

CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY



QUARTERLY NEWS FROM ALTERNATIVES, INC.

WINTER 2020



ALTERNATIVES
CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY

Mission Statement:

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

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Jail Overcrowding

By Amanda Green, Beta Jail Alternatives Supervisor

At the beginning of November, stakeholders from both the city and county gathered in the Yellowstone County Commissioner's Board Room to discuss overcrowding at Yellowstone County Detention Facility.

Led by Commissioner Don Jones and Deputy Civil County Attorney Melissa Williams, the discussion drew speculation about the cause of the overcrowding. The expansion of the current detention facility will not be completed until early spring. However, even with expanded bed space totaling 434, it is still not enough based on the average jail population hovering around 500+ for the last 12 months.

Jail Commander Roger Bodine indicated that over 100 inmates have been there for more than 90 days and collectively, the population includes 2,636 unsentenced charges - 300 city charges and 311 awaiting felony trial, many with charges at both the misdemeanor and felony level. A total of 156 of the 500+ were State Probation and Parole inmates pending new charges in the community.

The jail population has been hovering around 500+ for at least the last 12 months....

Discussion also centered around housing out of county, state, and federal inmates. These contracted beds help pay for the general operations of the facility and enhance community safety. United States Attorney for the District of Montana Kurt Alme noted that federal inmates are those arrested in the Billings community, but there is often regular movement of these offenders to other facilities.

County Attorney Scott Twito and District Court Judge Rod Souza both agree that there are system challenges and detention staff recognize a disconnect between logistical processes between the three jurisdictional courts which affect staff time and the inmate's ability to quickly be released from the YCDF.

Sherriff Mike Linder assured the attendees that those needing to be in the facility are those who are there. It is not uncommon for police officers and sheriff deputies to issue a Notice to Appear in court. This poses its own set of challenges with people missing court dates and warrants that ensue as a result. Sometime

in the next several months, these stakeholders will meet again to review the population and evaluate whether there are inmates who can be released, what processes need to be implemented to ensure cohesiveness between the Courts and the Detention Facility, and next steps. Ultimately, to keep up with the population growth, increase in methamphetamine use, felony case filings, and regular overcrowding, it may be necessary for Yellowstone County to face the question as to whether a larger detention facility is needed.



The current detention facility located at 3165 King Avenue East.

Community Service with Family Services

By Joseph Anderson, Jail Alternatives Manager

Before Family Services moved into their new building at 3927 1st Avenue South, they always talked about doing out-reach programs that would get food to families in other towns.

Usually the Montana Food Bank Network (MNFB) would be the organization that conducted out reach, but they can't always get to the towns further east. When Family Services moved into their new bigger building, dreams came true.

With their improved facility, they can now be a hub for the outreach programs that MNFB offers and stretch out further east than MNFB could by themselves. Recently, Family Services contacted Alternatives, Inc. for help with boxing up food for the outreach project.

Six Alpha House residents stepped up and volunteered. These residents were very excited and proud to help when they found out where the food was going.

A big thank you to Eugene Walls, Kyle Verley, Thomas Parisian, Jake Hogsett, Jaryd Hafer, and Eric Leniz!



Kyle Verley, Jake Hogsett, and Eugene Walls.



Eric Leniz, Thomas Parisian, and Eugene Walls



Staff Development: Moving Up and Sometimes Out

By Yolawnda Henry, Director of Human Resources

We have all heard that employees don't leave companies, they leave managers. It is always tough to experience turnover. It is easy to assume retaining employees is the best outcome for the company. I beg to differ! Managers must build relationships with their staff and possess empathy and humanity. As leaders, we must be willing to prioritize our employees' needs along with the company's needs. In the end the result may provide a more positive outcome for both the individual and the company.

When managers gain a true understanding of their employee's needs, they are more likely to find resolution and peace with employees leaving. It has and will always be difficult to say goodbye but ultimately, we all want what's best for all parties involved.

Mandy Hurr started at Alternatives as a temporary employee in 2004 in the secretarial department. In January of 2013, she was promoted to Administrative Support Supervisor. In February of 2015, after graduating from college, she transferred to the Human Resources Department. In her role as a Human Resources Generalist, Mandy was able to expand upon her knowledge and obtain Human Resources certification. Mandy's dream job was to become an HR Director.



Mandy Hurr, a 15 year employee, is moving on to bigger things!

Join me in congratulating Mandy on her new position as Human Resources Director of Explorers Academy! Mandy you will be missed! Mandy's last day was August 9, 2019.

Welcome New Board Members



Blade Stiller:
Commercial Loan Officer -
Stockman Bank



Melinda Arnold:
Provost & Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs - Montana
State University Billings



Josh Billstein:
Director - Billings Clinic

The Ins and Outs of a Culinary Arts Program Student

By Steve Peek, Program Supervisor

The Culinary Arts Program (CAP) is an eighteen month long pre-apprenticeship program that can accommodate up to fifteen students at any one time. It includes 2000 hours of on-the-job training and 288 hours of related instruction in the classroom and working events. Upon completion, the participants receive a certificate from the Montana Department of Labor and Industries.

The first six months focuses on classroom instruction. During this time, the students study the principles and chemistry of cooking, butchering, filleting techniques, and many other skills. The classroom instruction features in-house and guest instructors. The CAP participants also complete Serve Safe certification and take field trips to learn from local restaurateurs.

The second six months is hands-on with the focus on becoming employed in food services. Students hone skills such as menu and event planning, and food preparation. During the final six months of the program, the residents are on pre-release status and are able to put their new skills to work at a job in the community.

The CAP students participate in numerous practicums around the city and state. The most high-profile function is the biennial Legislative Reception held at the Capitol Rotunda where they are able to showcase their proficiency for legislators. Other activities in which they have participated include the Veteran's Stand Down through Job Service, Blankets and Bears, the Billings Classic, Montana Fair, and the Moss Mansion's Annual Board of Director's and Donor's Christmas party. CAP is generally involved in approximately 12-15 community events per year.

The CAP students cultivate the Passages garden. They grow a wide variety of vegetables and herbs. The garden project is managed by Kitchen Coordinator Monika Johnson. They sell part of their produce at the Southside Farmer's Market. Some of it is also provided to partner agencies and some surplus is given to staff members.

In order to graduate, each student must oversee a 'CAP Lunch.' She is 'the chef' for that meal. As Chef, the student is responsible to design the menu, price the supplies, adhere to a budget, and order the needed ingredients. She is tasked with creating a 'dining experience.' This includes arranging the music, décor, and all other elements of the production. The student is expected to consider the history and culture of the type of food prepared.



Heather Santos - CAP Student

The chef for a CAP Lunch learns elements of management as she must do a lot of planning and delegating duties to her CAP teammates. She must create her vision and as Chef Patrick McNellis says, "Food becomes a gateway to opening your worldview."

"Food becomes a gateway to opening your worldview." - Patrick McNellis, Chef

Each CAP graduate learns a great deal in a wide variety of areas and is able to gain expertise that can be taken with her in future endeavors. Alumni have gone on to work in a wide variety of restaurants around the region, some in managerial positions.



Students pictured L-R: Jadrian Skarda, Lisa Perdue, Stellar Bulltail, Merciline Gray Hawk, Patricia Pasak, and Jazmine Enemyhunter

140+ Years of Experience

By Amanda Roos, Alpha House Operations Supervisor

Each year Alternatives, Inc. honors those staff members that have been with the agency for 10 or more years with a festive luncheon.

Each of these veteran staff members gets to bring family and friends as guests, while they are honored by the agency with a few words by a chosen staff member and an individualized gift.

Last year we were honored to recognize Terri Sisson (UA Lab Supervisor), Richard Farnsworth (Client Advisor-Alpha), Bridget Girard (Operations Supervisor- Passages), and Shannon Breipohl (Technical Training Specialist) for 10 years of service, Mandy Hurr (HR Generalist) and Brice Brogan (LAC) with 15 years of service, Gwen Albrecht (Executive Assistant) and Steve Peek (Program Supervisor) with 20 years of service, and last but not least, Jan Begger (COO) with 30 years of service!

With a combined total of 140 years with the agency, we know we will continue to do great things for our community, and we thank them all for their dedication to our on-going mission here at Alternatives, Inc.



Top Row: Jan Begger, COO (30 years) - Gwen Albrecht, Executive Assistant - Steve Peek, Program Supervisor (20 years)
Middle Row: Mandy Hurr, HR Generalist - Brice Brogan, Licensed Addictions Counselor (15 years) - Terri Sisson, UA Lab Supervisor (10 years)
Bottom Row: Shannon Breipohl, Technical Training Specialist - Bridget Girard, Operations Supervisor - Richard Farnsworth, Client Advisor IV (10 years)



ALTERNATIVES

CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY

Alpha House

3109 1st Avenue North
Billings, MT 59101
406-259-9695

Passages

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

Beta Alternatives / Compass

2120 3rd Avenue North
Billings, MT 59101
406-256-3501

Carbon Alternatives

PO Box 1652
Red Lodge, MT 59068
406-446-1675

Stillwater Alternatives

PO Box 1050
Columbus, MT 59019
406-322-4121

info@altinc.net

If you prefer to receive our publication via email, please contact Gwen Albrecht at 406-256-3501 ext. 239 or galbrecht@altinc.net

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Buchanan Capital Inc.

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Business Owner

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Melinda Arnold
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Billings Clinic

Bill Bullock
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