

TRANSITION TIMES

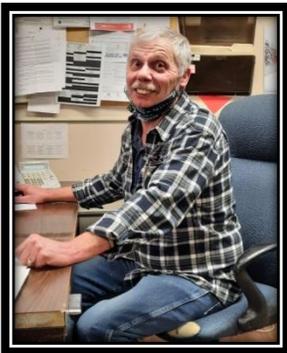


VOLUME 21, ISSUE 4

4th QUARTER 2020

2020 Commitment to Excellence Award Winners

The prestigious Commitment to Excellence Award annually recognizes those staff members who are models of attitude, innovation, integrity, quality work performance, and dedication to the highest standards of excellence while working at the Center, and, in many cases, outside of work with their community involvement. A new process was used this year to select the awardees. In the past the winners from the previous year nominated individuals they believed deserving of the award with final approval from the Executive Director. This resulted in input from only two or three people. Executive Director Alan Scanlon stated, "This is a very special award which comes with a check for \$100, and I believe that every staff member should have the opportunity to have their voice heard and be able to nominate someone they believe to be deserving of such high recognition."



Tom Schlosser, Compliance Officer Night Shift Manager, is reliable, hardly ever misses work, and is always available to answer questions or help out in the variety of situations the CO's encounter. Tom pays close attention to details and interacts well with all of the residents. He handles stressful situations with ease and is a born leader.

Charlene Bonde, Food Services Manager, goes above and beyond in every aspect of fulfilling the demands set before her. She is regularly short staffed, yet she never complains. She works year-round obtaining donations for the resident Christmas bags and putting together the resident and staff parties. Charlene can often be seen working alongside her staff cooks and inmate workers sharing her knowledge and skills. Charlene's empathy and compassion for staff and residents alike shine through every day in her actions.



Jim Kist, Security Coordinator, takes his job seriously and does it professionally. He is always available to investigate concerns brought forth by staff or residents. He is thorough in his work and does not jump to conclusions. Jim also has a special way of speaking to and calming residents that are upset. Jim has taken the Security Coordinator position to a new level.

Bikes for Kids

By Jeff Barnhart, Facility Services Director

This past fall there was a significant amount of activity around the bike rack due to the generosity of some of our residents who have gone above and beyond.



The trios of **Callen Bradford, Terry Brasda, and Ronald Hearn** have led the charge into taking on a project for a very noble cause - **Bikes for Kids**.

Walmart notified me that they had several “slightly abused” new bikes that they could not safely sell in their store. The bikes were inadvertently broken, bent or damaged, and were considered out of the capabilities of their own in store bike assemblers. Rather than put them into the crusher, they offered them to us to possibly re-constitute into working bicycles. The best part is that they were giving the bikes to us free of charge.

The three volunteers, primarily lead by Callen Bradford, saw these bikes in the back of my truck and offered to work together to build them back up to working condition. Through a lot of experience and fortitude they were able to mix and match various parts and pieces from other bikes and came up with a fleet of now working bikes. As you can see from our photo, from the initial 22 bikes, they were able to assemble over 16 bikes of various makes and models and turned them from salvage metal into working bikes in good running order fit for those in need.

These bikes are now being made available to children and their families who are in need. Some have already been donated to the Childhood Cancer Campaign sponsored through the Uptown Optimist Organization. Others have been, and will be, donated to local schools that have requested bikes for kids who need to get to jobs and in one case, just to get back and forth to school. Some of these bikes may end up at the Boys and Girls Club as well as some other Non-Profit Organizations.

In Callen’s words, “There are a lot of kids who are out there that don’t have a bike, and I can pay it forward if I can get these bikes into the hands of a parent or grandparent who can get them.”

Callen has also been a great help to the residents when it comes to fixing their bikes. He would like to add his own “Hats Off” to the **Knicker Biker** for their loan of a much needed bike repair tool!



Life’s always going to have a challenge
And battles we must always fight
It’s not healthy to seek revenge
We must remember to live in the light

Our lives are too short to live in sorrow
And too special to always be angry
Live as if there is no tomorrow
And dance to your own melody

Beautiful Life

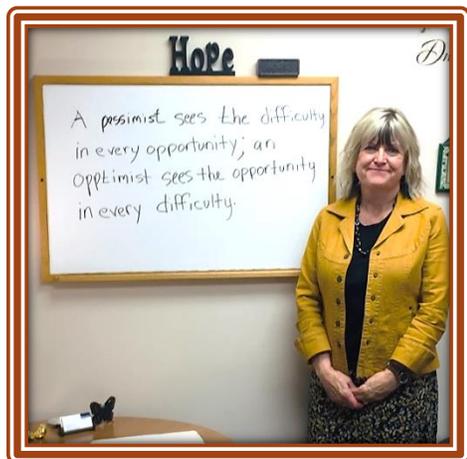
Poem by Resident

Nicole Thibert

We’re all unique in our own way
And we all have great potential
So remember to live in today
That your life alone is essential

Employee Milestone

by Brenda Demers



Karen Workman recently reached her 15 year milestone as a Licensed Addictions Counselor, contracted from Benefis Health Systems, at Great Falls Pre-Release.

Karen is proud to call Butte her hometown. She and her 9 siblings have always been a close knit family. "We did not realize we didn't have money because we had everything we needed by my dad's hard work and my mother's ability to stretch a dollar." (That explains Karen's work ethic and love for yard sales!)

Karen's dad was a miner and her mother a homemaker. Her dad immigrated to the United States from Yugoslavia. He had to learn to speak, write and read English on his own. "Dad said you work for everything you have - nothing is free. He always said

education is important because he never had that opportunity."

Karen shared that she was the wild card of the family. "I got into my own troubles as a teenager -- spiraled out of control -- and my parents thought a change of environment would help." As a result, she moved to Texas to live with her brother and finish her senior year of high school. Karen got her first job at a fast food restaurant and worked her way up to management.

After a few years in Texas, Karen's dad became ill, so she returned to Butte to help her mom. Karen took some college classes and eventually married and had two children and moved to California for a time. She returned to Butte where she attended the Vo-Tech. During one of her classes she remembers taking off her headphones and declaring, "This isn't what I want to do!" Karen knew she wanted to be a counselor since she was 14. It came to her naturally, as her friends always looked to her for advice.

At this point she was a single mother determined to be a counselor, so she and her two little ones moved to Great Falls where the degree was offered. She didn't plan on staying in Great Falls, but everything fell into place. Of course, it wasn't as easy as that sounds, and Karen has no idea how she pulled off college, work, and raising children all at the same time. She was doing an internship with Deaconess (now Benefis). They hired her for a paid job as an addictions counselor while she finished her schooling. At the same time, Karen taught addictions classes at the college. "I took one day at a time and did what I had to do for the day. If I thought about it too much, I got overwhelmed."

Karen found love again and has been married to Steve for 22 years. They have a daughter that just graduated from college and is pursuing a law degree. Karen was the first woman to be named Counselor of the Year by the Montana Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (MAADAC). She was appointed by the Governor to serve on the State Licensed Addiction Counselors Advisory Board. Following that she served on the State Ethics Committee for Licensed Addiction Counselors. Currently she serves as a Board member for MAADAC.

Her philosophy is, "Treat everybody as an individual; don't be judgmental, as we do not know their story. Change is a process. Recovery takes time with hard work and trial and error until you find the right path and stay on it." One of her favorite sayings is, "To win you've got to stay in the game. You never lose until you quit trying."

Employee Milestone

by Brenda Demers



Andre Carrethers, Screening/Disciplinary Hearings Officer, reached his 5 year milestone working at Great Falls Pre-Release.

Andre was raised in Great Falls by his dad, who served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. Andre's love of bowling started at a young age when he hung out at the bowling alley where his dad bowled league on Friday nights. Andre soon became a member of the Youth Bowling Association and bowled every Saturday morning. He still bowls every week and has proven to be very good at it.

After graduating high school Andre attended the University of Montana in Missoula for two years. He went on to play football at Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma. His major was psychology, but after three years he was burned out. He left the academic life and worked as a delivery person and then transferred to the mailroom at a prestigious company in Fort Worth, Texas. It was there that he learned the best way to handle differences with your boss: go directly to him or her rather than a step above. Andre loved the spontaneity of trying to figure life out.

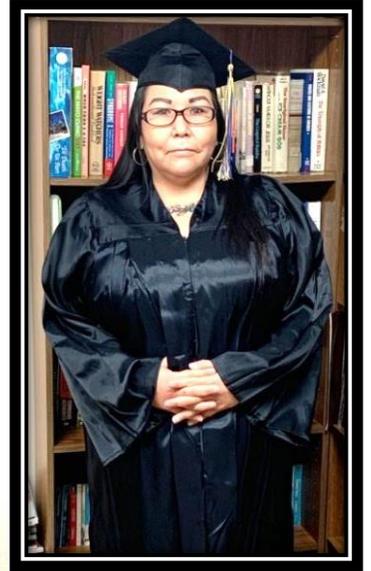
Andre later obtained a job at a juvenile detention center in Dallas, Texas. That's when the seed was planted to go into law enforcement. His buddy suggested he would make a good cop, and he had always had an interest. He enrolled in online schooling for Criminal Justice in 2011 and was hired by a police department outside of Dallas. He loved the valuable training the police academy allotted him. "It was the toughest thing I've ever done." His experiences as a police officer brought him face to face with death, DUI's, domestic disturbances, and a firsthand experience into the criminal world. Andre's law enforcement career ended sooner than expected when he was involved in an accident. That made him skeptical about continuing in that line of work. He learned that you should never be complacent, always be on guard, and be aware of your surroundings.

In July of 2014 Andre returned to Great Falls and felt revitalized with being home. He worked various jobs and was looking for something consistent, so he applied to be a Compliance Officer at Great Falls Pre-Release. At that time, he wasn't thinking long term. As he worked here, he became aware that the only way he could move up was to finish his degree. While working, he completed his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. Shortly thereafter, a chance for advancement summoned him with the opening of the Screening/Disciplinary Hearings Officer position. It was confirmation that he went through all of that madness for a reason. "Schooling wasn't my thing, but finishing was my challenge."

What is challenging about his job? After working alone for so long, working in an office environment with so many different personalities is an ongoing adjustment. Andre likes the interaction with the residents. He sees so many with far less than he had. He remembers what he was doing at their age and appreciates the benefits he had. He tries to help them see a better way, but too often hears excuses, unaccountability, and a lack of motivation. "There is no fire under them to better themselves. The responsibility is solely on them now; they are adults."

Resident Earns HiSET

Congratulations to **Michelle Healy** for earning her HiSet! Michelle plans to attain her Associates degree at Aaniiih Nakoda College in Fort Belknap and then pursue her certificate for medical coding.



Resident Talent



Terry Desjarlais shared some of his incredible artwork.



Tim Bishop has some mean knitting skills. He made these cute critters.



Christmas Gift Bags



Thanks to the support of our community, each resident received a gift bag.





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:** VP-Branch Manager/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:** Retired Trust Officer, Davidson Trust Company
- 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.