

TRANSITION TIMES



VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

1st QUARTER 2020

New Education Coordinator



After a lengthy search for the right person to fill the Education Coordinator position, Matthew Hauk was selected. The goal of the position is to help any residents that do not have a high school diploma prepare to pass their Hi-Set. Matthew also helps those individuals that are not at that level work on basic skills, such as reading, math, understanding measurements, etc., depending on their needs. He also helps residents put together a resume and prepare for their driver's test. Unexpectedly, residents laid off from work due to the Coronavirus found him to be a valuable asset in helping them file for unemployment.

Matthew has a background totaling 24 years of experience in the education field. He attended Jamestown College in North Dakota majoring in education and biology and minoring in chemistry. He went on to earn his master's degree in education from MSU-Billings.

Matthew spent time teaching high school science in Stanford and in Circle. He also served as an administrator at Valier High School. In addition, he worked for Dawson Community College and later at the University of Providence running a grant for at risk students. His work at Dawson gave him the opportunity to teach GED classes at the prison in Glendive. While working with the prisoners he learned that, "They had a lot of untapped talent, and it is the same with the residents here."

Matthew and his wife, Carla, have been married for 20 years. They have two daughters, ages 16 and 14, and a 13 year old son. In his free time Matthew enjoys the outdoors, specifically fishing and hunting with his family. Matthew has coached basketball throughout his career and is currently the girls' varsity head coach at Great Falls Central.

Why I wanted to work here: "I enjoy helping people learn and helping them to improve their lives. Education is a valuable part of growth in our lives and we should strive to keep learning through our whole life."

Why I like working here: "The staff is very friendly, helpful, and enjoyable to work with. It is great to be able to affect peoples' lives in a positive way. The residents are very appreciative. There are a lot of smart people with a lot of potential; the goal is motivating them to use it."

What I am finding challenging about my job: "Getting people to follow through with their appointments." Matthew contrasted coaching to teaching: "With coaching, they want to be there; with school, not always. " "With the COVID we can't utilize the outside resources that we otherwise could."



Our Community Partners: The Great Falls Public Library

By Sheena Jarvey, Community Assistance Specialist

We park the van and clamber out. The hour must be used well. First stop - the main floor. We load up, exchanging information (“have you seen this one?”). Okay good, on to checkout and then up to the second floor. We travel as a group and settle in upstairs with the magazines and newspapers. Sometimes a chess game gets going, we hunt in the stacks for more books or we just sit quietly, engaging in some small talk. Is it time to go? No, not yet, even though it almost is. We all want to stay and enjoy the calm for just a bit longer.

Reflecting on the calm, Patrick Studley observed, **“Inspiration comes from the solitude of man’s mind. To have a place to go that stimulates imagination and promotes personal growth makes a community a better place.”**

While residents can go to the library on pass, inmate workers can leave the center only with an approved escort. Our escorted trips to the Great Falls Public Library have provided the inmate workers an oasis away from the demands of living and working in the same area for months at a time.

Susie McIntyre, Director, Great Falls Public Library, welcomed us with this statement: **“The mission of the Great Falls Public Library is to serve as a connection point; we empower the community and enhance the quality of life by providing individuals access to information and social, cultural and recreational resources. We strive to provide a warm, welcoming environment for ALL. We are thrilled to be able to serve residents of the Great Falls Transition Center. I love seeing Sheena and the women and men she brings into the Library. I’ve enjoyed many conversations about books and movies with the residents over the years. I hope that everyone that comes through our doors feels encouraged to be a life-long library user.”**

The free dissemination of knowledge, via a public library, is a momentous idea. But the concept of something so significant can only be turned into a practical reality by committed individuals. Library Director Susie McIntyre has professionally and thoughtfully continued the legacy passed on by another distinguished Great Falls librarian, Alma Smith Jacobs.

Alma Smith Jacobs, after receiving a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Talladega College and a bachelor’s degree in library science from Columbia University, returned to her home town and began her employment at the Great Falls Public Library in 1946. From 1954 until 1973, she served as Head Librarian. Her rise to the top of her profession was guided by her vision that a library should be at the heart of a community.

When Alma Smith Jacobs was born in 1916, only 51 years had passed since the ratification of the 13th Amendment. The inspirational quality of Alma Smith Jacobs’ work – amazing on its own – takes on a different dimension when seen in the context of an African American woman in the mid 20th century in a small western city. This, at a time when Great Falls was largely segregated.

However, it’s equally important to note that Alma Smith Jacobs emphasized that her contribution to her community and to her professional career didn’t need an adjective. Her amazing work stood on its own. In an interview with the Great Falls Tribune in 1967, she stated, **“I resent being thought of as a Negro librarian. I would rather concentrate on being a good librarian.”** A concept that echoed Martin Luther King Jr’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

For Alma Smith Jacobs, it was about the mission; it was always about the mission. It was her firm belief that access to resources was vitally important to a functioning, intelligent citizenry and all should be welcome. Her vision, the gracefulness of her spirit, her determination to enhance the lives of others so they could live their full potential, found focus in her community. Alma Smith Jacobs was an untiring civic leader and human rights advocate, including her advocacy for the African American servicemen stationed at Malmstrom AFB. From her own vast experiences she understood the damage of judging people based on a category.

Inspiration and Art from our Residents

Editor's Note: In putting together the monthly, in-house newsletters, I have the opportunity to interview residents and see some of their artwork. Following are some quotes and artwork that I thought were worthy of sharing.
– Brenda Demers, Administrative Assistant and Newsletter Editor

Patrick: "I lived the all-American life for 35 years, never in trouble, until one decision changed all that. Every decision you make in life has consequences, and you need to be aware of them when you make decisions. Even small decisions you make in life can alter your life drastically. I paid the price for my mistakes and have learned some things and came out a better person in the end."

Ian: (In response to cutting hair for fellow residents.) "I don't want anyone getting bullied around here."

March: (In response to being placed as an Inmate Worker.) "I made up my mind to come into it open minded and willing. I knew what I did in the past never worked, so I knew I had to do something different. I was willing to learn, so now I have a new set of skills I never had before."

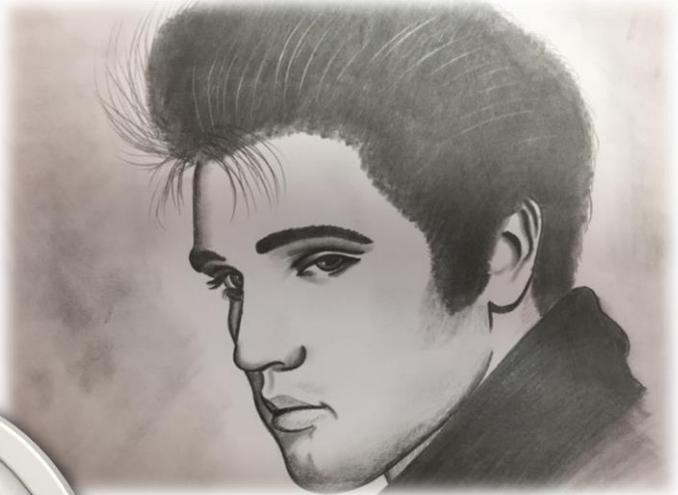
Fred: (In response to being in prison for a lengthy amount of time and transitioning out.) "I learned that most anyone can survive or overcome anything even when they are at their lowest. You can't prepare yourself. You can never be ready. There is a lot to deal with emotionally and mentally. In prison everything doesn't move as quickly. A person's trust factors go out the window. Don't be quick to judge others. Just keep your head up. If you take one step back, try to take two steps forward – grind it out."



Scorpion made out of wire by Greg Moss



Card drawn by Fred Martell



Drawing by Rachelle Rutkowski



Drawing by Rachelle Rutkowski

Easter Crafts

Staff members helped the residents decorate eggs and put together Easter baskets. Some residents gave or mailed them to loved ones and others kept them to enjoy. A special thanks to volunteer Diane Kliever for donating supplies for the event.



Joseph Reich made this basket for his daughter



Robert Phelps and HR Manager, Dan McLaughlin



Vinson Lausch created these characters

New Staff

We are pleased to welcome **Zach Clark, Herb Selvidge, Diane Schmitt, and Sara McLean**, who have joined us as Compliance Officers. We welcome **Christy Atakenu** as a Correctional Treatment Specialist. Congratulations to **Jim Kist** for being promoted from a Compliance Officer to the Security Coordinator, and to Keith Ricketts for being promoted from a Compliance Officer to a Correctional Treatment Specialist. Welcome to **Matthew Hauk** as the new Education Coordinator.

How we are Coping

No doubt, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be extremely stressful for everyone. The emotional toll is evident. Many of our residents found themselves unemployed and navigating the process of finding a new job, a temporary job, or applying for unemployment. The situation is complicated because the center does not want to lose its valuable relationships with employers in the community that hire our residents. Our administration has not taken the situation lightly and has gone to great lengths to keep our staff and residents healthy. Meetings and



Steve Rogers' mother sewed and donated a wide array of face masks for GFPRC staff and residents.

volunteer activities typically held at the Center have been suspended, along with the Community Service, ESP, and Jail Alternative programs. Fabric chairs have been replaced with hard chairs and positioned 6 feet apart. Meal times are staggered to allow for only 2 people per table. Meals are being served on disposable dishware, and the self-serve salad bar has been eliminated. Intakes are being quarantined for 14 days. Residents are not allowed to have visitors or take passes. Allowances have been made for staff to take a limited number of residents per trip to the store to purchase necessary items. A significant temporary change was made to allow the residents, including inmate workers, to possess internet capable cell phones. The goal is to provide the residents with easier access for employment needs in addition to affording a means of communication with their loved ones. The residents are extremely thankful for this allowance. In the end, as the following quote by an unknown author implies, we will all be different people in one way or another: **“Every struggle in your life has shaped you into the person you are today. Be thankful for the hard times; they can only make you stronger.”**



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GREAT FALLS, MT
Permit #211

Providing re-entry services since 1984

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TRANSITION TIMES

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jon Boutilier, President: Vice President-Commercial Loan Officer, Stockman Bank
John Gregory, Vice-President: Retired Branch Claims Manager
Gary McFerrin, Secretary: Retired Commercial Producer, HUB International
Max Van Heel, Treasurer: VP Sales & Marketing, Pacific Media Technologies
Karen Grove: Trust Officer, Davidson Trust Company
Robert Dompier: General Manager, Great Falls Heritage Inn
Kevin Heffernan: Supervising United States Probation Officer
Bill Quast: Retired Vice President, Energy West
Trudi Schmidt: Former State Legislator, Educator, and Social Worker
Curtis Thompson: Attorney, Thompson Law, P.C.
Kathy Van Tighem: Counselor, Great Falls High School

MISSION STATEMENT

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



gfprc.org

Vision Statement

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

Statement of Values

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