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3109 1st Avenue North  
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406-259-9695

Passages  
1001 South 27th Street  
Billings, MT 59101  
406-294-9609

Misdemeanor Probation /  
Beta Jail Alternatives  
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"Alternatives to the Corrections System"

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# Alternatives, Inc. Quarterly Newsletter

Spring, 2018

**MISSION STATEMENT:** We promote public safety and challenge offenders to become responsible productive citizens through firm, fair, consistent supervision, treatment, and education.

## Supportive Housing & Reentry Grant – *Dave Armstrong, CEO*

On Monday, April 23rd, the Billings City Council voted unanimously to accept a Supportive Housing grant awarded by the Montana Board of Crime Control to the Municipal Court. The grant funds became available through Senate Bill 65 from the 2017 legislative session. SB65 was originally suggested by Billings' Senator Margie MacDonald and its intent is to use state general funds to create housing options for offenders.

*The project will be a community wide effort involving clients from the treatment courts, probation and parole, institutions, and community corrections.*

Alternatives spearheaded the writing of the grant proposal supported by a large group of community members and organizations. Support letters were received from the Billings Reentry Task Force and its Housing Subcommittee "Home Base 406", District Court Judge Mary Jane Knisely, Sheriff Linder, US District Court Judge Susan P. Watters, Dress for Success, Judge Gustafson (then District Court, now Supreme Court Judge), Mona Sumner (Principle of Addictions Consulting Group), the Housing Authority of Billings, Justice Court Judge David A. Carter, MWPP Warden Jennie Hansen, Chris Evans (Region IV Deputy Chief of Probation and Parole), HRDC, MSP, and Job Service. Accordingly, the project will be a

community wide effort involving clients from the treatment courts, probation and parole, institutions, and community corrections.

For offenders in need of housing, the project will provide a directory of rental options. Qualified persons will be eligible for rent support, and damage and utility deposit assistance. Landlords who rent to offenders participating in the project will receive the assurance of funds for damage abatement as well as tenants who have been made fully aware of their responsibilities. A contracted liaison experienced in real estate and landlord concerns will educate property owners, manage abatement funds, and provide an open channel of communications between renters, landlords, and supervising authorities.



Judge Sheila Kolar,  
Billings Municipal Court  
- sponsor of the Supportive Housing Grant

A Supportive Housing and Reentry Supervisor, Susy Paddock, has been hired and will manage the project. Susy will oversee a new Reentry Department at Alternatives, Inc. (continued on page 2)

## Supportive Housing & Reentry Grant – Dave Armstrong, CEO

(continued from page 1)

that will combine the Employment Placement Specialists (3) and Transitional Living Case Managers (2) for Alpha House and Passages. The intent is to offer grant participants assistance in the job market as well as housing, and to actively visit rental properties to assure client needs are met and that they are keeping up with their responsibilities as tenants.

It is anticipated that as many as 200 individuals will receive services from the supportive housing and reentry project during its 16 month term. Those receiving services will be persons who are already in our community or who have ties to the community with an emphasis on treatment court participants as well as DOC offenders. If successful, the project should remove the mystery of the inner workings of renting to offenders for landlords and create more responsible tenants. ***If stable housing situations result, and recidivism is lowered, we all win.***

*If successful, the project should remove the mystery of the inner workings of renting to offenders for landlords, and create more responsible tenants.*



Senator Margie MacDonald,  
House District 54



Susy Paddock, Supportive  
Housing and Reentry  
Supervisor

## An Accomplishment 15 Years in the Making – Gwen Albrecht, Executive Assistant

### Prerelease resident Bobbi Flammond earns her Hi-Set!

What began as a mandatory class at the Elkhorn Treatment Center for Ms. Flammond, led to an aspiration to finish her final Hi-Set exam at Passages. Beginning the process while at Elkhorn gave Ms. Flammond the confidence she needed. Her past drug use and lack of confidence had put the process off for nearly 15 years. After passing her first exam, she quickly realized it wouldn't be as difficult as she thought it would be.

Preparing for the Hi-Set meant checking out books from the local library and studying for hours on end. The math exam was the final, and most difficult, of the exams. Hard work and determination paid off however, and that math exam is what finally earned Ms. Flammond her Hi-Set.

Ms. Flammond says this means that she can go to college and move on to bigger and better things.

She hopes to use her knowledge of her recovery and achievements to help others who are trying to achieve similar things. She now has a better understanding of what it feels like and what it takes to accomplish something like this.

*"It means that I can do more to help my people back on my reservation."*

Ms. Flammond stated friends and family have been very excited, very proud and happy for her!

Bobbi Flammond stands proud after earning her Hi-Set!



## Jennie Hansen Named New Warden of the Montana Women's Prison

— Jan Begger, Chief Operating Officer

Jennie Hansen was named the new Warden of the Montana Women's Prison in November 2017. Jennie is no stranger to Alternatives, Inc., especially to the Passages Program. She started her career with the Department of Corrections in 2009 as the Institutional Probation and Parole Officer (IPPO) at MWP and has worked hand in hand with Passages since that time. She was instrumental in the New Path New Life grant which helped set the stage for much of the re-entry work that we do today. She, along with our Lead LCPC Mindy Brookshire, were the first trainers of the Women's Risk and Needs Assessment (WRNA) and together they have trained most of the state to use this gender specific assessment tool. Warden Hansen is not one to become stagnant in a job – since being hired by the Department of Corrections in 2009 she has held the positions of IPPO, Mental Health Probation Officer (in this position she was selected as the Montana Probation Officer of the Year), Probation Officer II, and the first ever Eastern Bureau Chief. She was also chosen as a member of the Sentencing Commission to review and update correctional practices in the State of Montana and was a member of the Montana Board of Crime Control. Warden

Hansen stated that she will be in this job for a long-time as it has always been her dream to be able to ensure that gender-specific care and treatment is available to female offenders in the state.

Warden Hansen is a graduate of Billings Central High School and the University of Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas where she excelled in athletics and attended college on a volleyball scholarship. She and her husband Loran, have three children and are very involved in 4-H and with their horses. Her newest "hobby" is coaching her daughter's softball team.



New MWP Warden  
Jennie Hansen

With Warden Hansen's passion for advocating for female offenders, we can expect to see many innovations at MWP. Congratulations to our colleague – we are looking forward to our continued partnership!

## American Community Corrections Institute (ACCI) –

Amanda Green, Beta Jail Alternatives Supervisor

Since April 2014, Alternatives has been working with the American Community Corrections Institute (ACCI) to provide self-directed and online Cognitive Lifeskills programming to local referral sources.

As with any new program, finding a fit for client needs and managing staff capabilities, takes time. Beta has found the best fit with this program in small counties that lack educational programming and with juvenile probation officers who are looking for targeted programming that youth and their parents can learn about the impact of their actions.

Recently Beta learned that the Alliance for Youth Program in Great Falls, MT included funds in its annual budget to help juvenile probation officers refer and cover the \$100 cost for the curriculum. ACCI programs include Media Awareness (including social media and cyber bullying), Marijuana Aware-

ness, Truancy Prevention, Minor in Possession, Positive Thinking Skills, Youth Substance Abuse, Youth Theft/Shoplifting, and Bullying Prevention, among others. This grant from the Montana Board of Crime Control will pay for 20 courses that juvenile POs will refer through the Yellowstone Beta Program. With success of this program, Beta hopes to prevent future juvenile crime.





## Law and Justice – Jan Begger, Chief Operating Officer

Several members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee (LJIC) toured the Passages Programs on March 20, 2018. This committee is a joint bi-partisan committee of the legislature that meets between legislative sessions. The LJIC monitors the activities of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Justice, the Office of State Public Defenders and the Judicial Branch. They also examine laws and justice policy issues and makes recommendations to the full legislature.

*The feedback received from the committee members was overwhelmingly positive.*

The tour included all three units of the Passages program and staff were given the opportunity to explain the units function, staffing patterns and treatment opportunities provided to the resident's. The members observed the Morning Meeting on the ASRC and ADT Units. This resident facilitated meeting involves all of the residents

with the goal of setting a positive tone and plan for the day, hear announcements from the staff and discuss concerns.

The tour was followed by a luncheon prepared for and served by the students in the Culinary Arts Program which gave the members a firsthand view regarding the importance of correctional training programs.

The feedback received from the committee members was overwhelmingly positive. They were impressed with the number of programs and opportunities that we offer, the overall enthusiasm of staff and residents alike.

***A special thanks to Rachel Weiss, the Lead Staff of the Law and Justice Committee, who assisted in arranging the tour!***



*Representative  
Jessica Karjala*



*Representative  
Barry Usher*



*Representative  
Jimmy Patelis*



*Senator Jen Gross*

### ***Local Legislatures from the Law & Justice Committee***



*Senator Margie  
MacDonald*

## Featured Board Member: Ryan Van Ballegooyen – *Mandy Hurr, Human Resource Generalist*

Ryan Van Ballegooyen has loved science since he was a child, however, his path did not lead him into a career studying the physical world and its phenomena. Instead, Ryan graduated from South Dakota University with a degree in Business Economics. This lead him into his current position as supervisor at Job Service, which he assumed in 2011 when he decided that he wanted to do something to help people. He was quickly promoted to Manager and has loved the challenge of managing people and changing culture. Ryan is proud to say that he has not had any employee turnover in the past two years.

Ryan originally moved to Billings with his wife, who has family here, but found that he fits right in due to his love for camping,

fishing, and hunting. He has three children and his claim to fame is having lunch with George Takei (Hikaru Sulu, helmsman of the USS Enterprise in the television series *Star Trek*) at an awards celebration in Washington DC for an 8th grade science project. Ryan created a concept for a robot that hooks up to dairy cattle to a milk machine; the likes of which you can find on some farms today!

If you want to know who Ryan really is, just ask him how he is doing, and he will respond with “I am living the dream, if it’s a bad day, not sure whose dream”.



Ryan joined  
Alternatives' Board of  
Directors in 2016.  
Ryan is Manager for the Billings  
Job Service office.

## Giving Back to the Community – *Amanda Green, Beta Jail Alternatives Supervisor*

On a very windy and snowy March day, a team of staff, residents, and community service workers lent a hand to the Explorer's Academy (formerly Head Start), cleaning up the outside playground area.

Megan Martin, Explorer Academy Coordinator, also recently worked with the Alpha House Maintenance Inmate Workers and staff to put a new roof on a storage shed along with a new coat of paint. There is also discussion of working in the garden area come summer. These projects are part of the ongoing efforts to permit residents the opportunity to give back to the community through service activities and assist court ordered clients complete mandatory service.

*“This saved our program time and money...”, Megan Martin, Explorers Academy*



Alpha House Inmate Workers Bruce Bittick and Julian Baughman help repair the roof of Explorers Academy's shed.

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