

Sheriff, Businesses Join Together On The Lands Council Inmate Project

The Lands Council is partnering with Sheriff Knezovich, business leaders and Geiger Community Corrections to launch an **inmate Work Crew and education program designed to safeguard and enhance local waterways while providing inmates real-life environmental skills training afield and in the classroom.** The Lands Council is a Spokane-area grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and revitalizing the quality of Inland Northwest forests, water and wildlife.



viability of the creeks themselves, but pours tons of silt and agricultural chemicals into the Spokane River. "To establish grass, shrubs and trees along the creeks is to protect them from flood erosion, and provide valuable wildlife habitat at the same time."

Equally important, the program fosters an awareness of work ethic, belief in the ability to succeed, and perhaps an interest to pursue ecological restoration or landscaping vocations after release. Employment is one of the biggest factors in successful offender rehabilitation and transition back to the community.

The Lands Council and Sheriff Knezovich invite all businesses and interested individuals to support the Green Sleeves Project. The program receives no direct public funding.

The joint Lands Council/Geiger native species nursery will be developed and organized on-site at Geiger by Lands Council members. Geiger Sgt. Jon Simbler will supervise its daily maintenance and operation. Sgt. Simbler also supervises the Geiger Community Garden, which is expanding to 16 raised beds this year. Last summer Geiger inmates raised and donated more than a ton of fresh vegetables to area non-profits.



Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich explains The Green Sleeves Project May 13 at a fund-raiser breakfast held by The Lands Council at The Center Place, Mirabeau Point Park.

Sheriff Knezovich, The Lands Council and Geiger staff hosted business invitees May 16 for a "Breakfast With The Sheriff" fundraiser at Mirabeau Point Park's Center Place event facility.

Sheriff Knezovich told how the fledgling Geiger/Lands Council program, named "The Green Sleeves Project," would continue the Council's commitment to improve Spokane area water quality through the effort of inmate Work Crews while providing offenders with basic landscape and nursery skills training.

Sheriff Knezovich stated his office is very good at catching law breakers. "We haven't been as effective helping offenders reshape their lives and preventing their kids from becoming offenders, too."

He explained that while Geiger Corrections Center has done a great job re-establishing treatment, education and re-entry readiness programs for offenders, a constant challenge has been funding. "Captain McGrath and Lt. Lake have put together an effective group of programs to help offenders re-establish productive lives, and they've done it with minimal funding by partnering with business and non-profit organizations. There's a huge need to expand those programs, but we can only do it with your help."

Amanda Swan of the Land Council told how the emphasis of the program is providing inmates an avenue of growth and education while establishing protective grass, shrubs and trees along sections of Latah (Hangman), Deep and Coulee Creeks. "These creeks absorb a lot of runoff, but there's not much vegetation along the shorelines. So when the creeks rise, erosion takes a huge toll. This not only degrades the ecological

Geiger Work Crews Set Busy Agenda For 2013 Community Events

Geiger Corrections Center Work Crews again this spring helped prepare the Bloomsday road course by removing litter and garbage before the race. Afterwards, Work Crews were instrumental in garbage clean-up and collection of clothing discarded by runners along the race route. Collected clothing again this year was donated to The ARC of Spokane.

While Bloomsday, Hoopfest, Spokane Indians Baseball and the Spokane Co. Fair are the marquee undertakings for Geiger inmate Work Crews, the first really big event each spring is setup and tear-down of volleyball courts for the PNO tournament. The late-March gathering brings together hundreds of girls' volleyball teams from throughout the Pacific Northwest vying for entry into the USA Volleyball national tournament.

Geiger Work Crews set up 19 courts at the Spokane Convention Center and the 13 courts at the Phase Building on the EWU campus for the event. Seven Work Crews—each consisting of 8 to 10 inmates and a Work Crew Deputy—completed the task in about 7 hours. Tear-down was similarly efficient.

Geiger Work Crews continue their I-90 corridor beautification project, involving garbage collection under the freeway, graffiti removal and landscaping.

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Spokane County Detention Services

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Geiger Lt. Joanne Lake

Post-Release Offender Parlays Fulcrum Job Search Into New Start

Our Mission:

To provide services to adult offenders which enhance public safety through effective and innovative programs which support positive choices, constructive behavior and accountability, thereby reducing repeat criminal behavior.

Our Principals:

- We believe that change is possible, and it begins internally.
- We believe that all people are equal and diverse individuals who have intrinsic worth and 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.

Kelly first used meth at age 12. "Meth is completely addictive. It keeps you from believing in yourself or even knowing who you are—and you're not even aware of it. When I was using, I was amazed how some people could keep it all together—work, family, friends, cars. As it turned out, they didn't. Every one of those people eventually unraveled and ended up broken and convicted. They all go down."

Geiger's inmate education and re-entry readiness programs, presented in partnership with the Fulcrum Institute, continue to gain momentum and yield results. One recently released inmate who's availing herself of all the resources available from Geiger and the Fulcrum Institute—and excelling—is Kelly McGirk. She completed several Fulcrum pre-release classes at Geiger, obtained employment through Fulcrum Job Search, and is now working with a mentor.

The Fulcrum mentoring program pairs post-release offenders with volunteers trained to assist, coach, motivate and support them in their efforts to find and maintain employment, remain clean and sober, and begin shaping a new life. Fulcrum mentors include judges, attorneys, reformed offenders, crime victims, relatives of offenders and others just wanting to help.

Kelly's mentor is Samantha Brown. Samantha, in addition to mentoring, recruits for the Fulcrum Business Roundtable, helps post-release offenders prepare for interviews and assists their search for employment.

Kelly, now in her early 30s, has a 4-year-old daughter who provides unlimited motivation to succeed. "I've missed a lot of time with her because of drugs and poor choices. This past year I spent Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's in jail. Every day away from her in jail broke my heart, but we're rebuilding our relationship and she's my inspiration."

Kelly's path to rehabilitation didn't come without failure. "I had been released from jail and was 8 months clean and sober when my old boyfriend was released from prison and caught up with me. Soon thereafter I was back with him and drugs."

Kelly eventually was arrested for vehicle theft. "I

test drove a car and another drug user ended up taking the car and destroying it in Moses Lake. I was convicted of vehicle theft and malicious mischief."

Kelly participated in Judge Harold Clarke's Therapeutic Drug Court, was sanctioned for treatment violations and eventually terminated from the program. "Even though I didn't make it through Drug Court, Judge Clarke was supportive and gave me motivation. I remember his words to me after I failed the program. He was sincere and inspirational, and I owe him the world."

Her stay at Geiger provided time to reflect, and the courage to examine poor decisions with an eye to the future. "The Fulcrum classes in Anger Management, Job Skills and Emotional Development were not only educational, but gave me confidence. I also graduated from Ms. Butterfield's Breaking Barriers program—including the optional Employment Essentials section. Her class is so cool I wanted to take it twice."

Kelly knows she's still at risk of relapse. "I'm currently attending outpatient treatment. I like the pace of the program as it's a bit slower than intensive outpatient. This allows more time to explore each lesson and become completely engulfed in the details of rehab. I learned to like myself; believe in myself. Just about everything I do now is aimed in some way at separating farther and farther from my past."

Mentor Samantha exclaims if you were to see Kelly today, you wouldn't suspect she's had a sorrowful life of addiction, crime and incarceration. "She looks vibrant and her eyes sparkle; she's delightful, and she's optimistic."



Kelly McGirk (left) confers with Fulcrum Institute mentor and Job Search counselor Samantha Brown.

Affable Work Crew Deputy Ron Tomsha Ready To Set Hook On Retirement



Geiger Work Crew Deputy Ron Tomsha's is retiring. Ron has led Geiger Work Crews the past 11 years. He'll turn over the keys to his International Harvester transporter, then catch up on some long-neglected relaxation and fishing. "I don't have a lot of hobbies, but we'll regroup, hopefully catch some big trout and take some time to enjoy this beautiful area."

Ron won't be spending a lot of time travelling. "There's more than enough to keep us busy right here locally. This is a special place."

Ron hasn't had much time to enjoy this most beautiful place on earth since beginning his working career over 60 years ago. He was with Kaiser Mead Works back in the heyday of aluminum smelting in Spokane, then signed up with Geiger in 2002. "Spokane and its job market have changed a lot since I first went to work at the Mead plant. Good paying jobs are harder to find, education and vocational training are more critical than ever, and the traditional trades unions are the exception."

Ron explains that's one of the reasons he came to cherish his role as Work Crew Deputy. **"These guys are facing a tough job market, and a little direction and encouragement go a long way. The Work Crew offenders are hard workers who've typically not had a lot of constructive guidance and made some poor decisions. They'll labor all day long on a sandwich and are able to maintain a positive demeanor despite the most daunting workload or working conditions."**

Ron feels supervising Work Crew inmates is not difficult. "The key is remembering they're people. It's a two-way street: if



Spokane County Detention Services Work Crew Deputy Ron Tomsha is saying goodbye.

you're professional and treat them respectfully, they'll perform Work Crew miracles. I see it over and over again, just like today. They're ahead of schedule getting these courts set up."

Ron is gratified to have supported and coached the Work Crew offenders. "I got a lot out of it, too. **The county employees I've met have been inspiring. They're courteous, witty and supportive.** I couldn't have done this job without the help of Jeremy Jordan in County Purchasing. And whenever things become a bit predictable, Lt. Joanne Lake always has new ideas how we can better serve the county, the taxpayers or the inmates. She never stops trying to find a better way to do something."

Ron vividly recalls the big snow winter of 2008-09. "Every day was an effort, and everybody we helped dig out genuinely appreciated the inmates' effort. We didn't take the chains off our work crew trucks for weeks. The inmates couldn't have been more emotionally uplifted by the elderly and disabled they helped. While it was our most difficult winter, it taught the Work Crews a lot about themselves and a lot about others. Blessings come disguised in unlikely ways."

For one of his final projects, Ron's Work Crew transported literally tons of surplus Spokane County property to Post Falls for the annual Spokane County auction. "While collecting the salable items, I had the opportunity to meet people from nearly every county department. They're some of the best people anywhere."

Congratulations to Ron, who made a difference helping inmates realize their capabilities and explore new potential. He'll have the fish cooperating in short order, just like his Work Crew.

Former Offender Explains To Inmates His Path To Stability & Business Ownership

Geiger-Fulcrum Job Skills class recently hosted guest speaker Don Russell, proprietor of Don's Mobile Wash in Spokane.



Don Russell visited Geiger Corrections Centers' Fulcrum Job Skills class and told his story of offender to business owner, and the challenges he met.

Don's Mobile Wash is a Fulcrum Business Roundtable participant, helping offenders make a new start through counseling, assistance in employment placement and job retention.

Don explained to the inmates how he, with help, was able to break away from drugs and crime. "I

became involved in the Fulcrum Business Roundtable because for me, giving back to those in need motivates and inspires. I give it away in order to keep it."

Don has a unique business washing very large things. His business is touted as Spokane's only mobile friction wash. One particular piece of equipment he uses is a huge vertical spinning "brush"—similar to what you'd see in a carwash. Only this brush is mounted on a wheeled base that can be maneuvered by hand to wash very tall and very large objects—like an entire semi-truck and trailer. In fact, he can clean an entire fleet of trucks in short order.

Don has the ability to clean heavy equipment, houses, roofs and mobile homes—and most anything else.

Geiger thanks Don for sharing his path in regaining a stable and productive life, and helping motivate, encourage and advise Job Skills inmates.

Communication Skills Requisite To Re-Entry Readiness

Robert "Bob" Wise teaches communication skills to Geiger Corrections Center inmates striving to establish stable and supportive lives upon their release.

A recurring challenge facing reforming offenders is gaining the social skills necessary to foster and maintain professional and personal relationships. Geiger Corrections Center offers several classes exploring the dynamics of interpersonal communication and relationship issues.

Offered at Geiger through partnership with Fulcrum Institute Dispute Resolution Clinic, Bob's "Effective Communication" class provides a foundational approach to life skills education. Effective Communication is more grass roots than other Fulcrum offerings at Geiger--Anger Management, Emotional Development, Relationship Management, and Parenting.

Bob has taught communications curricula at Spokane Community Colleges the past 24 years and understands varied learning styles. **"I enjoy working with the offenders, although I've adapted my teaching style to better suit their level of achievement. I see a lot of aptitude and potential."**

Bob is meticulous in his teaching style. With a quarter century of experience, he knows how people learn. Constantly asking for feedback response during his lectures, he makes certain each student understands a concept before moving on. He's patient and tactfully keeps digressions to a minimum. Inmates know he's glad they're in class through his encouraging and reassuring demeanor.



Robert "Bob" Wise, Spokane Community College Adjunct Instructor of Communications, offers afternoon classes to Geiger inmates.

Geiger's inmate population is demographically diverse, and one of Bob's courses focuses on intercultural differences and the challenges it poses to effective communication. The class explores attitudes and values and the reasons

they're not the same in all cultures. **Offenders examine culture's impact on language, and how conflict can be mediated through communication and attitude.**

Two concepts Bob emphasizes to the offenders are the impacts of unintentional non-verbal communication, and how the tone of verbal communication can completely change a message.

Offenders consistently rate his classes as among their favorite and his teaching effectiveness as excellent. Thanks for all you do, Bob! You are a valued resource to the inmates, to the community and to effective communicators!

Detention Services Realigns Under County Commissioners; Mission Unchanged

Administrative alignment of Spokane County Detention Services switched from Sheriff Knezovich's Office to the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners on June 1. This change was the result of joint budgetary and administrative analysis by the Sheriff and the County Commissioners, and allows the Sheriff to better focus his efforts on law enforcement. The commissioners offer unrivaled public fund management expertise to facilitate increased departmental efficiencies and are actively participating in the current analysis of the local criminal justice community. That analysis will result in recommendations later this year regarding the



The new Spokane County Detention Services patch was designed by Corrections Sgt. Brett Sobosky. The patch is the new branding for Spokane Co. Jail and Geiger Corrections Center. Thanks, Brett!

overall organizational structure and operations of the courts, prosecutors, public defenders, Detention Services, Pre-Trial Services and probation. The goal is to explore opportunities to enhance services, streamline for better outcomes, improve communication between departments and increase efficiencies.

The County Commissioners and the Sheriff share the common goal of increasing public safety while reducing the recidivism. Geiger Corrections Center treatment and education programs were begun under Sheriff Knezovich. The Sheriff is very tough on crime and criminals. However, he gives unwavering support to offenders making the commitment to change their lives. That will remain our objective. **I've never seen the Sheriff more passionate or gratified than when he's speaking to one of our Breaking Barriers graduating classes. We are indebted to Sheriff Knezovich for his leadership, judgment and dedication. I assure you he will continue his special interest in Geiger inmates working to change their lives and become successful parents and productive citizens.**

Sincerely, Geiger Lt. Joanne Lake