

MJPS News



Letter from Past President Kim Neuman

Well, I hope you all enjoyed the Fall Conference. It was a great day and the speakers were awesome! Thanks to Roger Edwardson-Kandiyohi County and Tom Wells-MSA for getting those speakers lined up, Great Job!!!

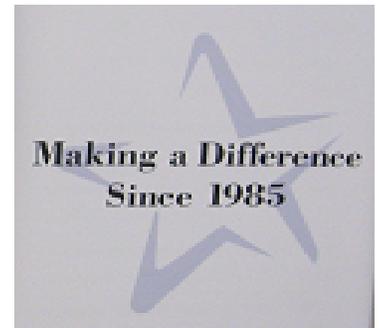
It's always great to get together as a group and discuss what is new in their facilities. It was nice to see the faces of new programmers- Welcome to the Wonderful World of Programming!! If there is anything you need there are many Programmers out there willing to lend a helping hand.

The MJPS Board will be meeting on November 7, 2017 at 10:30 at the MSA in St. Paul, all members are welcome. We will start getting speakers lined up for the 2018 Spring Conference at Arrowwood in Alexandria, MN.

Again I would like you all to keep Shanna Krebsbach (MJPS President/ Meeker County) in your prayers and wish her a speedy recovery. Get well soon Shanna, we all miss you!

On that note, I hope you all enjoy the upcoming holidays and be safe in your travels.

MJPS Past President- Kim Neuman



A division of the
Minnesota Sheriff's Association

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Executive Board Meeting Dates

MSA Office	November 7, 2017
100 Empire Drive,	January 23, 2018
Suite #222	March 20, 2018
St. Paul, MN 55103	10:30am
Phone: 651-451-7216	



2017 MJPS Fall Conference

October 10, 2017

Anoka, Minnesota



Above: Our MJPS hosts Melanie Hehr and Jill Hlavinka, Anoka County.

Above: Speakers Dr. Rebecca Shlafer and Washington County Jail Administrator Roger Heinen.

Children of Incarcerated Parents

Dr. Shlafer is a national expert on the impact of incarceration for children and families. She has developed a toolkit for enhancing child visitation experiences in jails and prisons. (p. 4)

Jail Administrator Roger Heinen has implemented a child-friendly visiting area in Washington County and recently started a Dog Therapy Program featured on the next page.



A big "Thank you" to Resource Coordinator Roger Edwardson, MSA Rep Tom Wells and Kim Neuman for coordinating the event. A total of 53 participated in the conference.

Above left: Speaker John Emery — Muslims and Islam in Minnesota Jails (Islamic Resource Group)

IRG is available to answer any questions that come up about Muslim practice, especially as it pertains to jails and prisons. IRG also provides, free of charge, copies of the Quran, prayer rugs, and head coverings (hijabs). IRG is very active responding to inquiries during Ramadan, the month of fasting. They also can provide volunteers to give sermons and lead prayers for Muslim inmates on Fridays. Islamic Resource Group's website is irgmn.org. For general questions and presentation scheduling is irg@irgmn.org. John can be reached at john@irgmn.org.



Washington County Program Spotlight



WCSO Rolls out Pet Therapy Program

Washington County Sheriff Dan Starry has implemented a Therapy Dog Program for inmates at the Washington County Jail. The Sheriff's Office is partnering with Home for Life, a non-profit Animal Rescue Sanctuary located in Star Prairie, WI. Director Lisa LaVerdiere has rescued hundreds of animals since she was a child. Rescue dogs, cats and birds are brought to Home for Life when they are unable to be adopted. The animals are medically cared for, loved and given a new lease on life. Many of these dogs are trained to work with people. Lisa and her team of volunteers are extremely busy visiting schools, nursing homes and hospitals bringing joy and happiness to whomever they meet. Service dog training is fairly common in prisons. However, having therapy dogs visit inmates in a jail is rare due to the short stay of an inmate, which is usually 7 days or less on average. What are the benefits to having a therapy dog visit an inmate in custody?

- Creates a caring connection, a bond, a feeling of acceptance and joy, reduces angry feelings, depression, anxiety and grief.
- In addition to inmates who volunteer to see the therapy dogs, the dogs will visit the juvenile inmates and children who are visiting their incarcerated parents.
- Reduces tension. Inmates are calmer and less likely to act out.
- Provides a learning opportunity to ask questions about the dogs.
- The dogs are rescues who have lived through emotional and physical trauma. Inmates will relate as many of them have experienced adversity in their life.
- Dogs will not judge an inmate no matter what the inmate did to get arrested.
- Officers and staff working in the jail and the law enforcement center have stressful jobs. Visiting with the therapy dogs will uplift their spirit.

Sheriff Dan Starry stated that a high percentage of inmates will be released from custody and placed back into our communities. We need to find ways to help inmates transition to be a successful citizen, worker and parent. Treating inmates with respect and dignity is the right thing to do. Our goal is to have inmates leave our facility better off mentally, physically and spiritually than when they came in. We believe having therapy dogs visit the inmates and staff is the right thing to do. Lisa and her team of volunteers plan to visit the Washington County Jail at least two times a month bringing a variety of rescue and disabled dogs. There is no cost to the Sheriff's Office. Home for Life staff volunteer their time to help the inmates.

Parents in Minnesota Jails and their Minor Children

In partnership with the Association of Minnesota Counties and with support from the Minnesota Sheriff’s Association, researchers at the University of Minnesota conducted a study, in March 2017, of parents in Minnesota jails and their children. This study is part of a program of research at the University of Minnesota focused on understanding the strengths and needs of incarcerated parents and their minor children.

From this data, an estimated **9,898 children** under the age of 18 have a parent currently incarcerated in a county correctional facility in Minnesota.

Parental incarceration is an adverse childhood experience. When a parent goes to jail, children may experience challenges at home, in school, and in their communities.

To learn more about this study and receive the toolkit, *Safe and Secure, Family-friendly Visiting in Jails and Prisons: A Toolkit for Enhancing Child Visitation Experiences*, contact:

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What can jails do?

- Partner with local law enforcement to implement trauma-informed arrest policies.
- Implement parenting education and support programs.
- Provide family-friendly visiting spaces.
- Implementing re-entry programs that support the needs of parents.

SAVE THE DATE!

MJPS Spring Conference
April 24—26, 2018
Arrowwood Resort
Alexandria, MN

Welcome New Programmers!

Travis Black – Pennington County
Tim Brummer – Morrison County
Matthew Polis – Sherburne County

Mitch Dickison – Carver County
Luke Husom – Wright County
Nathan Price – Wright County

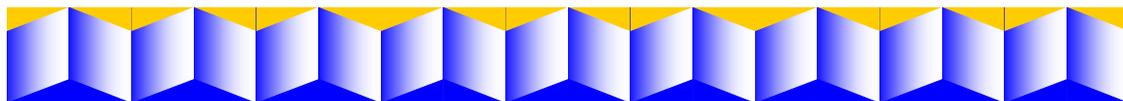




**2017
Programmer of the Year
Award**

Ryan Como

Nobles County



**2017
Volunteer of the Year
Award**

Darrel & Bev Welle

Morrison County



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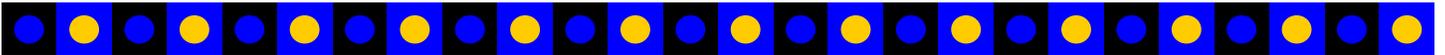
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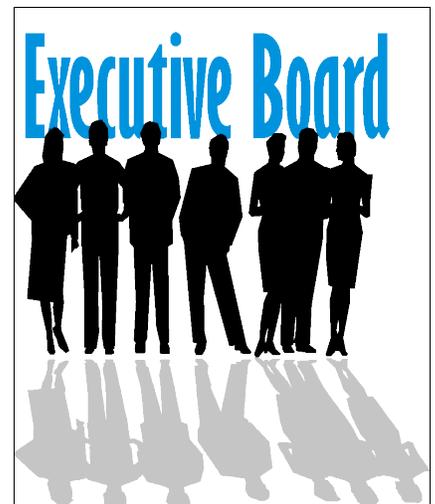
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Hubbard County Spotlight: Program Coordinator Christina Day



This article appeared in the Park Rapids Enterprise newspaper on September 11, 2017, written by Shannon Geisen.

Breaking the cycle: County jail programs guiding inmates toward better choices.

Fewer lock-downs.

Fewer fights.

Fewer incidences of disrespect or behavioral issues.

There's a whole paradigm shift here in the environment," said Christina Day, Hubbard County Jail Programs Coordinator. "Our inmates behave better. They don't want to lose their program privileges."



An art class is among the programs at the Hubbard County Jail designed to help inmates foster positive behavior and set goals. (Submitted photo)

Life skills and parenting classes, Alcoholics Anonymous and Bible studies are a few examples of long-established programming at the jail. Since Day took over the role in December 2013, she's added other curriculum, like The FATHER Project, Al-Anon for female inmates, art, FearBusters, and a coping with addictions class.

Day is also spearheading a transitional housing project in Park Rapids to provide a safe and sober place for select inmates after they're released from jail.

"I had no idea I was going to feel this passionately about my job," she said.

Day and her team of volunteers are proponents of the power of positivity, empowering people to set goals, believe in themselves and make better choices.

"Each of our programs here, somebody touches on that in some way," Day said.

Inmates are urged to make a conscientious effort every day to get closer to their goals of sobriety, reuniting families or whatever the case may be.

"I don't know how many times I ask inmates, 'Have you told yourself something positive today? Would you criticize your best friend?' I preach it all the time; all the time. Not just me, but all these wonderful volunteers. They get it. The people we have here truly have heart."

A breakthrough occurred several years ago while the county jail housed a group of women for the Department of Corrections for 11 months.

"When they were here that's when I really started to dig deep into what brought them here. "Why are you here?" Day said.

She discovered that, for most inmates, the first time they got drunk or high was with their parents. Many that had sold drugs were taught to hustle by their parents.

"I had no idea I was going to feel this passionate about my job."



"So the very people that are supposed to be teaching them right from wrong and helping them choose the right way are the ones showing the wrong one," Day said. "That's where I feel our role, as far as myself and the other volunteers and instructors that come in and even jail staff, have to be able to show them kindness and some compassion and understanding. Most of the time it's a generational trauma. They don't know a different way. So now this is our way of showing them a different way."

One particularly hardened, 20-year-old female inmate had a long criminal history. Day encouraged her to write down her goals and write a letter of gratitude to a childhood mentor. The inmate agreed — if Day could locate the mentor.

"So that became my mission," she recalled.

Through online searches, Day found that long-lost mentor, who began regularly emailing and sending motivational books to the prisoner. They continued to stay in touch. When the inmate was released, she stayed at her mentor's house, a safe and sober environment.

"Had we not put the connection together, who knows what would've happened?" Day said. "A lot of it was just taking the time to say, 'Hey, I care. What are we going to do? How are we going to fix this? What do you want out of your life going forward?' instead of making her feel stuck in this little cell."

Programs with a purpose

Often, Day said, inmates are "loaded" with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) — stressful or traumatic events, including abuse, domestic violence and neglect. ACEs are strongly related to the prevalence of chronic health problems throughout a person's lifespan.

"They trust me. They know I get it."

"Most of the inmates here have addiction issues. The topic of addiction or alcoholism comes into play because they have that in their background, typically. It was a real wake-up call for me because I came from a really troubled past," Day said.

She speaks openly about her struggles growing up with an alcoholic father.

"For myself, if the cycle of abuse and alcoholism didn't stop with me, my two children would be dealing with that and their children and it would just continue more generational trauma," she said.

Now those difficult childhood experiences help Day relate to inmates.

"They trust me. They know I get it," she said.

John Szurpicki offers a faith-based, addictions treatment class at the Hubbard County Jail. He has served in that role since 2014, but also visits Beltrami and Becker County Jails.

Szurpicki, a minister, said he helps inmates "deal with a lot of wounds they've experienced in life and how to grasp some hope by applying basic principles about prayer and forgiveness."

Forgiveness is essential for releasing anger, bitterness and pain, he explained.

He works at Restore House, a chemical-dependency residential treatment facility in Bemidji, as well.

"The lion's share of people I work with — 90 percent — men or women, incarcerated or not, that struggle with addiction have been sexually abused. It's been so high, it's unbelievable," Szurpicki said.

The FearBusters curriculum is led by Mary Conrad.

"What she talks about is that fear is an underlying emotion behind any other one, so if you can get to the root of your anger and disappointment, your depression, your sadness then there's some fear behind that. If you can find the fear in the other emotions that you're experiencing, you're able to handle that emotion a little bit differently," Day explains.

Hubbard County Spotlight: Program Coordinator Christina Day

About three years ago, Jody Ziemann began teaching art classes. Each week, she introduces different art styles or themes.

"There are coloring clubs springing up all over the country because people understand the therapeutic value," Ziemann notes. "It's a form of active meditation."

Inmates can create pencil drawings, ink art bookmarks, personal affirmation cards, greeting cards or artwork to send to their children or family members. They have colored plastic bottles for the library's community art project.

"It's just such a great, creative outlet," she said. "Our thoughts and feelings can come out through our hands. Just start putting the pencil and color to paper and see what happens."

She reads from her favorite authors, like Wayne Dyer and Deepak Chopra, or motivational podcasts to spark ideas, introspection and interesting conversations.

"We're all just people, doing the best we know how to do," Ziemann said. "I've learned so much, things I've taken for granted all my life."

She praised Day's efforts to expand programming at the jail.

Inmates have a desire to learn, Day said, indicated by the number of participants. They attend classes of their own freewill.

"Once they go and get some useful knowledge, they always go back for more. Our programs that are positive, forward-thinking, motivating and all that, they don't want to lose that privilege; therefore, they are better behaved inmates. They are more respectful of each other because they're learning how to be more respectful in those classes," Day said. "The knowledge piece, that's key."

Several former prisoners have sent letters to Day telling her they'd made different choices "and a lot of it had to do with the programming and the things they learned while they were here."

"I'm very, very proud of the information provided to inmates," she said. "I'm called here to help these people to believe in themselves, to learn, to be uplifted."

Good job, Christina!

Article submitted to MJPS by Hubbard County Jail Administrator, Joseph Henry. *"I'm very, very proud of her and her efforts. Christina is an **AMAZING** programmer."*

If you would like to submit an article or share an upcoming event for the next publication, please contact:

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Be fearless in
the pursuit of
what sets your
soul on fire.