



Community Corrections Newsletter

Director John McGrath

Lt. Joanne Lake

Our Mission:

Providing services for adult offenders to enhance public safety through effective and innovative programs supporting positive choices, constructive behavior and accountability, thereby reducing repeat criminal behavior.

Our Principals:

- We believe change is possible, and it begins internally.
- We believe all people are equal and diverse individuals having intrinsic worth who deserve personal attention, support, humor, empowerment and recognition.
- We believe in creating a challenging environment that emphasizes individual growth, exploration and strength.
- We believe in being proactive participants in societal, environmental, political and individual change to promote a safer community.

Geiger GED Program Evolving With State Changes

Nicholas Robertson is one of the offenders making progress toward his GED while at Geiger. Nicholas explained he's been trying to obtain his GED since he left high school before graduating. So when he arrived at Geiger he jumped at the opportunity. "I put in a request and was able to start working on test preparation right away. First you pass the practice test, then sit for the on-line test."

Besides working on his GED, Nicholas also helps in the Geiger kitchen. "I try to keep really busy, and that helps the time pass faster. Last Tuesday I was up at 3:30 a.m. to work in the kitchen, sat for the Social Studies test at 9 a.m. and passed that, then studied for the next sectional test until 2 p.m. It was a great day. I plan to continue at SCC after I finish my GED and am released."

Geiger's GED program continues to evolve following the 2014 switch in Washington State to a more difficult exam. Last year Geiger, under the direction of private testing firm Pearson Vue, established an authorized testing center in order to continue offering GED prep and testing. Person Vue was contracted by the state to direct all GED preparation testing. Since then, Geiger has partnered with Spokane Community College as a "satellite" GED testing center. Offenders entering the Geiger GED program actually receive an SCC student number.

"If they pass the GED at Geiger, they can continue in college-level classes at SCC through targeted programs," explained Geiger education director Rebecca Butterfield. "If they pass one or more sections of the test before they are released, they are able to continue the testing process at SCC. Everybody who completes the GED is encouraged to continue toward a degree or other certification. It's a smooth transition."

Overseeing the Geiger's GED test preparation is Bob Wise of SCC, who's also taught re-entry education and Communication at Geiger. Becca proctors the on-line testing at Geiger.

Becca mentioned that changes to the test structure this summer have coincided with increased offender participation and better test-taking results. "When the state changed the GED last year, the test became a lot harder."

The major overhaul last year occurred because employers and college educators felt the GED wasn't providing the necessary core curriculum for employment or post-high school education. In Washington State, over 18,000 adults passed the GED in 2013—the last year under the old system. Under new testing standards in 2014 less than 3,000 passed the test. It's estimated over 500,000 Washington State adults have not graduated from high school.

Becca feels the latest switch in the structure of the test has improved preparation engagement, reduced anxiety and raised scoring results. "The new test that first came out last year was multiple choice. It was revised to more of an essay form where students are posed a problem and must argue one side or other using facts and analytical skills. The math section focuses on algebra and geometry and the Reading and Language Arts sections were combined into one."

Offenders seem less intimidated since the 2015 revision to the test structure, Becca believes, and it's showing in the number of people using Geiger's GED services. "We have course prep and testing Tuesday through Thursday for 3 hours a day, and the GED computers (cont. on page 4)



Nicholas Robertson needs to pass two more sectional tests to earn his GED.

Geiger Collaborating With “Spokane Riverkeeper” On River Clean-Up Project

Geiger Work Crews spend thousands of hours along our roads and highways each year removing litter and cleaning up illegal dump sites.

This year the trash collection effort has a new dimension as Geiger is working with the Center For Justice “Spokane Riverkeeper” program to facilitate removal of metal trash from the Spokane River. Geiger machine shop fabricator Brett Oldenburg constructed an aluminum cargo frame that allow Riverkeeper volunteers to remove heavy objects that otherwise wouldn’t have been transportable on inflatable river rafts. Funding in large part for the river clean-up effort is through the Washington Department of Ecology.

Geiger Work Crew supervisor Sgt. Jason Robison explains the non-profit Riverkeeper program is dedicated to protecting and restoring the health of the Spokane River watershed. “Brett Oldenburg came up with the platform deck idea to aid them in restoring and preserving the river’s ecological health and aesthetic integrity.”

As a member of the “Waterkeeper Alliance” movement, Spokane Riverkeepers’ paramount purpose is to defend the river against pollution and polluters through education, cooperation and, when necessary, litigation.

Jule Schultz, Spokane Riverkeeper Technical Lead, reports Riverkeeper volunteers have already collected nearly 2 tons of metal garbage, consisting of such items as bikes, wheels and boilers. “Lots more to go, but it’s an impressive start. We have a river rafting clean-up float scheduled for Sept. 19.”

Jule mentioned the metal debris removal program wouldn’t be possible without the platform. “It’s constructed of aluminum and affixes to the rowing frame. Brett conceived the design, did a great job fabricating it and completed it quickly.”



Jule Schultz, technical lead for Spokane Riverkeeper, shown with a load of metal debris retrieved from the Spokane riverbed last month. The platform deck was designed by Geiger shop worker Gregg Oldenburg.

Jail Alternative Programs Utilize Risk Assessment Process

Incarceration without behavioral or skill-building programming does nothing to reduce recidivism, yet by itself can increase the future risk an offender poses to the community. Geiger Corrections Center’s “jail alternative programs” offer several options that hold offenders accountable for their crimes without actually locking them down in a traditional jail cell.

Probably the most familiar “jail alternative” program is electronic home monitoring (EHM). Currently Geiger has 21 offenders enrolled in EHM. Geiger Lt. Joanne Lake explains that EHM, when used correctly, not only provides accountability, but allows offenders in many instances to maintain their employment. “If you throw them in jail to serve a sentence, they likely lose their job, have no income, and are often homeless by the time they are released. For those released with no home, no money and no job, the outlook is not optimistic—for them or for the community.”

Lt. Lake is quick to note that not all offenders are suitable for jail alternative programs. “Naturally, we don’t want to put those out on alternative programs who are a risk to commit a violent crime. Criminal justice statisticians have developed accurate prediction tools to gauge the probability an offender will commit new crimes or violent acts, and the accuracy of these tools continues to improve.”

Presently, Geiger Case Managers are using the Adult Static Risk Assessment tool (ASRA) to help guide decisions about who might be tried on less restrictive alternatives. The ASRA is provided to criminal justice agencies in Washington State through the Administrative Office of the Courts. The ASRA, as its name implies, is a static risk evaluation. It uses a number of variables that will never change; thus factors are termed ‘static.’ Using a weighting system developed from analysis of tens of thousands of actual historical samples, the ASRA makes its predictions based on age, age at first arrest, gender, adult misdemeanors, and adult and juvenile felony history.

The predictive power of the ASRA is excellent. Guessing whether a tossed coin will come up heads or tails can be predicted with about 50 percent accuracy over time. In other words, you’re wrong as often as right. The ASRA provides about 70 percent accuracy in predicting whether an offender will recidivate. ASRA categorizes an offender as either low risk, moderate or high risk. And of those found to be high risk, ASRA can additionally predict whether that recidivism will be a property crime, a drug offense or a violent act.

Geiger Case Manager Barb McGlothen explained that for those serving jail sentences, the ASRA score is used with other information in making a suitability determination for alternative programs. “We look at every sentenced offender for alternative programs. Sometimes they’re just a bit too high risk for our comfort, so if it’s possible (continued on page 4)

Geiger Work Crews Slam-Dunk 2015 Hoopfest Court Setup In Extreme Heat

Hoopfest

Hoopfest celebrated its 26th year this summer with the biggest, most successful event ever. Five Geiger Work Crews helped with court setup and tear-down, completing the downtown transformation in about 5 hours. Crews set up and dismantled 456 courts spanning 42 city blocks. Approximately 28,000 competitors, 3,000 volunteers and more than 200,000 spectators and supporters clogged downtown streets, making this year's event the biggest—and hottest.

Geiger Work Crew Supervisor, Sgt. Jason Robison, complimented the inmates on over-coming the heat and setting up a record number of courts. "While Hoopfest is a miraculous community achievement every year and great fun for all the teams and spectators, it's more than that. Hoopfest was originally conceived as a fund-raiser for Special Olympics and other non-profit basketball-related activities. That's still the primary objective 26 years later. Hoopfest has donated more than \$1.6 million to charitable organizations and constructed 29 basketball courts in the Spokane area, plus public courts in Reardan, Fairfield, Rosalia and Clarkston."

While set-up and tear-down are crucial to the event's annual success, Work Crew inmates labor for 2 months at the Hoopfest Warehouse prior to the event. "Hoopfest brings a lot of visitors to town and the local businesses love it. It's being copied throughout the country. This year ESPN brought a remote crew to Spokane and produced several of their newscasts live from Hoopfest." "The Hoopfest organizers do a super job every year, but the biggest congratulations this year go to all the volunteers who worked through sweltering 100-degree heat."

Interstate Fair

Geiger Work Crews were busy at the Fairgrounds this summer preparing for September's Interstate Fair. During the Fair, Geiger Work Crews keep the garbage bins emptied,

Dear BOBBIE
I Just wanted to Take the
Time TO Thank you for Being
Such a great person and
In My own opinion A very
fair C.O from This Program
I've had Some very important
life Changing experiance from
Pating My Boots on in the
moning to working My hardest.
Just to Be able to see
The world in a New light
Thank you.

Letter to Geiger Work Crew Officer Bobby McGowan from a Geiger offender participating on Work Crew.

the animal stalls clean and supplied with fresh hay, and the exhibit hall floors swept and polished.

I-90 Overpass & Gateway Beautification Projects

Geiger Work Crews continue helping with the City of Spokane on downtown beautification projects, garbage clean-up and graffiti removal under the freeway, along railroad overpasses, and adjacent the central core freeway off-ramps. The crews also helped with landscape maintenance, and they cleaned and prepped yet another overpass for a mural painting project directed by the Spokane Arts Commission.

Other Projects

Work Crews helped with setup and tear-down of the 6th annual "Strides for Strong Bones" 5K Fun Run/Walk, held Aug. 16 at Waterfront Park in Medical Lake. The event is organized by the Washington Osteoporosis Coalition.

LFO Settlement Includes Offender Jobs Skills, Placement Program

As part of a recent class-action lawsuit, approximately \$25,000 has been earmarked for a job training programs to be accessible to offenders in arrears on their Superior Court-ordered legal financial obligations (LFOs). The program will integrate with the LFO court docket to provide case management, training and employment placement.

Lt. Joanne Lake explained that Geiger's existing partnership with SCC will be used to provide training opportunities, while Fulcrum Institute's post-release Job Search programs will be utilized for jobs placement. "Fulcrum's group of local businesses cooperating in the post-release job placement program exceeds 325. HR managers at these companies have agreed to interview qualified offenders referred by Fulcrum for their openings."

She stressed that placement success is mostly dependent upon the offender's willingness and ability to cultivate interviewing skills, communicate their values and goals, and display a professional demeanor and work ethic.

"Those putting in the work are the ones getting hired," noted Fulcrum education director Justin Van Elsberg. "The job

market in Spokane has been improving steadily the past year, and we've had about one offender hired through the Business Roundtable (BRT) each week since May. Most of these have been non-seasonal full-time entry-level positions. A year ago, many of the openings were part-time and placement was a lot more difficult."

Lt. Lake emphasized employment is a critical factor in reducing recidivism. "Without work, there's no money, no structure and no ability to afford housing. Even with a minimum wage job, though, you have some structure to your life and some income for housing, which are two crucial elements in helping offenders stop committing new crimes."

Justin noted the types of businesses hiring recent offenders include the hospitality industry, lawn and landscaping, fabrication, machine shops and construction trades. "Some feel we might better serve offenders with in-depth training for specific jobs. That would be ideal. However, in many instances, we feel its important to get them earning quickly as possible and begin a constructive routine that includes a paycheck and housing."

MRT Treatment Community Garden: Giving Back

This is the fourth year for Geiger's community garden, and while it was hoped the early warm-up would afford a record harvest, the earlier-than-usual cool-down didn't help.

Programs Officers Ray Gawenit and Zac Crawford estimate they'll harvest 600 pounds of onions by season's end, and about 600 pounds of tomatoes,

Geiger Lt. Joanne Lake noted that keeping tabs on the harvest total is a fun way to motivate, but the purpose of the Community Garden is not competition. "It provides a means for offenders to give back to the community and is an important tool in providing a way for

those working in Moral Reconciliation Therapy to satisfy the community service requirements of the program."

Officer Gawenit felt the overall harvest could have been slightly larger, save for some foraging by local wildlife. "Every year we've added a bit more capacity to our garden. This year it was large plastic barrels used for growing for potatoes."

The produce is distributed as it's harvested to local area non-profit kitchens and food banks. "The recipients are always so grateful, and that's the gratitude we want the inmates to feel. They did a good job."



Geiger Corrections Officer Ray Gawenit (right) delivers Geiger-grown community garden vegetables to "Cup Of Cool Water Ministries," in downtown Spokane. The Christian ministry has been working with Spokane's street youth since 1995. Ray explains to Jeremy Clark, Cup Of Cool Water staffer and youth advocate, the origins of a unique striped chili pepper. This delivery was heavy with russets and white onions. Cup Of Cool Water feeds dinner 3 times weekly and will soon be serving 4 times weekly. During the summer there are typically between 15 and 40 for each meal. Cup of Cool Water Ministries also operates a retail bike shop, staffed in large part by volunteer youth.

Jail Alternatives—Continued From Page 2

and the offender is amenable, we start them on a continuum that could lead to EHM. We might first request they go out on Work Crew for a period of time. This gives the Work Crew Officer and Case Managers a chance to observe his or her behavior. Depending on history, we can ask the offender to attend for a drug/alcohol assessment. If indicated by the substance evaluation and the length of their sentence, they are referred to Geiger's Treatment program. We also might encourage them to enter Anger Management classes or our Breaking Barriers re-entry program. For those who demonstrate accountability, cooperation and progress in these lead-up programs, Work Release can become an option if the offender has a job."

Another option available to the courts is Geiger Day Work Crew. These sentenced offenders report to Geiger in the morning, undergo drug and alcohol screening, then spend the day on a Geiger Work crew before returning home. Still other offenders fulfill their court-ordered Community Service hours on a Geiger Work Crew, Lt. Lake mentioned.

"County and city criminal justice leaders for the past year have been re-examining the entire criminal justice system to ensure the most efficient use of resources while focusing on those posing the biggest community risk by providing them an avenue for positive change."

Geiger GED Program News—Continued From Page 1

are full all the time. We've been averaging about one successful GED completion every other week since the test format changed earlier this summer. Even though it's still a higher test standard, the structure change has been good for the students and the program."

Becca sees even more changes coming. "Our partnership with SCC is affording the offenders an opportunity to actually obtain a high school diploma in a new program completely

separate from the GED."

Named "High School 21+," the program is available at about a dozen of the state's 34 community colleges and more will start this fall. The process begins with the student assaying his or her existing academic skills learned through life experiences, then filling in the rest with classes.

One of the best parts, Becca mentioned, is its cost at only \$25 per scholastic quarter.

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We're on the web:
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or comments?

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