I'M TAKING THE COVID VACCINE.

WHO'S WITH ME?

Thank You For Your Service:
Agency Retirements

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Kevin Foster

Our collective hearts go out to staff at Shakopee and all those who knew Kevin Foster. Kevin passed away unexpectedly on December 30, 2020.

Kevin was a long-time staff member and was loved dearly by his colleagues. He was well respected by the incarcerated women at Shakopee who will undoubtedly feel his loss as well. Kevin devoted his career to keeping his co-workers safe and helping people change for the better.

Everyone at Shakopee is supporting each other as best they can during this difficult time. The Employee Assistance Program is also available to anyone struggling with this traumatic loss. Kevin was a great man and a great friend.

Moose Lake Honors Staff

By Ian Heaslip, Corrections Program Director

On Dec. 15, the MCF-Moose Lake Employee Events Committee hosted a winter holiday event at the facility.

Even with our important COVID restrictions, the group pulled off a great event, which included frozen pizzas for all staff to bring home and share with their families. There was a myriad of prizes handed out throughout the day.

A special thank you to the AFSCME Union for their donation for the pizzas, Kettle River Pizza for the discounted price, and MMA union members for their contributions as well.

Photo: Sgt. Scott Wiebusch, Officer Kortney Sundeen and Sgt. Justin Eiffler

Chard Promoted at Rush City

By Ashlee Berts, Captain

Lt. Jacquelyn Chard was promoted to 1st Watch Commander in late November.

Chard has been with the DOC since January of 2003 and a Sergeant since February of 2015. She has a variety of experience throughout MCF- Rush City and has been involved with instructing several classes in Employee Development, CISM, and ICMS. She completed a Lieutenant practicum and was a WOOC Lieutenant previously. Her variety of experience will be a great addition to our watch office!

Photo (L – R) AWO Jesse Pugh, Lt. Jacqueline Chard, Captain Ashlee Berts
Correctional outcomes have largely remained unchanged over the past several decades. According to the National Institute of Justice, almost 44 percent of people released from prison return before the end of their first year out of prison. About 68 percent will be arrested for a new crime within three years, and 77 percent within five years. The harsh reality is that correctional interventions fail more often than they succeed.

Something must change if we are to achieve an effective justice system that protects and enhances public safety, corrects systemic disparities, and preserves human dignity. In Minnesota, we’ve worked hard over the past 20 months to clarify our mission: Transforming lives for a safer Minnesota. In October, Commissioner Schnell announced a new strategic direction to align our work with our mission—a person-centered approach to all agency operations.

To illustrate this approach, I’ll share a story about my mom. I’m sure many of you have similar experiences. My mom lived independently in a home she was proud of because it represented the culmination of her life’s work. It was a lake home capable of providing her children and grandchildren with opportunities to swim, fish, and enjoy nature. She dreamed of listening to loons haunt the morning air, summer breezes blowing gently on the patio, and the sound of waves lapping the shoreline. This is what she worked so hard for and she intended to enjoy it for many years to come.

Life had other plans. My mom became ill two years ago and couldn’t take care of herself. We brought her to the emergency room where nurses and doctors asked her what was wrong. She said she was weak, had no appetite, and was losing weight. Doctors released her from the emergency room after finding nothing wrong with her. She was terrified to return home because she knew it wasn’t safe to be alone. My wife and I lived 90 minutes away, worked full time, and had two young children in the home. My brother and his wife worked full time and lived two hours away. Extended family were even farther away. We were left with no options and felt powerless to navigate my mom’s complex needs alone. She required assistance for everything.

We brought her to another emergency room. Nurses and doctors there asked the same questions. What’s wrong? Same response: weakness, no appetite, and losing weight. Finding nothing wrong with her, my mom was released. We grew hopeless. We drove my mom to her sister’s house five hours away where she stayed for a week. Her condition worsened. We brought her to another emergency room where a nurse asked her, “What matters to you” rather than “What’s the matter with you.” I was struck by the seemingly insignificant difference in the question. Rather than explaining that my mom was sick, and we didn’t know why, we were afforded an opportunity to explain that we were scared for her safety and that we couldn’t care for her. My mom explained how important her home was and what living there represented. She was admitted to the hospital and later transferred to a skilled nursing home where the focus shifted from diagnosis to improving her quality of life.

Too many people have had bad experiences when things were done to them, or about them, or around them, but not with them. My mom’s condition improved dramatically after she was placed at the center of her care. She now lives in my home and, although she can no longer live in her dream home, her quality of life has far exceeded the grim prognosis we initially resigned ourselves to. She lives with two of her grandchildren and appreciates life’s most important offerings. This outcome would not have been possible if doctors focused only on her diagnosis or if they didn’t ask what mattered to her.

The American justice system places an emphasis on getting people off the streets by locking them up but fails to fix the issue of preventing people from reoffending afterward. Recidivism affects everyone: the recidivist, their family, the victim, law enforcement, and the community overall. Furthermore, taxpayers are impacted by the economic cost of crime and incarceration.

Five percent of the world’s population lives in the United States, yet it’s home to 25 percent of the world’s incarcerated population—one in four. American prisons house more than 1.5 million people, an increase of more than 390 percent
since 1978. People of color and indigenous people are incarcerated at alarmingly disparate rates.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the DOC Adult Prison Population Summary, in Minnesota Black people are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of the overall population. American Indians and Alaskan Natives at almost six times. What’s more, according to the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission, people of color and indigenous people are likelier to be committed to prison and are likelier to receive longer sentences than their similarly situated counterparts.

Imagine how these disparities impact the people we serve. The justice system is a forbidding place. Post-conviction systems are designed to punish and deter bad behavior. Rehabilitative efforts are difficult to implement effectively. Inequities and injustices abound. The environment is cold, unwelcoming, and uncompassionate. Picture yourself entering prison and attempting to navigate its complexity, keep yourself safe, and advocate for what you need. Would you feel in control of what might happen to you? Would you feel safe? Would you believe the people working there recognize your intrinsic worth, desire for change, and capacity for self-control?

A person-centered approach represents a comprehensive change in the way we think about our work. It’s a way of thinking and doing things that views the people we serve as equal partners in planning, developing, and engaging in services to meet their needs. Like my mom’s experience above, unless and until we consider the individual needs and characteristics of the people we serve, we are unlikely to effectuate positive outcomes.

A cross-section of agency staff is currently working to prototype a person-centered model. It involves orientation, intake, and assessment processes that focus on the individual strengths and needs of the people we serve. Assessment and planning are meaningful, ongoing processes that help identify an individual’s recovery goals, strengths and resources, needs, and barriers to recovery. It helps gain an understanding of what’s going on in a person’s life to target interventions to their unique needs.

The assessment process will inform multi-disciplinary teams who work in partnership with the people we serve to design and deliver transformational services. These teams consider people’s desires, values, family situations, social circumstances, and lifestyles to collaboratively develop realistic and appropriate solutions.

Multi-disciplinary teams, in partnership with the people we serve, will develop individualized, front-end loaded program plans that integrate both physical and behavioral health, coordination of transformational programs and services, and care goals specific to the needs of the client and meeting defined specific service requirements. All aspects of person-centered planning rely on shared decision-making and client-defined outcomes, which promotes client choice, empowerment, resilience, and self-reliance.

A person-centered approach also applies to the DOC workplace. The purpose of any public agency should be rooted in serving people. There are four ingredients to a person-centered workplace: wellbeing, belonging, engagement, and transformation. If an employee doesn’t feel valued, respected, and trusted, it directly affects their work in a negative way. Employees are unique individuals with specific needs and preferences. As employees, all of us want to be treated well. It will increase our productivity. With very few exceptions, we work in teams. When we feel like we belong and are accepted, it creates a needed safety net to be ourselves, which means we bring our best to work. Engaging and challenging work gives us purpose. It’s absorbing and puts us into a state of flow. Unlocking purpose in work leads to greater engagement. Finally, people have a deep need for meaning in their work. Something must be transformed to create meaning, otherwise it leaves a void in our lives, one that pushes us from job to job as we seek work that brings meaning.

My mom’s story isn’t unique. It plays out every day across the country and throughout the world. My mom’s story played out in middle class America where people have an expectation for high quality health care, with a patient who had resources, support, and access. And yet it took several attempts over three agonizing months to get her the care she desperately needed. Providing person-centered care to incarcerated people is no different simply because they have been convicted of a crime. Creating a person-centered workplace is necessary to bring about transformation. We owe it to the people we serve, to Minnesota taxpayers, to our communities, and to ourselves.
Pasch Retires After 30+ year DOC Career

Captain Tom Pasch retired on Dec. 1 after nearly 34 years with the DOC.

Tom began his storied career as a Corrections Officer Trainee at MCF-Red Wing in 1986 and attended the academy at MCF-Stillwater. Tom transferred to MCF-Faribault in 1994 where he promoted to Sergeant. Over the course of 11 years at MCF-Faribault, Tom also completed Work-Out-of-Class (WOOC) assignments as Lieutenant and Training Director and was eventually promoted to Lieutenant. In 2005, Tom found his way back to MCF-Red Wing where he promoted to Captain in 2012. In 2016, Tom was selected for a WOOC assignment as Associate Warden of Operations at MCF-Red Wing.

Congratulations, Captain Pasch, on your much-earned retirement and thank you for your many contributions to the DOC!

Stillwater Staff Donate to Toys for Tots

Even in this challenging year, our amazing staff still came together to help those in need. MCF-Stillwater collected nearly 100 presents for the Toys for Tots campaign! On December 14, Corrections Officers from MCF-Stillwater along with Officers from the Bayport Police Department delivered the donated items to the Toys for Tots program. These presents were donated to the DOC and also through local businesses in Bayport.

Thank you to everyone who donated to this important cause and all our staff who helped make this donation drive a huge success! We also thank the Bayport Police Department for their continued partnership in giving, we appreciate all that you do!

Follow DOC on Social Media

The DOC’s social media accounts recognize the excellent work of our staff and help us recruit new employees. Follow the department on Facebook, Twitter:@MinnCorrections, LinkedIn, Instagram. and TikTok.
Espinosa Named Corrections Person of the Year by MCA

MCF-Stillwater Corrections Officer Antonio Espinosa is the recipient of the Corrections Person of the Year award by the Minnesota Corrections Association. Congratulations, Antonio!

Antonio has served as a corrections officer for over 18 years at MCF-Stillwater. He is certified in Crisis Intervention Training and is a Transition from Prison to Community Specialist. He has proudly served as a member of the MCF-Stillwater Honor Guard for the past 8 years and coordinates the annual Toys for Tots fundraiser at the facility. He helped to launch a men's support group called Stand Up that is co-facilitated by officers and incarcerated men. He also coordinated a series of multi-cultural events for the incarcerated men that brought community leaders, political figures, and artists into the facility to bring a positive message and hope to the men. His latest effort, Art from the Inside, creates the opportunity for incarcerated artists to have a visual voice through engaging, community-centered exhibitions of their art. His vision is to empower incarcerated artists to experience personal transformation and restoration.

Antonio is proud to have received the MCA 2020 Corrections Person of the Year award.

Testimonial: Marisa Williams

My name is Marisa Williams and I work at the MCF-Stillwater. I started my DOC career in 2000 at MCF-Lino Lakes as a Corrections Officer. During my nearly 20 years with the DOC, I have held numerous roles and responsibilities. I have completed a work-out-of-class assignment as a Sergeant in a control center. I was responsible for count in the facility, releasing incarcerated people, delegations for incarcerated individuals, and monitoring cameras throughout the facility. In 2012, I promoted to the Interstate Compact Unit as an Agent/Caseworker, supervising and monitoring MN transfers out of state. In January of 2018, I became a caseworker at MCF-Stillwater. I’m currently doing a work-out-of-class assignment as a Watch Commander Lieutenant on 2nd Watch at MCF-Stillwater.

I like the many opportunities the DOC has given me to include serving and keeping the public safe. I am also a part of the Crisis Negotions Team (CNT) here at MCF-Stillwater, which is trained in a variety of areas to deal with some challenging situations. I must say the benefits are a plus for me as well; to include the pay and opportunities for promotions. Many opportunities have arisen for me to advance in my career.

Despite the negativity you may hear about working in a correctional facility, I am motivated by the DOC mission to transform lives, and to ensure safety and security of the facility, the public, visitors, employees and incarcerated people. I like the responsibilities entrusted to me by my supervisor and the challenges presented to me. I genuinely like the people that I work with and the camaraderie. I appreciate the sense of humor that most of us develop to survive overwhelming days. I thrive on the unspoken bond developed between us, knowing even though we may not always agree with one another, when the need arises, we are “one team and we work together for the common good!” So, if you are looking for a career with benefits that include being a TEAM, TEAM DOC may be for you!
Ivan spent his career keeping those in his presence safe. He and his partner Rick Jennings were also National Champions. Rick said, “He was one in a million—an amazing dog and a really good friend.”

Deepest sympathies to Rick and our K9 Team.

Trust in me my friend for I am your comrade. I will protect you with my last breath. When all others have left you and loneliness of the night closes in, I will be at your side.

Together we will conquer all obstacles and search out those who might wish harm to others. All I ask of you is compassion, the caring touch of your hands. It is for you that I will unselfishly give my life and spend my nights unrested. Although our days together may be marked by the passing of the seasons, know that each day by your side is my reward.

My days are measured by the coming and going of your footsteps. I anticipate them at every opening of the door. You are the voice of caring when I am ill, the voice of authority when I’ve done wrong.

Do not chastise me unduly for I am your right arm, the sword at your side. I attempt to do only what you bid of me. I seek only to please you and remain in your favor.

Together you and I shall experience a bond only others like us will understand. When outsiders see us together their envy will be measured by their disdain.

I will quietly listen to you and pass no judgment, nor will your spoken words be repeated. I will remain ever silent, ever vigilant, ever loyal. And when our time together is done and you move on in the world remember me with kind thoughts and tales, for a time we were unbeatable, nothing passed among us undetected.

When we meet again on another street, I will gladly take up your fight, I am Corrections Working Dog, and together we are the guardians of the night.
My name is Megan Harms and I am a recovering addict. I have not used illegal or mood-altering substances since May 17, 2016. I was an addict long before my life started to crumble and the artificial smile, financial stability, and freedoms faded. I was smoking, snorting, eating and taking up to ten pills of Adderall or Vyvanse a day. I functioned as an active addict with a career, a house, a car, and a family that loved me dearly. All of those things were blocked by apathy because on the inside I was escaping from myself and the real-world realities. I told myself, don’t get involved, stay single, it’s nothing personal — it’s just business. Eventually, the instability of using chemicals left me homeless, and I lived with my dog in my car.

My friends and family did not understand why I was choosing this as a way of life. It was the courts and probation that brought my addiction to a conscious realization. It was the “system” that helped me when I didn’t know how to help myself.

At first, I was scared, then ashamed, over-confident and almost arrogant because I continued the criminal and addicted lifestyle for three years after my first charge. Probation violations, additional charges, warrants, lying, being secretive, crying, using, and manipulating anyone and everyone I could to get my next high. I had received five different charges during my 14 years of active addiction. There was a day my dog, my best friend, ate some of the toxic chemicals I was consuming and passed away. I saw it as a sign from my higher power that I needed to start focusing on myself — to stop running, hiding, being apprehensive, and hurting.

I entered treatment at Project Turnabout in June of 2016, completely sober and ready to learn how to live a life without substances. I followed all the recommendations of my counselor and of probation — calling my PO almost every week for a year, telling her about my goals and struggles, while stumbling through a new way of life called sobriety.

We have to stop pretending that addiction is something to be ashamed of. When we silence the problem and act like everything is okay, the fire grows and disintegrates everything in its path.

Many people get frustrated when they feel stuck or when they think they are not progressing. I personally wanted to accomplish everything at once, as the addict brain in me enjoys instant gratification. Patience became a virtue, as I needed to learn that the greater the dream, the more work it would take to achieve it.

I am no longer a felon — the court system works and today I am thankful for the arrest warrants, violations and house raids. From my perspective, it showed that the judges, law enforcement officers, and probation department cared about me. They cared enough about me while doing their jobs to clean up the streets, in the hope I would get clean too, so they wouldn’t have to see me again causing harm to myself and others. They never gave up believing that I would find my path towards a new lifestyle that was unfamiliar, but one that was productive and happy.

It is so true that “life is a journey to be experienced, not a destination to be reached” — every experience takes us to the next level of our development. I needed the lessons and experiences I had on my journey...even if it was not where I wanted to be. I needed the consequences, to understand and see that it was NOT a life I wanted to continue living. Every season serves its purpose, even the seasons of jails, institutions, and probation. Subsequently, I am a better friend, daughter, sister, counselor, and person. My knowledge through these experiences have helped guide me to live a better life for myself and have driven my desire to help others in society, instead of being trapped by shackles.

There is no amount of guilt that can solve the past and no amount of anxiety that can change the future. All we have — all I have, is today!
Shakopee Welcomes New K9 Team

By Jeff Spies

Canine Officer Chris Persing and his partner joined the staff at MCF-Shakopee recently.

Persing came to Shakopee with 12 years’ experience working with K9 partners in corrections. Persing’s current partner, a yellow lab, came from a breeder in Wisconsin who breed labs for both military and police work. We cannot divulge the dog’s name for security reasons, so we’ll refer to him as “Yellow Guy”, or YG for short.

YG is a pure bred and registered yellow lab trained specifically to detect drugs. Persing and YG have specialized training in narcotic detection in vehicles and room searches, highly valuable skills in a correctional environment. When YG detects the presence of drugs, his indicators are to either sit or go to the down position. He has been trained to detect marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and ecstasy. Future training will include detection of other contraband items common in the correctional setting. They recently got the chance to put their training to work during a facility-wide lock up. YG took the lead as K9 units from Faribault and Oak Park Heights assisted in the searches of all cells and common spaces within the facility. Thank you, Oak Park Heights and Faribault, for lending your staff.

Persing describes YG as play motivated (he loves his ball) and highly driven. He loves to work, is a quick learner, is motivated and smart. Both Persing and YG are already proving to be valuable additions to the Shakopee team. Welcome to you both!

Rush City’s First K9 Unit

By Ashlee Berts, Captain

MCF-Rush City Canine Officers Bernard Henninger and John Kelly and their partners graduated from their K-9 academy recently, where they received certification in narcotics and patrol work. This is MCF- Rush City’s first canine unit and we couldn’t be more excited to have this unit up and running.

To us at Rush City it means so much to have this additional level of response at this facility. We know this facility inside and out and we know the situations we deal with daily. It also enhances our security and the safety for all of us. We have the luxury of being able to start our program from the very beginning, and while the pandemic we’re responding to has impacted how we’ve prepped the staff and incarcerated individuals for Henninger and Kelly and their partners’ arrivals, we are welcoming them with open and excited arms!

This has been a long work in progress, and we appreciate the support from staff and the other K-9 Units that have helped us get this going! Congratulations to Bernie and John and their partner!
Thank You Staff for Volunteering at Stillwater MSU Canteen

By Amanda Evenski

On November 14, MCF-Stillwater’s Minimum-Security Unit was placed on quarantine status due to COVID; this resulted in no incarcerated people in their canteen assignment. As a result, staff from all over the agency (Stillwater, Central Office and Industries) volunteered for over three weeks to help fulfill canteen orders. In the 13 days the contingency workforce worked in Canteen, they processed an impressive 6,649 orders for a total of 165,978 items. With everyone’s assistance, it allowed for MINNCOR to stay on schedule during the always challenging holiday season.

Thank you to all staff who pitched in their time, your willingness to assist in times of need is truly appreciated.

Pictured: Staff filling orders at Stillwater MSU Canteen

Community Member Knits Winter Hats for MINNCOR Bridge Participants

By Amanda Evenski

Winter can bring the worry of not having proper attire for the cold days, as not every person has access to basic winter gear. During a friendly conversation, MINNCOR Account Manager Doug Johnson learned that his neighbor Clark knits hats for those in need in the community. Clark learned many Bridge participants do not have all the necessities for winter and wanted to do something about it. To date, Clark has now knitted over 50 hats to Bridge participants.

For more than 50 years, Clark has been a volunteer at heart, including being a volunteer fire fighter for over 20 years, working as a community affairs officer, and a teacher at the St. Paul Technical College. He has also volunteered with the Salvation Army to wrap and package gifts for children of incarcerated people through the Angel Tree Christmas program.

After Clark retired, he was interested in continuing to volunteer and learned how to knit hats. He first made them for his grandchildren, and after those went over well, he created hats for his church’s winter clothing drive. His hats have been donated to the Salvation Army and local churches, and every year, Clark donates hats to Roseville elementary students who are in need.

Bridge participants were very appreciative and grateful to receive hats for themselves and their children. Clark is happy to hear the men enjoy them.
By Jeff Spies

To say 2020 was an unusual and challenging year would be an understatement. COVID has dominated both our work and private lives, requiring all of us to adapt to new realities, new circumstances, and new processes. It is heartening to know that one constant through all of this continues to be the exemplary work done by DOC staff. In 2020, we again had close to 300 nominations for Employee Recognition Awards. Nominations reflect a small portion of the quality work done in the DOC. We who serve on the Employee Recognition Committee believe that each nomination deserves special recognition. Thank you for all who took the few minutes it takes to nominate a co-worker this past year. Recognizing another person for outstanding work is one way we can all have positive impact on our work cultures. Recognizing others encourages all of us to even higher performance. It builds teams and gives a spark of encouragement in a work environment that is often stressful and too often, can feel thankless.

In 2021, we will be introducing an additional recognition focused on impacting the lives of others. The committee is working on a process for recognizing Transforming Lives to highlight the many ways in which you influence and support others in their journey to a better life. We are appreciative of your nominations and are excited about this new recognition.

Please take the time to congratulate the 2020 award winners listed below. Submitting a nomination for the next round of awards takes only a few minutes and is a big encouragement in itself. Let’s continue to lift each other up with encouragement and recognition in 2021.

**Above and Beyond:** Ryan Ruzich, Central Office


**Creativity and Innovation:** Issac Hartman – WR/ML, Brian Hammill, Wayne Niles

**Exemplary Citizenship:** Tom Murphy – Field Services

**Leadership:** Angela Vatalaro – WR/ML

**Other (Impacting the Lives of Others):** Blake Nelson – RC

**Outstanding Individual Performance:** Kaitlin Barry - SHK

**Project Recognition:** SCL - Nick Parmenter, Jaime Holm, Roger Baburam, Seal Dwyer, Erik Halvorson, Karl Krippner, Amelia Basgall, Kara Zdon

**Safety:** Lee Fanning, Mike Moonen – MINNCOR

**Security:** Jay Woodman - Togo

**Team Recognition:** SCL – Eric Thielbar, Chris Sinclair, Todd Belmont, Dwight Summerville, Dustin Weller, Jamie Waytashek, Vladimir Vikhtinski, Keith Larson, Joseph Sullivan, Nick Chirhart, Michael Gross, Laura Weller

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Outstanding Individual Performance Award Recipient, Kaitlin Barry - SHK.
Art from the Inside Gallery Showing

Art from the Inside MN’s first exhibit, NUMBERS, concluded on November 29th. The exhibit at Creators Space in St. Paul featured works of art by men inside MCF-Stillwater. In total, 24 pieces of art were sold during the gallery showings, with proceeds going directly to the artists. A big thank you to Corrections Officer Antonio Espinosa who founded the program and all the staff at Stillwater who supported this effort and made it all possible!

Another gallery event will take place in 2021 – the dates have not yet been decided. To learn more about Art from the Inside, visit: https://www.artfromtheinsidemn.org/

Pictured are those picking up art they purchased.

Togo CIP Participants Learn Valuable Skills While Helping Keep Campgrounds Open

It’s been a challenging time for Minnesotans during the last year, but camping is one activity that has not slowed down. Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) participants at MCF-Togo take care of 7 state campgrounds, as well as sell firewood to 5 state parks in the area.

CIP participants take pride in their work and are appreciative to be giving back to the community.

CIP Industry Sgt. Jon Patterson has noticed a trend of fuller campgrounds over the last few years, noting “it’s picking up and I don’t see it slowing down any time soon.” Sgt. Patterson and his crews will continue to stay busy providing clean and safe camp sites, as well as firewood, to those who partake in camping in the Northwoods.

Photo: Participants in CIP at Togo work on splitting firewood.
On December 31, MCF-Oak Park Heights, Shakopee, and Faribault Health Services staff began receiving the first department COVID vaccines! Shortly after, the long-term care population began to receive the vaccine at these facilities. The Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control determine the priority order for the COVID vaccine for Minnesota. We are currently in phase 1a which is for health care workers and long-term care patients. Thanks to all who did their part to keep us all safe!

Star Tribune Visits Faribault

Reporter Liz Sawyer from the Star Tribune visited MCF-Faribault on Monday, January 4, to talk with our staff and incarcerated people about the COVID vaccine and COVID precautions. She witnessed the first incarcerated person receiving a vaccine in a long-term care unit and toured parts of the facility. Here, Lt. Tom Wagner tells Liz about COVID daily life and precautions in the K-1 unit.

The full Star Tribune story can be read on-line here.
By Robin Goldman

The first time I stepped foot in a correctional facility was in 1982, having returned to Minnesota from sunny San Diego. The nation was in a recession, unemployment at almost 11 percent and I needed a job! I took a state test, interviewed and accepted a position in the Mental Health Unit at the new state of the art maximum custody Oak Park Heights (OPH) Correctional Facility...my father was petrified! I, on the other hand, was young, naïve, energetic, optimistic and eager to apply my emerging therapy skills. Shortly thereafter I was invited to transfer to a position in the yet-to-be-opened sex offender treatment program. I gradually moved from a perspective of being “willing to try this out for a while” to deciding this was my career path and passion. After 38 years, I am retiring from this amazing career!

Many mentors and colleagues taught me much along this journey but some of my early learnings have stayed with me. The Warden at OPH, Frank Wood, made certain that his philosophy of corrections was not lost on those that worked there. He reminded us that “there but for the grace of God go I” and that we should treat those we incarcerate with that same awareness and respect. I soon learned that incarcerated persons were more similar than different from me...they are first and foremost, human beings with the same human needs we all have. Warden Frank Wood also preached the reality that “We cannot incarcerate our way out of this.” There was a clear recognition that systemic, rehabilitative and restorative responses were needed if we really wanted to see change in individuals and reductions in rates of offending and reoffending.

In 1982, there was little formal training on the treatment of persons who’ve sexually offended. I found a small group of colleagues to network with, drove from MCF-Oak Park Heights to MCF-Lino Lakes to spend my evenings observing and co-facilitating programming in the Transitional Sex Offender Treatment Program, (one of the first such programs in the country, which eventually merged to become part of the expanded program which I’ve directed for the past 23 years), and sought out training from the county victim advocacy program on the experience and response to crime victims. This has served me well throughout my career and I place a high value on the importance of collaborating with those who advocate for prevention and provide services to persons harmed by sexual abuse. While we work with different populations, we share the same mission...to prevent sexual abuse in all its forms and to help those impacted by sexual abuse, both those harmed and those that have caused harm, to engender healing, transformation, and restoration.

Along the way, I’ve seen many models of correctional practice come and go and while I place great stock in evidence-based principles and practices, I’ve learned to value those that stand the test of time. Risk-Need-Responsivity principles are among those...they teach us that we should invest our time and funds in treating those at higher risk, target those issues related to risk to reoffend that can be changed, and recognize and respond to the specific strengths and challenges of the individual so we can match our services and approach to their needs. More importantly, I’ve learned that, as with other forms of therapy, relationship matters most. Like the mantra in real estate...it is all about “location, location, location,” in therapy, it’s all about relationships. People, including those that have done horrific things, change through relationships with others. Good therapy/effective therapy requires a respectful and caring relationship. I have been enormously blessed to work with some of the most dedicated, talented and caring therapy and correctional staff. While they recognize the need to hold incarcerated persons accountable, they do so in a manner that preserves respect, provides support, and elicits motivation for positive change. I’ve had the pleasure of witnessing countless people truly transform their thinking, attitudes, values, and behaviors. They’ve shared their gratitude for the

Frank Wood ... reminded us that "there but for the grace of God go I."
support, knowledge and care they’ve received from the staff and other incarcerated persons that walked alongside them through this difficult journey of change. There are lots of myths and some understandably hostile attitudes about persons who’ve committed sexual offenses. I will never excuse their behaviors but was surprised to learn that most of them want to change their behavior to avoid harming others in the future. I honestly don’t know a more appreciative group of folks than those who leave our treatment programs having taken advantage of the opportunities provided them. Members of my treatment team frequently share the news of a phone call or letter from someone that left our program and returned to the community. Occasionally, they call because they are struggling and seeking a referral or resources to help them find their way. Most often they call because they want to thank the staff and share their pride in their new success...a boss that gave them an opportunity at a job, enrollment in college/vocational training, a marriage, a gathering with friends for a sober activity. It’s a testament to the value of supportive relationships that they want to share their good news with staff who worked with them in prison.

Treatment for sexual offending is difficult both for the person undergoing treatment and those that provide treatment. It requires extensive time, a lot of painful introspection and a great deal of practice to change patterns of thinking and behavior. Treatment providers listen to and read difficult and painful stories of harm and neglect. Their workload is extensive, and their working conditions are not glamorous. In spite of this, I’ve witnessed treatment providers support one another in this challenging work and invest their heart and soul in helping people that sometimes reject help and occasionally later return to prison, though thankfully, our research indicates the vast majority find more positive paths.

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle"

Aside from this amazing opportunity, some additional highlights of my career have included serving on the Executive Boards of the international organization, the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) and its chapter MnATSA, chairing the 2006 ATSA Conference in Chicago, co-chairing the first MnATSA conference in the mid-90’s and the very first Male Victim and Offender Conference in Minnesota in the 1980s. I’ve chaired and served on many MnATSA and ATSA committees, many DOC, DHS, and Dept. of Health committees, workgroups and task forces, and was blessed to work with an amazing group of folks on the development and research on the original MnSOST and later the MnSOST-R, Minnesota’s home-grown risk assessment tool, which has garnered international use and is widely cited in the literature. I have had some phenomenal opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to author, train, and consult for the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM) and I helped found and later served on the Advisory Committee of a Minnesota branch of Stop it Now!, a public health program focused on the primary prevention of sexual abuse.

While there is room for much improvement in our criminal justice system, as we’ve all seen too clearly in 2020, there is also much to celebrate. While incarceration may be a necessary option for some people, it is by itself, an insufficient one for most. Prison alone and other punitive measures are not solutions and the research confirms their ineffectiveness. Providing treatment for mental health, substance abuse/dependence and sexual offending is both ethical and more effective than alternative approaches. The Minnesota Department of Corrections has nationally recognized programs and outcome studies that demonstrate their effectiveness in reducing future offenses. I hope you will recognize these efforts with gratitude and support for the leadership and the correctional and program staff that provide these services and support those that take advantage of these services when they return to the community.

Someone far wiser than me said: “Be Kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle” (Mclaren). In this time of social chasms, political polarization, and an unprecedented pandemic, I am grateful, humbled and so proud to have served with an incredibly talented team that treats one another and the people they serve (our communities and incarcerated persons), with kindness and respect. As I move to the next chapter in my life, I realize that what’s most important is not where we’ve been or what we’ve accomplished but where we are going. There will be many people that will do this work with greater knowledge, skill and success then I, and that is exciting.

(Robin retired on December 30, 2020)
Captain Dean Weis retired in October after a long career with the DOC. Recently retired St. Cloud Program Director Roger Baburam wrote the following story:

MCF-St. Cloud Captain Dean Weis was tailored made for a career in corrections. When he started his DOC service in 1987 as a Corrections Officer at MCF-St Cloud, he was continuing an impressive correctional family legacy that goes back to a great uncle who worked as an administrator in the 1920s and father who retired as a Captain in the early 1980s. The macabre, uplifting and embellished penitentiary stories were all a normal part of his childhood and teenage years. Now, Dean will be sharing those stories as he is set to retire after 33 distinguished years with the DOC. Aware that promotions were more quickly attainable in the newer institutions, Dean transferred to the newly created medium facility of MCF-Moose Lake in the early 1990s.

I first met Dean in 1994 when I became a Case Manager at that facility. One quickly got the distinct impression that he was blessed with good common sense, sound judgement and intelligence, perhaps an inheritance from his pedigree Correctional family. Not surprisingly, he quickly rose through the ranks of Sergeant and Lieutenant and in 2004, transferred back to MCF-St. Cloud where he subsequently became Captain in 2006, following the footsteps of his father, Captain Leon Weis.

When the Captain position opened in 2006 at St. Cloud, the then administration was intentionally looking for someone with only few years left to retirement to evolve leadership succession plans more quickly. However, this plan changed when Dean applied, even though he had about 15 years left to retirement. Retired Program Director Paul Burgess stated, "Dean came with so much knowledge, experience and dedication, they couldn't pass him up just because he had several years to retirement. He has proven that they were right to choose him."

Dean brought a wealth of security experience to the Captain position, including a previous WOOC Captain experience at MCF-Moose Lake, Special Operations Response Team (SORT) Commander at Moose Lake and St. Cloud, and other activities such as being instructor and/or team leader in a variety of areas.

In 2000, Dean was asked to become the team leader and form a new statewide Marksmen/Observer team to supplement the DOC's SORT teams in the ever-evolving training/preparing for riot control within the correctional systems. In subsequent years, he became a valuable leader in emergency management and tactical teams' operations for the DOC, including being a part of the recently created elite Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Cari Gerlicher, retired Director of the DOC's Office of Special Investigations, said Dean was instrumental in helping her achieve a good working relationship between the Crisis Negotiator Team (CNT) and the tactical teams, expanding and professionalizing SORT Academy and creating the Special Operations Group (SOG). Gerlicher stated, "Captain Weis has always been a firm leader who is not afraid to ask the tough questions, hold people accountable when needed, praise people when deserved and walk the extra mile to get things done." Fellow Captain, Bob Mallery from MCF-Faribault, described Dean as "a consummate professional."

To narrate Dean’s career as simply advancing in the Corrections Officer ranks (Officer to Captain) is fragmentary at best and a disservice at worst. During his long career, Dean accumulated significant Work-Out-Of-Class (WOOC) experiences in the executive and specialized leadership stints as an Associate Warden of Administration, Associate Warden of Operations, Plant Operations
Captain Dean Weis, Continued

Director, Security Specialist Director and Construction Manager. In his last WOOC role as Construction Manager, he presided over a $30-plus million-dollar bonding project that included completion of the new Intake Center and initiation of the new Loading Dock construction. The knowledge and experience he acquired in budgetary matters, labor-management issues, construction concerns, etc. has earned him the moniker “Right again Dean!” when contested issues come up in policy or past practice disagreements. Associate Warden of Operations Carol Krippner said, “Over the years, it has been clear Dean is the quiet observing type. He does not say much but when he does, we should all listen. His decisions and positions are never personal but always business need focused.”

Dean, generally stoic and reflective, commented on the many changes in the corrections profession over the past 33 years. Among these are more peer support for employees who are assaulted, such as the CISM resource; more policy access availability for all staff, particularly computer technology access; and increased availability of radios for all staff and other security equipment, such as chemical agents and handcuffs for every officer (only 4 radios per shift when he started). He believed the leadership style that evolved from top down to more soliciting input from others before a final decision is made is a welcome change. He believes all these changes are for the better. One of his goals starting on Day 1 as the facility Captain was to preach situational awareness within the prison: he coined the phrase, “See Something-Say Something” if it did not feel or look right. He also championed “we are all in this together—safety and security is everyone’s job so we all get to go home at the end of the shift no matter if you were the Officer, Caseworker, Maintenance, Teacher, Foodservice worker we all had something to gain by being aware of our surroundings.”

Yes, Captain Weis may have had the good fortune to be part of a respected correctional family that goes back about 100 years at MCF-St. Cloud. However, the industry, integrity and leadership that he displayed in his 33 years at the DOC were all earned personally by the man himself. In his post corrections years, Dean plans on spending more time with his family enjoying the outdoors and going on the road assisting a friend who has a national dog sledding team.

Congratulations, Captain Weis, on your well-deserved retirement!

In November, MCF-Faribault Captain Trevor Johnson retired after 30-plus years of service.

Johnson was honored with a flag ceremony at the facility. The Honor Guard took down the state flag, folded and presented the flag to Warden Tracy Beltz, who thanked Johnson for his commitment and leadership during his career.

Staff assembled to acknowledge Johnson’s work and legacy. Thank you for all you have done for the Faribault facility and the department.
Lt. Moffett Retires After 26 Years With Corrections

By Ian Heaslip, Corrections Program Director

This fall, Lt. Robert Moffett retired with over 26 years with the DOC, all of which were spent at the Moose Lake and Willow River facilities.

After beginning his DOC career in September of 1994, Bob eventually promoted to a lieutenant position. He most recently spent time as the Discipline Lieutenant and was well respected amongst his peers across the agency. He was involved with many extra teams and duties, including SORT, Marksman Observer, shotgun instructor, security audits, and many more.

Bob stated that the highlight of his career was being a part of the transformation of the Moose Lake state hospital into a correctional facility. He was involved in the construction phase, and the writing of policies and procedures. Bob’s words of wisdom include to watch you and your coworkers’ backs, stay safe and don’t take the work home with you at the end of the day.

Lt. Moffett, congratulations on the well-deserved pastures of retirement. I have learned so much from you, as have many others!

Lt. Moffett receives his certificate of retirement.

Sgt. Bukowski Retires After 32 Years of Service

St. Cloud Sgt. Mike Bukowski retired this fall after 32 years with the DOC. The following article was written by one of his former coworkers.

Equipped with a degree in Law Enforcement, Mike Bukowski started his career as a Corrections Officer at MCF-St. Cloud in 1988. Mike worked all three watches and became a Sgt. in 2006. His last position was a Truck Gate Sgt. Mike is an exemplar of one who brilliantly juggles career with sports activities and family obligations. After 32 years at MCF-St. Cloud, Mike retired.

Over the years, Mike was involved in multiple committees, including the original Incident Command System committee, the Special Operations Response Team (for a remarkable 10 years), and the Scheduling Committee, etc. Regarded as a “top notch” trainer, he instructed many classes. His extensive knowledge in corrections has made him an excellent mentor to new staff. Lt. Poppen shared, “Mike has been a great resource to me and others in understanding the various aspects of the operations and how they are connected.”

Referred to as “Mr. Positivity,” Mike always greets everyone with a smile. The formula to his positive approach to his work is no secret to all who know him. His father, Earl Bukowski, was already working at the facility, when Mike started his career. The elder Bukowski was a football referee in the community.
throughout his career at MCF-St. Cloud and encouraged Mike to continue his sports officiating legacy. For the next three decades, Mike balanced his correctional profession with officiating at high school and the collegiate levels for the St. Cloud Officials Association, including Division II college football. He said he learned valuable life lessons on the importance of camaraderie and cooperation, lessons he employed working in a correctional environment. He even officiated football games between incarcerated people in the 1990s, as was the practice then. Collaboration and conflict resolutions skills are interchangeable for both work and sports. The Sauk Rapids Herald recently recognized his accomplished sports officiating experience for the past three decades in a front-page story.

Always the family man, Sgt. Bukowski makes it a priority to spend valuable time with his wife and three daughters. He is very proud of his daughters’ academic accomplishments. In his retirement, he plans to continue sports officiating and spend time with his family. Congratulations, Sgt. Bukowski, on your well-deserved retirement and thank you for being Mr. Positivity at MCF-St. Cloud.

Congratulations CIT Graduates

Congratulations to 21 staff from throughout the DOC who graduated from Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training this month! Pictured below are three new CIT graduates from MCF-Oak Park Heights. Other graduates are from Faribault, Lino Lakes, Moose Lake/Willow River, Red Wing, and Stillwater.

Staff trained in CIT intervene – and often prevent – crisis situations when people are struggling with mental health issues. The MN DOC now has 565 staff who have completed this important training.

“Congratulations to our newest CIT graduates. This training provides our staff an additional tool to use daily in all aspects of their transformative work,” said DOC Deputy Commissioner Michelle Smith. “I thank each of you for your involvement.”

Oak Park Heights CIT Graduates

By Chris Pawelk, AWO

Congratulations to Officer Paige Diekman, Officer DeAndre Moss and Officer Jesse Bizzotto on graduating from the CIT Academy! You are excellent additions to the CIT Team!

Extra special thanks to CIT Coach Glenn Lisowy and Training Specialist Dan Lipa (not pictured). They played a major role in ensuring the first ever virtual CIT training was a success!

CIT is an important program in our facilities as it creates a safer and more compassionate environment for staff and those in our care.
In addition, congratulations to MCF-Red Wing staff Lavonne Murray (Walter Maginnis High School Guidance Counselor), Brittani Terwilliger (Corrections Officer) and Jayson Singer (Corrections Officer) for completing the first virtual CIT Academy!

Red Wing CIT Graduates

Myon Burrell Released from MCF-Stillwater

In December, the Board of Pardons commuted the sentence of Myon Burrell and ordered his release to supervision from MCF-Stillwater. Myon was only 16 years old when he received a life sentence, and is shown here reuniting with his family.

Media from all over the county covered the story, and many came to Stillwater to witness this historic event. Thank you to Victor Wanchena, Guy Bosch, Paula Thielen, Katie Marek and everyone who helped the evening run smoothly—and to the many others who worked behind the scenes to carry out his release. Best wishes to Myon and his family as they begin this new chapter.

Testimonial: Shane Warnke

The following testimonial was written by MCF-Stillwater Sgt. Shane Warnke about his career with the DOC.

Why have I stayed for 15 years? One word. “Opportunity.”

When I began my career in the fall of 2005, I had a lot of interest in the criminal justice system but little knowledge of the prison system. However, that has changed drastically over the course of 15 years. I have had the opportunity to help our communities and help those working to transform their lives every day. I have grown both personally and professionally. Now some of that growing was not always easy; but I felt supported and encouraged by those around me who share the belief that you get out just as much as you put into your career with the DOC. In addition, my thirst for knowledge as well as my desire to give back to the agency and the many people who have supported me along the way is what drives me, excites, and pushes me every day.

Throughout the course of my 15-year career, the DOC has given me unique opportunities, for example to work with the Secret Service during the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, to presenting at a national conference in Texas, and to be the recipient of a Crisis Intervention life-saving award in New Jersey.

As a life-long learner, I knew I wanted to be involved with training and employee development. I was given the opportunity to instruct Interpersonal Communications, mentor new Corrections Officers as a Lead Field Training Officer, and mentor staff as a Crisis Intervention Coach. I also helped to redesign a live-scenario training to better prepare
Shane Warnke, Continued

My experience working for the DOC has challenged me in the sense of wanting to learn more, and I decided to embark on an educational journey that has been going slow but steady since 2007. I am slated to complete my doctoral dissertation within the next year.

Looking back 15 years ago, one may question what has kept me here? It’s the deep relationships made, and the deep bonds formed which have kept me grounded. It’s the urge to give all that I can. There are many people that I have gotten to know over years while working for this agency that I would not hesitate to call at a moment’s notice if I needed help, and they know I would do the same for them as well.

I believe that working in a dynamic environment such as corrections requires a great deal of pragmatism, and emphasis on person-centeredness with both co-workers and those under our care. Ultimately, incarcerated people are watching how we treat each other. At the end of the day, they will be our neighbors and the people we see while we are out shopping with our families. Most will be integrated back into our communities at some point in time. I think the true question is, what can we do while they’re within our care, to ensure we’ve done everything possible to ensure their success?

I believe it starts with humility; we treat people as humans, which for some may be something they have had little of throughout their lives. Second, listen. Oftentimes things can be done to expedite processes. Sometimes going the extra mile by making a phone call for something simple, can circumvent a process of writing a kite which may take days for something that can be rectified in minutes. One thing that I have begun to notice as I age in my career is the gratitude that exists. There have been many times where I have received a “thanks a lot Sarge” or “good lookin’ out.”

I can honestly say that after 15 years, I still love what I do as well as the people I work with. Our work is never done and is ever evolving. Here’s to many more years!

Theater Group Engages with Incarcerated Population

By Chelsey Tulgren, ED and Transitions to Post-Secondary and Careers Teacher

And Paige Berg, GED and Transitions to Post-Secondary and Careers Teacher and Paige Berg, Clinical Program Therapist 4, MCF-Stillwater

Ten Thousand Things Theater (TTT), based in Minneapolis, values storytelling that honors a diversity of identities and has offered free performances to marginalized populations, such as homeless shelters, low income senior centers, and correctional facilities in our state.

In its effort to continue “to ignite empathy and revolutionize belonging through the power of compelling and inspiring theater” during the challenges of COVID, TTT organized a project called Ten Thousand Voices and welcomed creative writing pieces from incarcerated people and those in long term care facilities with the intent to select pieces to be read on stage by professional actors, as well as shared online in blogs and videos.

Responding to an email seeking submissions from incarcerated men and women, based on writing prompts, we collaborated to bring this program to the department. With Chelsey taking the lead, this unique opportunity was shared amongst incarcerated individuals at our facility and throughout the
Theater, Continued

As a finale to this year’s experience, Commissioner Schnell, Chelsey, and Paige were invited to a virtual premier of the project and were able to speak about what it meant for those incarcerated to be heard in this way. Commissioner Schnell commented on how heartening the stories of people inside can be and was grateful these stories remind us of “the wholeness of who they are, not just the things they’ve done.” Aimee K. Bryant, an actress with the company, noted she was moved by how “rich, so full of grief, so full of soul searching, full of loss, but also full of joy, and wit, and surprises” the writing was. To learn more about this amazing theatre company and view the pieces, check out www.tenthousandthings.org.

CIP Presentations go Virtual at TOGO

By RJ Kruse, Captain MCF-TOGO

Pre-COVID, individuals participating in CIP at MCF-Togo were able to attend a Phase II Orientation with one of the DOC’s CIP Agents. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, agents have not been able to visit the facility to present the expectations graduates will encounter upon release.

Togo Transitions Program Coordinator David Copp and Career Caseworker Liz Sundeen coordinated with CIP Agent Supervisors to set the presentations up virtually.

Recently, Agent Aric Welle of the St. Cloud East team was able to present the expectations of CIP Phase II & III, answer questions, and give some tips for transitioning back into the community.

This is yet another shining example of the department adapting and overcoming obstacles in order to fulfill our person-centered mission.
Bringing Statewide Training Academy to Life Virtually

By Danelle Gorra

It became clear when the Spring academy was placed on hold that COVID-19 would not allow an in-person academy for some time. Still, the list of attendees was growing. Beginning July 2020, Field Services piloted the use of Zoom, a platform to collaborate virtually online, for client interactions. Al Godfrey tasked Field Services Admin with bringing Academy online for Fall with the same virtual platform.

Gen Wilkens and Dan Traun to schedule, adapt course evaluations, create a “lessons learned” capture for instructors and coordinate material distribution.

District Supervisor and trainer Jacob McLellan invited a steering committee of inter-agency stakeholders to the virtual table to have a broader discussion about shared decision making to not only adapt Academy to virtual, but to make it truly a Statewide Training Academy for all three delivery systems.

Miller and Letnes coordinated small groups of trainers and worked tirelessly to convert courses to adapt to the virtual platform; considering best formats for learning, for example, Motivational Interviewing 2 transitioned to coaching circles for greater interaction and deeper learning. Rachel recruited seasoned trainers to instruct for each course and the trainers received instruction in the Zoom platform as well as practice sessions.

Kelly Wheeler supported by Gen Wilkens and Danelle Gorra have created practice sessions for attendees from all three delivery systems and have acted as Zoom support persons to assist in platform use from sharing videos, audio and PowerPoints to breakout groups to white boards to chat.

Courses have been occurring since September and thus far, attendees are reporting 99 percent satisfaction overall.

This continues to be a big undertaking and we thank everyone involved for their willingness to think about Academy differently, for their patience as the groups work out challenges and for the collaboration and support of our corrections partners as we continue to move forward.
St. Cloud Staff Donate Items to St. Benedict's Senior Community

On Dec. 11, members of the MCF-St. Cloud Workforce Development Committee delivered donated gifts to residents of the St. Benedict’s Senior Community.

In its 6th year, the Golden Gift Giving Event saw a record 95 gift tags filled by the staff at MCF-St. Cloud. The gifts will be distributed to seniors in need this holiday season! Additionally, proceeds from the Golden Gift Giving Event Raffle were used to purchase craft supplies for residents, which were also donated. Thank you to everyone who made this year’s Golden Gift Event a success!

Oak Park Heights Staff Help Those in Need

Staff at MCF-Oak Park Heights recently collected items for the annual Toys for Tots drive, as well as care packages for those in the military. Hundreds of toys were gathered for deserving children, and the military care packages included: holiday decorations, toothbrushes, body wash, mixed nuts, granola bars, protein bars, and fruit snacks. Great job MCF-Oak Park Heights staff and the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Committee!
Women in CIP Donate Handmade Masks to Christian Community Homes and Services

Women in the Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) at MCF-Shakopee made 500 masks for donation as part of their Restorative Justice program.

“The Restorative Justice program is an amazing and meaningful way for the women in CIP to give back and reconnect with the community,” said Sgt. Troy Hedtke.

The masks were donated to Christian Community Homes and Services. The organization was honored to receive the cloth masks.

Two OPH Officers Bring Holiday Cheer to Colleagues

The tradition continues! Each year, MCF-Oak Park Heights Corrections Officers Mary Schlueter and Shannon VanAlstine go above and beyond to take care of their colleagues working on the Christmas holiday. Using their own funds, and, this year, a surprise donation from AFSCME, along with a donation from the facility admin team, they make sure there is a holiday surprise for each person working.

Donations allowed Mary and Shannon to purchase the following items to donate to staff: gift cards, fruits and pastries, coco and cider packs, thank you cards, canisters of coffee for all units.

Shannon and Mary handed out more than 100 gift bags and breakfast treats. The remaining gift cards were donated to the Watch Center to give to staff who are working overtime.

“With all of this we were able to make 140 gift bags with treats and random gifts for those who sacrificed their family time to be here,” said Mary Schlueter. “Shannon and I strongly feel that taking care of each other is important, not just for morale to our second family but, to the next generation of staff. We hope that in the hard times they know they do have another family here who will have their backs.”
Congratulations to Jamie Holm on becoming Captain at MCF-St. Cloud on January 6th. “Jamie has spent the last 20 years at St. Cloud getting to know all the areas of the facility and how the facility operates,” said Carol Krippner, St. Cloud's Associate Warden of Operations. “This knowledge along with her networking abilities and organizational skills will allow her to manage security of the facility and so much more that the job entails. Congratulations, Jamie!”

Jamie began her DOC career in October 1998 at MCF-Sauk Centre as a Corrections Officer. In March 1999, she transferred to MCF-Faribault and later transferred to MCF-St Cloud in September 1999. Jamie promoted to Sergeant in January 2012 and to Lieutenant in May 2016.

During her career, Jamie has completed Work-Out-of-Class opportunities in the following areas: Captain (2020), Program Director (2019), Lieutenant (2015-2016), Inventory Control Supervisor 2 (2014), Case Manager Practicum (2012), and Office of Administrative Specialist Intermediate for Health Services (2007 and 2009).

In addition, she has held the following positions: MCF-St Cloud Affirmative Action Officer from 2009-2016, Facility Committee Liaison since 2014, MCF-St Cloud PREA Audit Manager since 2016, Diversity Symposium Planning Committee member, and FTO Coordinator.

Jamie has also assisted in a variety of special projections, including: the development and implementation of the SCL Health Services Appointment Scheduling List, creation of the Facility Committee Charters and Committee Liaison, the development and implementation of the MCF-St Cloud Camera Review Form, the 2016 and 2019 MCF-St Cloud PREA Audit and CO-Creator of the MCF-St Cloud Offender Mentor Program.

Congratulations on your promotion, Jamie!
The final DOC Strategic Plan documents are now available on our website, [here](#).

### MISSION:
Transforming lives for a safer Minnesota.

### VISION:
Achieving justice through promotion of racial equity, restoration from harm, and community connectedness.

### AGENCY REORGANIZATION
- Reorganize the agency to break down silos, improve communication both vertically and horizontally, increase cross-unit efficiencies, improve agency leadership awareness, and reduce costs.
- Develop a comprehensive intake, assessment, and program planning process that focuses on the human being, not the conviction, to achieve transformation with the goal of achieving zero warehousing.
- Establish and implement agency research and performance measurement systems to inform organizational decision-making and public transparency.
- Practice servant leadership at every level within the agency to grow and develop staff, build trusting teams, and achieve results.

### TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING
- Increase public engagement in the creation and revision of agency programs and policies.
- Increase use of evidence-based practices in the rehabilitation of people who are incarcerated, or under supervision.
- Increase number of people released from prison who obtain housing, employment, enroll in education, or actively engage in community treatment by 90%.
- Increase intervention partnerships to effectively deliver community-based programs.
- Reduce disproportionate rate of American Indians and youth of color in the juvenile justice system by 20%.
- Reduce number of readmissions by 70%, through community supervision and supportive services.
- Increase enrollment in classroom college by 400% and enroll 250 people in DOC technical training leading to Minnesota State associate degrees.
- Improve the experience and outcomes for incarcerated parents and their children.

### SAFETY AND WELLBEING
- Continue to implement plans to reduce the spread of COVID-19 across the agency.
- Protect all staff, incarcerated individuals, victim survivors, and clients under supervision from additional harm and injury.
- Practice equity and inclusion to transform the workplace culture to a healthier and more successful environment.
- Improve the quality of the experiences of new employees entering the agency.
- Embed a culture of wellbeing across the agency.
- Provide sufficient resources and effective training to DOC staff and community partners to reach zero re-victimization of victim survivors.
- Provide incarcerated persons with the healthcare needed and access to healthcare upon reentry while under community supervision.
Who’s With Me?

Our DOC staff and incarcerated population know the best way to get back to normal is to take the COVID vaccine. These amazing people (and many more!) are helping to spread the word on posters and TV graphics inside our facilities and on our internal website. Thanks to everyone helping to spread the word.