

CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM ALTERNATIVES, INC.

SPRING 2019



Mission Statement:

We promote public safety and challenge offenders to become responsible, productive citizens.

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Growing Need for Jail Alternatives, Chemical Dependency, and Mental Health Treatment

By Dave Armstrong, Chief Executive Officer

Like a young couple, Beta Jail Alternatives and Alternatives' chemical dependency and mental health programs have expanded their family of services and are in need of new living quarters.

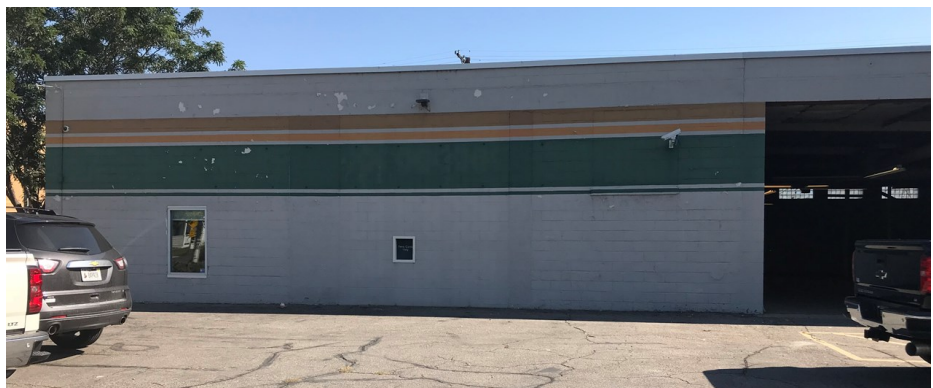
The Beta Program which employs 15 staff members in Billings (two more in Stillwater and Carbon counties), has resided at 17 North 31st Street more than 15 years. In approximately 3,500 square feet of space the staff see nearly 6,000 clients each year.

For their part, the chemical dependency and mental health treatment programs have their roots intertwined in both the Alpha House men's pre-release and Passages women's center. Having become certified for Medicaid and private insurance billing in the past year, the programs hope to expand their service offerings in a place of their own.

After a couple years of house hunting, the programs have found a new home in the former Cenex office building located at 2120 3rd Avenue North. A complete remodel will be done with plans to open the new facility in the fall of 2019.



The new facility has 16,000 square feet of floor space.



The new facility is undergoing a complete face lift with plans to open in the fall of 2019.

Regaining a Life and a Family

By Lexi Breipohl, Jail Alternatives Manager

The Yellowstone County Attorney's Office filed for court protection of 510 abused or neglected children in 2018, more than three times the total for the prior five years.

In 2008, the number of Montana kids in foster care totaled 1,507. That number has grown to nearly 4,000 kids, an increase of 165%, according to a report filed by the Protect Montana Kids Commission. Of those kids, over 1,000, or 25%, were placed into foster care due to the biological parent's meth use. Recent estimates indicate 65% of children placed in care in Yellowstone County had at least one parent or caregiver incarcerated or in the corrections system.

Here is the story of one of those cases:

Leota Beartusk's battle with methamphetamine addiction took a turn for the worse in December 2016. On the 15th her children were removed from her home due to suspicion of drug use and neglect. After a short stay with Grandma, the children were then turned over to the State of Montana and were placed in foster care.

Leota used methamphetamine daily to hide her pain from the loss of her children. Continued use and other legal issues resulted in placement in the Yellowstone County Detention Facility. She indicates that she "woke up" a week later with sounds of her children crying in her head. She knew at that point that she needed a change in her life. Her children needed her, and she needed them.

On April 13th, 2018, Leota was released from the Yellowstone County Detention Facility with no belongings or place to live. She was in and out of different hotels while trying to maintain her sobriety. She met with a mental health counselor and sought addiction treatment and parenting classes from local providers. All of this led her to regain visitation with her children in May of 2018. In August, at her request, she began a Patch (drug) testing program to help her maintain her sobriety. She indicated to Alternatives' staff that the patch has made her accountable for her actions and the decision to use or to not use.

Almost 2 years later in December 2018, Leota walked into Alternatives with a proud smile on her face and announced that she finally regained custody of her children. Since that time, her family has incorporated prosocial activities such as going to sporting games into their daily lives, and in February she reported to staff that she will be closing on the purchase of her first home.

When Leota was asked what she would like to tell people about curbing her drug use she said, "I wasn't ready. But when I heard my kids cry when I was in jail, I couldn't do it anymore. I needed to get out and I knew that nobody could love my kids as much as I do." Everyone can find that willpower, it just takes extra motivation. Leota's motivation is her children.



The drug patch is what helped Leota be accountable for her actions and the decision to use or not to use.

"I wasn't ready. But when I heard my kids cry when I was in jail, I couldn't do it anymore"

Employees of the Year 2018



Alternatives:
Shannon Breipohl,
Application
Specialist
Manager



Alpha House / Beta:
Adeia Thompson,
Beta Program
Assistant



Passages:
Deb Pelensky,
Client Advisor III

How Drew Became a Rockstar!

By Mariah Hammond, Case Manager

"I was a mess for the first 6 years of my adult life" ...that's what Drew would tell you. He racked up a few felonies in Bozeman and went to jail, addictions treatment, and pre-release. In August of 2012 after being in the "system" for nearly six years, he was accepted to and entered Alpha House.

While at Alpha House, Drew completed his required programming, obtained employment and completed the Transitional Living Program. He released to community supervision in May of 2013 and began attending college at Montana State University – Billings.

In the spring of 2014, I met Drew in music class. I found out he drove a 1964 Impala named "Stacy" and told him "nice car" and the rest is history as we began our friendship. At the time, Drew was in a band called DDX. Drew would write songs about his past and all the people that came and went in his life, and yes, he also wrote about his addiction. He recognized that he had hurt people and had a deep sense of remorse. The songs were raw with emotion. For Drew the music was an outlet he was learning to use as a coping skill.



Arterial Drive (from their Facebook page, used with permission)

Drew graduated from MSU-B in 2017 with a Bachelor's degree in Music and Business at the ripe "old" age of 29. His new band, *Arterial Drive*, started to become popular in the Billings community. *Arterial Drive* plays at places like the Pub Station and sometimes he goes back to his hometown in Bozeman and plays at the Zebra. With every show, their fan base grows and they play at least 6 plus shows a week. He accomplished all this while on probation, which he discharged on March 9th of this year.

For Drew the music was an outlet he was learning to use as a coping skill.

I understand the struggles felons have to overcome, and sadly there are some that don't make it. My hope is that my friend Drew can be an inspiration for those that still struggle on their path. Some time ago, he told me that he wanted to accomplish something good in his life and not just talk about doing it. He said, "there's hope in my story somewhere".

Editor's Note: Mariah was a Case Manager at Alpha House from March, 2018 to March, 2019. She met Drew after he completed his pre-release stay and before she became a Case Manager.

CISM Training Hosted by Alternatives, Inc.

By Rick Deady, Emergency/Safety PREA Coordinator

On February 6th and 7th, Alternatives, Inc. hosted a training on Crisis Intervention and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Carol Staben-Burroughs, LCPC from Bozeman, was the trainer for the two-day event.

CISM: Group Crisis Intervention is designed to present the core elements of a comprehensive, systematic, and multi-component crisis intervention curriculum. The course is for people who work in the emergency response fields and for Human Service professionals who desire to be part of a debriefing team. In the aftermath of an emergency, medical event, suicide attempt, or physical altercation for instance, the responding staff may suffer self-doubt, depression, shock, or delayed stress. CISM is intended to permit staff to release stress or to come to grips with the emotional effects of the incident.

In addition to Alternatives' staff, the training was opened to local and state emergency response, medical and correctional agencies. Eighteen individuals representing the Montana Highway Patrol, Probation and Parole, Pine Hills, Missoula County 911, Helena Police Department, Wildfire Defense Systems, Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office, Madison County Volunteer Fire Department, Pioneer Medical Center, and Billings Airport Fire Department attended and completed the two-day training.



Carol Staben-Burroughs, LCPC and trainer in CISM

Alternatives Sustaining a Bright Future

By Lance Trusty, Maintenance Manager

The Maintenance Department began energy saving lighting upgrades to both Alpha House and Passages in late 2017. These upgrades will increase the sustainability of the organization, reduce future energy and repair costs, and reduce our carbon footprint.

Alpha House is in the process of replacing ceiling fixtures with energy efficient LED lighting. It was determined that the same visual effect could be achieved with fewer fixtures. Maintenance Supervisor Arthur Aue implemented this out of the box thinking which will amplify our savings.



ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS



Passages began upgrades in late 2017 with the replacement of old T-12 vanity light fixtures with LED technology. John Hougardy, Maintenance Assistant for Passages, researched and implemented a replacement strategy which brought us to 100% completion in November 2018. The Housekeeping Department got in on the action and has started upgrading bulbs for lamps, and entryways to the new LEDs.

The cost of the upgrades was reduced through incentives offered by NorthWestern Energy which provides rebates for organizations that replace older fluorescent technology. In some cases, 75% of the cost of labor and materials was recouped. We want to thank Laurie Watts, Administrative Assistant at CTA, who partnered with us on this project to get our rebates processed.

Words to Live By From a Recent HiSet Graduate

By Trista Thrasher, Graduate

Ms. Trista Thrasher, an Inmate Worker at Passages, recently completed her HiSet (high school equivalency). She enthusiastically shared the following thoughts at the graduation celebration held on Feb 1, 2019.

"Bear with me on this, I say that because my outlook in this speech is not your normal outlook, but then again I am far from normal! But it will make sense at the end!



Trista Thrasher shows off her HiSet certificate!

I'm going to start with a quote: 'As long as we are persistent in our pursuit of our deepest destiny, we will continue to grow. We cannot choose the day or the time when we fully bloom. It happens in its own time.' Denis Waitley

People ask me if my relapse was worth it. Now the normal response would be 'no, right?!' Well for me it was worth it in a way. It set me on a path to accomplish a goal I had!

I alone could not achieve what I needed to reach my goal. With the help of my Case Manager on 2nd floor of Passages, Ms. Draeger, I was placed in the Hi-Set classes. From there, the teachers at The Lincoln Center came everyday to help me get one step closer to conquering my goal! Until the day came I walked away victorious.

Permeance, perseverance persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this, that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak! Thomas Carlyle

Knowing I can accomplish anything I put my heart and mind into, I can finally start laying out my floor plan for my Recovery and World Domination!"

Thank you! (Editor: mic drops)

Third Time's a Charm for Culinary Arts Program in the Rotunda of the Capital

By Jan Begger, Chief Operating Officer

For the third consecutive legislative session, the Passages Culinary Arts Program was invited by Governor Bullock to showcase our pre-apprenticeship program in the Rotunda of the State Capitol.

Six current students, along with three graduates of the program, Chef Patrick McNellis and Sous Chef Doug Dewitz prepared an outstanding menu of appetizers and desserts for members of the Senate and House of Representatives. This event continues to be one of the most popular events of the season as evidenced by the number in attendance and the many positive comments received.



The Culinary Arts Program participants take a much needed break to pose for a photo.



Top Left (counter clockwise): Mark Noland HD10 with PPD Operations Program Specialist Timothy Allred; CAP student Misty Denny with Montana Correctional Enterprises Administrator Gayle Butler; the reception crowd; Alternatives, Inc. COO Jan Begger with DOC Deputy Director Cynthia Wolken; Governor Steve Bullock with CAP graduates Jotera Knick and Colette Line and Lt. Governor Mike Cooney; Siri Smillie, Policy Advisor for Education with DOC Programs and Facilities Bureau Chief Megan Coy.



ALTERNATIVES

CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY

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