that came with his addicted lifestyle. Cody finally admitted to himself that he had become, "sick and tired of being sick and tired." At that point, he knew he could do better for himself.

Cody took his journey back to his true self seriously. He recounted, "In treatment I took a look at myself. I had to dig deeper and pull some things from deep inside. As painful and harsh as it was, and it was painful, it was an eye opener."

When Cody got his job at Big O Tires, this was another eye opener. As Cody put it, "I proved to myself that I can get a job and see more doors opening up." Cody told me that getting his job at Big O Tires has really been a huge step forward. He takes pride in his work, which adds value to the community, since everyone needs tires. This gives him a sense of achievement, which lifts his self-esteem. "I'm good at it, as I'm mechanically inclined. I have tools and take pride in my work." He has proved to his employer that he can put in the hard work and learn the trade.

Cody's mechanic work is also a loving tribute to his dad, who passed away when Cody was only seven. The time spent with his dad has blossomed now that Cody is an adult. The gift of his dad's skills, time, and love is now a big part of Cody's new life, and, like his dad, Cody has found his career in mechanics. When Cody mechanics, however, this is more than a skilled trade; this is a legacy link to his family.

He has a fiancé who has stood by his side out of love and now they can build their lives together on a solid foundation. Another love of his life is his young daughter. As Cody explained, "She looks up to me and now that I'm sober I need to be there for her." They talk every day and he can't wait to spend time with her, hanging out and doing fun stuff, like trips to the park and the movies. All the joys of being a dad.

Cody's life now has possibilities, so many possibilities and so many doors open to his future. To stay on track, he honors his Native tradition by smudging and also attends twelve step meetings. He said coming here "is a big opportunity to do better." And to be clear, he continued, "I want to be here. I don't have to do this. I want to do this."

Cody cares about his own well-being and cares deeply for his family, friends and his future. He also cares about new folks coming into the Center and the path they might take. Since Cody has been at the Center before, he knows both ways to run a program, both with predictable results. If a person truly wants a good outcome, Cody was direct, **"Take this as a good thing, not as an obstacle. Get in a routine, find a job and feel better about yourself. Doors will open and you will find it's not hard at all."**

We are very proud of Cody and wish him and his family happiness and a life filled with many good possibilities.



NEWS BY SHEENA JARVEY

What is happening in the Education Center? EVERYTHING!!

TAXES: Benjamin Franklin was right: taxes are inescapable. If you have a W-2 and your needs are relatively simple, you can come to the Education Center to e-file. Be aware that federal taxes are free to file, but Montana state taxes are \$14.99 to file. You will need to budget for that. You don't have to file both at the same time if you want to e-file on your own. You can file your federal return then go back once you have your budget squared away and file your state taxes. If you want advice or direct help, or if your needs are a little more complicated, we can get you set up with an appointment with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance). They are qualified professionals ready and willing to help the elderly and low-income individuals with preparation of tax returns.

EDUCATION

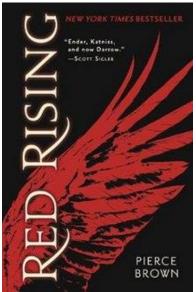


Noël Walker EDUCATION COORDINATOR

CREATIVE WRITING SESSIONS: Secondly, in case you were looking for an outlet,

the Creative Writing Sessions are off to a great start. Feel free to join in the fun. We meet **weekly, Tuesdays at 1900**, **in the Education Center**. If you would like to take part or contribute, we have weekly prompts to get us going. Pop by beforehand so you can come prepared.

Book Lovers Not-So-Anonymous: We are looking forward to the first meeting of Book Lovers Not-So-



Anonymous. We are meeting at **1400 in the Education Center on Friday**, **February 16th**, to talk about John Sandford's *Dark of the Moon*, Book One in the Virgil Flowers series.

If you are looking to get a jumpstart on next month's selection, we will be switching gears into the dystopian future painted for us in Pierce Brown's Red Rising Series. Book 1 is aptly titled *Red Rising*. I will have three copies available in the library starting next week. Because of the limited supply and the (hopefully) extensive demand, I am going to be following up on the two-week check out limit on these books with more fervor than usual.

The second meeting will be **March 15, at 1400 in the Education Center**, barring any changes. Keep your eyes peeled for fliers!



Art by Lindy Johnson

MAKING CHANGES AND BLOSSOMING

By Brenda Demers



Latasha Makes Cold Weather will have released by the time this is published. Having only two days to go at the time of the interview, she glowed with elation.

This was Latasha's first time at a pre-release, and she was excited for the opportunity. She shared that she struggled with addiction all of her life. An especially challenging time was relapsing after being sober for a year and a half. Latasha remembers it well because her mom was given 4 months to live. She said, "I hit it hard and tried to find help before my mom was dying, and then I caught charges after she passed. I was glad because I wanted help. I went to MCDC, which is only 28 days, but I needed something longer. I had never been independent and had never worked, so I saw it as a good way to learn some skills."

It's true that Latasha has blossomed. There is no doubt she had a difficult first part of her program, but she eventually came into her own and made a complete turnaround. In response to my question about what she learned from her experience at pre-release, Latasha said, "Patience, patience with life. You can't rush

anything being in this program. You just have to accept things." After 7 months here Latasha was getting anxious to get back to her two teenagers whom she hasn't seen in 2 years. The 7 months turned into 11 months, giving her the time she needed to mature and make better preparation for her release. The extra time provided her with the realization that she needed to do what was best for her children and that she would not be ready to parent yet. Latasha commented that she has seen other people go right back to parenting and then become overwhelmed. She watched as children in a comfortable and safe environment faced chaos and uncertainty.

Having never held a job before, Latasha found that she likes working and has been holding down two jobs and working 7 days per week. "Before, I isolated myself. I was a shy and angry person. Now I can get along with people. As for the people I don't get along with, I don't try to fight them; I just do my job."

Latasha has always wanted to be a drug and alcohol counselor with the drive coming from her struggle to find treatment. Back then she didn't have any self-esteem and battled depression, so she thought she could never be a counselor. "Now I know if I set my mind to something, I can do it." Latasha has learned that she is not dumb and that she is capable of being independent. She is proud of herself for not giving up. Prayer and exercise have played major roles in her success.

Latasha closed with, "You don't need another person to make you happy. I was codependent really bad. I know I can do this on my own. Latasha looks forward to when the time is right for her to be a mom again. "I see myself in them when I was young. I want them to see that I changed my life and that here is hope and happiness. I feel really happy and proud of myself for what I've become."

And we are proud of you, too – Congratulations!

Tammy's Poetry



CONFIDENCE By Tammy Kuenzel

Confidence gone, depression set in, When did it start? And when will it end? Domestic violence, rejection and fear Becoming a shadow, whenever you're near.

Feeling and thinking, I don't have a choice Living in silence, not having a voice. Fearing your anger, the tension is building You feel so much power as you see me yielding.

Once I was strong; I'm now feeling weak. It feels like I'm losing; it's love that I seek. But love shouldn't hurt – I know this is true, And my skin should be clear, not all black and blue.

I KNOW I have value; I'm worth so much more. I'll break from abuse to see what life has in store. Confidence building, I'm free now at last Walking into the future, I let go of the past!

All That I've Got By Tammy Kuenzel

What would it be like to be blind for a day? Would you be alright? Or would you lose your way? How about being deaf where you can't even hear? Would you be okay, or would you live in fear? What would life be like to be strapped in a chair? Would you be fine, or think life was unfair? What of the person who's gone sound to sleep, Into a coma, unthinkably deep? What if you had dementia, and then lost your mind? Memories all gone; you're unable to find. Sometimes I sit still and start to reflect On all that I do have; I try not to deflect. It makes me feel humble by all that I've got. The blessings God gives me . . . Add up to a lot!

SET SOMEONE FREE! By Tammy Kuenzel

Being a junkie or drunk, I just think Is more than just taking a drug or a drink. Getting past all the stigma; going right to the core I feel that you'll find something bigger . . . much more. That inner child, who screams late at night Is stuck with a demon, she can't even fight. It's frightening and cunning. It lurks in the dark But the mask that she's wearing – you won't see a mark. So if you meet a junkie who's filled with despair Why not show them kindness and show that you care? It might make the difference between life and death It might even break the addiction of meth. Or the drunk on the street could be you or me. Kindness might help to set someone free.

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 455-9323 brenda@gfprc.org**. Any suggestions are also appreciated.



PRE-RELEASE PRESS Editor: Brenda Demers



JEFF'S TRIVIA, SCIENCE, AND SAFETY CORNER

DID YOU KNOW?

1. The moon is moving away from the Earth at a tiny, although measurable, rate every year. 4.5 billion years ago the moon was believed to have

been part of the earth. It is, however, still moving away from the earth at approximately 1.49 inches each year.

The "ice-cream" you are probably looking at on advertising posters and television is most likely mashed potatoes. The photographers report that the strong lights melt the ice-cream too quickly to get good shots.

3. In Calama, a town in the Atacama Desert of Chile, it has never rained.

4. At any given time there are 1,800 thunderstorms in progress over the earth's atmosphere.



5. Erosion at the base of Niagara Falls has caused the falls to recede approximately seven miles over the past 10,000 years.

6. A ten-year-old mattress weighs

measurably more than when it did when it was new. This is due to debris that it absorbs over time and dust mites (their droppings and decaying bodies), mold, millions of dead skin cells, dandruff, animal and human hair, secretions, excretions, lint, pollen, dust, soil, sand, and a lot of perspiration, which the average person loses at a rate of a quart a day. Good night!



7. Every year, 16 million gallons of oil runs off pavement into streams, rivers, and eventually oceans in the United States. This is more oil than was spilled by the Exxon Valdez.

