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national correctional officer's week

Jennifer Guse, MCA Vice-President

Greetings MCA Members:

In review of this FORUM's edition, I believe it is important to recognize the first full week of May 2012 was dedicated as National Correctional Officer's Week. In a research attempt, I found this excerpt on the National Criminal Justice Reference Service Website of President Ronald Reagan's proclamation (www.ncjrs.gov/correctional_officers_week/):

"Correctional officers have the difficult and often dangerous assignment of ensuring the custody, safety and well-being of the over 600,000 inmates in our Nation's prisons and jails. Their position is essential to the day-to-day operations of these institutions; without them it would be impossible to achieve the foremost institutional goals of security and control. Historically, correctional officers have been viewed as "guards," occupying isolated and misunderstood positions in prisons and jails. In recent years, the duties of these officers have become increasingly complex and demanding. They are called upon to fill, simultaneously, custodial, supervisory and counseling roles. The professionalism, dedication and courage exhibited by these officers throughout the performance of these demanding and often conflicting roles deserve our utmost respect. The important work of correctional Officers often does not receive the recognition from the public it deserves. It is appropriate that we honor the many contributions and accomplishments of these men and women who are a vital component of the field of corrections. In recognition of the contributions of correctional officers to our Nation, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 132, has designated the week beginning May 6, 1984, as "National Correctional Officers Week," and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation."

In 2011, the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicated that nationwide, 1,612,395 adults are incarcerated at the state and federal level – Minnesota is accountable for 9, 796 of adult offenders (state and federal level). Include county, local and youth programs and obviously that number increases. Presently, the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development estimate there are 5126 Correctional Officers employed throughout the State of Minnesota – 60% of this population are employed in state prisons, camps, and youth facilities.

As inmate populations increase, so do the responsibilities of Correctional Officers...in addition to providing the three roles as mentioned in President Reagan's proclamation, technology advances, training and consistent implementation of safety for the institution, inmate, and officer exist. In the Minnesota Department of Corrections 2010 Strategic Plan, increasing safety and decreasing risk continue to be core goals for all institutions in Minnesota. MCA wishes to thank those individuals at the core of our national, state, local, and private institutions.

legislative update

CAL SAARI, MCA Legislative Liaison

As you all know by now, the 2012 Session of the Minnesota Legislature came to a close when the Senate adjourned sine die late Thursday afternoon on May 10th, following a similar adjournment by the House a day earlier. There were three major pieces of legislation which had all the attention of these bodies during the last two weeks of the Session - the Vikings Stadium bill, a State Bonding bill and a 2012 Tax bill - the Legislature passed bills on all three items. Ironically, the Bonding bill and the Viking Stadium bill required majority votes from the minority DFL in order to pass, and the GOP Tax Bill, which was a second effort by the Legislature to pass something the Governor might sign. It was a slightly watered down bill which was reportedly prepared by the Republicans without input from the DFL or Governor. As a result, this bill was vetoed again by the Governor after the Session ended.

This was a most unusual Session with many insiders referring to it as a "do nothing Session." Some political insiders said it was obvious the three final bills were a last ditch effort by the Republicans to show results for the Session that could carry into the fall elections. DFL'ers, however, are poised to go into the Fall elections emphasizing the lack of leadership by the GOP and the GOP's total failure to lead and produce results during the past two years. Depending on your own political leanings, you can decide which position will prevail, but we can see this positioning will make for a very interesting political season this fall with all 201 legislators up for election. An interesting sideline - 27 legislators have announced they will not seek re-election to their positions. Reapportionment also pitted several legislators in the same district which will require legislators to compete against one another. We will definitely see a rather large number of new faces in the 2013-14 Legislature.

At the start of this last Session, the major Corrections organizations joined MCA as working partners producing some major work on Juvenile Justice issues. All our agendas emphasized the need for revision on statutes pertaining to Juvenile Records, Juvenile Adjudication time frames, Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and other collateral sanctions revisions. Although we made significant progress early in the Session throughout Committee hearings, all of these provisions were left out on a limb by the Committee leadership in the Legislature - none were enacted this year. We assisted to create a very good dialogue on said issues however, and we learned who will support our agendas in the future. We are in a good position to present these issues in the next legislative session.

We were successful in other areas in utilization of a collaborative effort to delay the "Emily's Law" proposal to reduce the age for adult certification. This bill has been before the legislature for the past four years and I believe we'll see it again next year. The right to shoot first in your own home or property was passed by the legislature but we were happy to have the Governor veto this bill as well. We will be working this summer to develop our new legislative agenda and will renew our efforts on juvenile issues and consider other proposals our membership may bring to our attention. We solicited member feedback prior to the Fall Institute in October where we will again present our 2013 Legislative Agenda for member approval.

One final comment regarding the 2012 Legislative Session is pertinent. During this past biennium there were 5,775 bills introduced in the House and/or Senate. Of that number, only 170 bills were passed by the legislature and sent to the Governor; Governor Dayton vetoed 30 of those bills. I heard this is the *least* number of bills passed by the Legislature since the late 1890's. In addition to the different political philosophies of the GOP and the DFL, there is a large decisive split within the GOP with the ultra-conservative faction of the Tea Party Conservatives and the business oriented and often more moderate conservatives on the other side. This division has only added to the political gridlock we have experienced this year. This fall's elections will be very important as we will see which party elects the majority who will lead the Legislature this next Session. I encourage you to become politically active in your home area. Make it a point to contact and meet your local legislators. When you are confident they can be helpful to our causes, support them in any way you can.

This was not a significant year for Public Safety/Corrections legislation, and in fact, the House leadership even refused to prepare a Public Safety/ Corrections Omnibus Bill this year which is most unusual. There was a Department of Corrections Omnibus bill of only a few pages which was passed into law but contained nothing of real significance. There were thirteen bills specific to our work that were passed into law. I have defined them and you can

find them on the MCA website. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments. We'll now prepare for a Legislative Update Session at the Fall Institute and work on the development of our new Legislative Agenda in the next few months. Thank you for your support and encouragement - it is truly a privilege to serve you as your Legislative Liaison.

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mca membership and committee service

Mark Groves, MCA Membership Committee Chair

Hi. I'm Mark Groves. I'm the MCA membership chair. I want you to consider becoming more involved in MCA. Not because MCA needs your time (although it does) but because we can all use the opportunity to learn, from the inside, how MCA works and to gain the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to the advancement of our profession. In these uncertain times, Professional Associations like MCA are critical. Many of the most successful people I know belong to a Professional Association connected to their career. Being a member of a Professional Association will help you with networking, seminars, and research into issues connected with your work. Belonging to a Professional Association also gives us a chance to earn Certifications that will give us professional development credit and acts as a resume booster. Finally, by being a part of a Professional Association, we can participate in events and activities where we can communicate in real time with other members who share our career path and gain feedback and support about tough issues we face.

Please drop me a note with ideas on how to improve our MCA membership. Let me know what needs to happen for folks to say to themselves: "I need to be a part of this association. How do I join?" I look forward to hearing from you (mark.groves@state.mn.us).

Mark Groves
Membership Chair
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mca committee appreciation event

MARK YOU CALENDARS!!! The 2012 MCA Committee Appreciation Event is scheduled for Thursday, July 12, 2012 at 11:30, Warden's House on the MCF-Stillwater campus. This event is for MCA committee members only. Board members will provide potluck and beverages. For more information, please feel free to contact any MCA committee chair or Board member.

windows 8 to be released in 2012

David Heath, MCA Technology Committee Chair

Just when many of us have started getting use to Windows 7, Microsoft has officially announced their next operating system will be called Windows 8, and ship in the fall of 2012. There will be four different editions of Windows 8, as compared with Windows 7 which has six editions.

A number of significant changes are programmed into the look and feel of Windows 8. It appears to be a major overhaul to the operating system. From the research I have done, some of the new features appear to be quite similar to Apple products that have been experiencing recent market success.

At Microsoft's website, they say there will be a Windows Application store built directly into Windows 8 for downloading applications. The more applications you have, the better your experience, so they claim. They will have a browse list of top applications and staff recommended applications available for download. They will even give you personalized picks based on the applications you already have. Sounds a lot like an I-Phone or I-Pad doesn't it?

There will also be Cloud Connectivity to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other web sites and you can log in from multiple PC's or a cell phone. Mail and message handling will be better than ever and when you connect to your friends and family, your applications will light up. Also, once you have perfected all your personal Windows 8 settings, they will be retained from whatever PC you use. Using multiple computers and phones will be easy via the cloud.

Other features will be a new touch screen ability where you can shut off your keyboard and mouse, if you so desire. Internet Explorer 10, part of the Windows 8 operating system, boasts less browser and more web with added speed capabilities, according to Microsoft. Apparently your entire screen will be dedicated to the website with the ability to finger swipe through a new set of navigation control tabs. Once again, this sounds a lot like an Apple I-Phone or I-PAD. Microsoft says it is new Windows for new devices.

It will be interesting to see how established web applications can support the new browser. I imagine support staff will need to test existing applications to see how they operate under Internet Explorer 10. Unfortunately, we are always at the mercy of our browser when using any web based applications. Major browser changes sometimes can cause major problems on web applications that have been running smoothly under the prior version. When this happens, it usually takes programming changes in the web application to fix the problems.

From Microsoft's standpoint, it will be business as usual, forcing the end user to adopt the change at some point. Windows XP is dropping off the Microsoft support list in April 2014. Windows 7 is currently listed in the Microsoft Lifecycle report to end support in January 2020. I wouldn't be surprised to see Windows 7 end support sooner if they quit selling it. Right now it is undetermined how long Windows 7 will be sold in the Microsoft Life Cycle report.

Microsoft will tell us change is good. Usually it does turn out good, once all the support issues are worked out. Computer companies tell us the more applications we have the better our experience will be. Ask any kid that question and they most certainly they will reply with a resounding YES! Then again, they are usually not working under project deadlines and the associated job pressures computers can sometimes create when they don't work as planned.

New operating systems drive hardware and software development and also increase computer sales and support demands. This in turn creates new job skills for all computer workers, helping the job market and economy to grow. I would imagine many innovative developers are working diligently figuring out how they can capitalize on this new operating system.

I don't expect technology growth to slow down any time soon, so we might as well get used to it. At least they left us the mouse and keyboard this time around if we still want to use it. On future releases we might just talk to our computers or wear some new, fangled human interface device making keyboards and mice obsolete. They could become extinct technology just when the nations keyboarding skills have finally peaked with the generation that has grown up using computers dominating the work force.

Oh well, who really likes to type and click anyway? Remember change is good.

There are consumer previews for Windows 8 on Microsoft's Website at: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/consumer-preview>

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probation, parole, and community supervision week

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) has announced the week of July 15-21, 2012 is National Probation, Parole, and Community Supervision week. Check out APPA's website at

www.appa-net.org/eweb/Resources/PPCWS_12/ideas.htm

regarding how you may recognize co-workers, colleagues, staff, or family members during this time.

leave nothing to chance: the “initiative” of supportive housing

Mark Groves, MCA Membership Committee Chair

Prior to coming to work for DOC, I worked for RS Eden in a variety of management roles. One of those as the support services program director at two supportive housing programs in Minneapolis. We housed and served a lot of ex-offenders. I'm genuinely attracted to the supportive housing model. The mission and purpose of supportive housing programs include a wide variety of positive possibilities. I know that supportive housing programs having site-based Section 8 certificates are an ideal model for helping ease ex-offenders in their transition from prison back to the community. Why, might you ask? Well, because the mission of supportive housing programs is to help homeless persons in the transition from homelessness and to enable them to live as independently as possible. Supportive Housing programs are relatively new. They are authorized by **Title IV, Subtitle C**, of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 and they're administered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The HUD Supportive Housing Program initiative helps homeless persons meet three overall goals:

1. Achieve residential stability.
2. Increase skill levels and/or incomes.
3. Obtain greater self-determination (i.e., more influence over decisions that affect their lives).

These three goals dovetail nicely with the idea of desistance. What, dare say, was desistance again? Oh, yeah: Desistance is the sustained abstinence from offending and the reintroduction of ex-offenders into productive society. As I think about it, desistance is a *process* – not an event – in which criminal activity *decreases*, and reintegration into the community *increases*, over time. We're not simply talking about the *absence* of criminal activity here. Instead, the defining feature of desistance is an eventual, permanent abstention from criminal behavior. As we think about what ex-offenders need to be successful citizens, these three goals look like a pretty good match.

Let's take a look at the folks who need supportive housing and are looking for help. Maybe some of these characteristics will ring a bell for you. For the most part, they are lost and desperate. They come from the streets, from treatment centers, from prisons, jails or homeless shelters — from lives of poverty and deprivation. They've tried everything to fill the holes in their lives. They bounce from one treatment center to another and/or are perpetually involved with the criminal justice system. They've been arrested and/or jailed too many times. Their rental history is a maze. They've seen countless social workers, case managers, counselors, doctors, helpers, professionals. They've been asked the same questions so many times, they often just go through the motions — the “truth” becomes blurred. Trying to remember “events and dates” in their lives is difficult at best.

Because they are “bouncing around” so much, they truly cannot “pinpoint” the exact information inquiring practitioners ask. They've been “examined” till their heads swim. As they become more and more disengaged from the larger purpose in their lives, they're easily distracted by temporary pleasures and disturbances, by what's right in front of them minute-to-minute. They are often disoriented. When they are asked what's troubling them, many will have difficulty articulating an answer. They are out of balance. They have competing priorities in their lives — their jobs, their families and relationships, their physical, emotional, and spiritual health is askew. Too often, they find solace in “the bottle” or with drugs.

On the surface, support service housing programs help its residents face and overcome their problems with alcohol and drugs; with broken relationships; with becoming a responsible, contributing citizen (staying on the ‘straight-and-narrow.’) They help them accept responsibility for integrating their hearts, their minds, their spirit, with optimistic purpose. They help them reconnect. A homeless addict requires not only help in overcoming their addiction, they need immediate housing and assistance in coming up with a long-range plan for reconstructing their lives.

They are caught in a vicious circle. They are homeless because they do not have any money. They do not have any money because they do not have a job. And, more than likely, little experience in managing what money they've made in the past. Even when they are free of drugs and alcohol, they may have trouble finding a job with a future because

they do not have adequate education or job training. Their criminal histories are an enormous barrier. (*It's easier not to hire someone with a criminal history because no one wants any trouble at their company. And besides, you absolutely cannot trust an ex-con, can you?*) They can't get to employment interviews or to the work place without transportation. And without suitable clothes, they will feel uncomfortable in interviews and on the job. Recognizing all those needs puts many supportive housing programs in the housing, job training, life-skills counseling, transportation, and clothing business.

What about their life skills? They might not know how to prepare healthy food for themselves — let alone how to shop for groceries; or household items. They may not know how to keep a home clean; or how to pay bills. They might not know how to develop healthy relationships. They've probably not had responsible, healthy relationships with male and female companions that didn't involve some sort of "hustle." Perhaps they don't have the best communication skills. They conceivably are immature in dealing with and expressing their emotions. A primary task, then, is to deliver the message of inclusion and compassion to people used to being excluded and judged.

Another challenge in working with individuals with criminal histories and in need of supportive housing is to help them not get locked into a category of permanent service recipient. They need help to move from dependence to independence: from helplessness to hope. To accomplish this, evidence-based practice promotes the notion of practitioners needing to see them not only as clients, but as potential partners connected by common purpose. The savvy practitioner will be ever alert — looking for talents that can be encouraged and developed so they can become fuller participants in the community. To be successful, expectations often include requiring one-hundred percent commitment by them to be sober. To keep ex-offenders moving forward, they must be productive. For those who have a difficult time staying "clean and sober," their active involvement in a supportive recovery program is critical to their success. They need help developing and being involved in some kind of long-range plan. They need a lot of help adopting faithful attention to developing a strong sense of becoming a positive, law-abiding community member.

Support services housing programs have various rules and expectations that might radically restrict many residents' options, especially given the "street life" many of them lived prior to moving into a supportive housing program. As I see it, rules are necessary to maintaining a positive community. Rules support the system that ultimately delivers freedom from dependence on drugs and alcohol. My experience has shown me that, by agreeing to restrict and discipline, ex-offenders get their lives back. But, the rules are not the point. The mission of changing is the point. The rules only work when they are clearly in line with an overarching purpose visible from every perspective in the person's life.

I agree that ex-offenders need a lot of help preparing and searching for a job and help finding a safe, affordable place to live. In addition to these factors, a realistic and accessible plan needs to be developed that addresses help with changing their antisocial thoughts, attitudes, behavior, and peer groups. Not to mention long-lasting help with developing: basic life skills; coping and problem-solving skills; anger management; drug and alcohol use support; and especially help with developing a pro-social support network of peers and family.

I've experienced much success utilizing Motivational Interviewing and Strength-based models of counseling. What I've found working with countless individuals is that most people have an innate tendency toward growth and change. This can be achieved by promoting their autonomy and competence plus their need to be connected in positive relationships. It is not always apparent and, in fact, getting to that juncture can be quite tricky. Quite candidly, it is probably unrealistic to expect our clients to become truly intrinsically-motivated to engage in new, healthy behavior. This is where a supportive housing environment comes into the picture. These programs can help individuals experience a sense of choice and freedom from pressure and coercion. Consequently, ex-offenders are more likely to engage with and maintain new behavior and changed attitudes. Supportive housing provides structure, autonomy, involvement, and social supports. Typically, supportive housing staff practices these principles in their approach. The supportive housing model provides the time and resources to accomplish just about anything.

Supportive housing is an excellent model for working with and helping "difficult, challenging" clients change. As we develop more systematic, evidence-based approaches, programs and models I think it wise that nothing is left to chance. Take a moment out of your busy schedule and contact a supportive housing program to arrange a visit and tour. I think you'll be impressed with what you'll see. Ciao baby.

David Heath
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appa annual training institute

The American Probation and Parole Association has announced their 37th annual training institute will take place August 12-15, 2012 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Please find registration material on the APPA website at:

www.appa-net.org/institutes/2012_Indy/attendee/featured.htm

mca 2012 awards

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2012 MCA awards – the award list includes:

Correction's Person of the Year

This award is given for outstanding contribution in the field of corrections in Minnesota by an individual in any employment. It could be clergy, judge, legislator, group home parent, etc., as well as a correctional professional.

Professional Achievement Awards

This award is given to two correctional staff persons (field services and correctional facilities) who have demonstrated achievement over a period of time, but shall not exclude professionals new to the field who have displayed outstanding achievement.

President's Award

This award is given to programs, resources or facilities working in the broad field of corrections and criminal justice, which demonstrate creativity, resourcefulness, effectiveness and innovation.

Technology Award - New Category in 2012

This award falls under the general umbrella of public safety and applies to Field Services, Facilities, and Support. It will be awarded for the best technology to Minnesota Corrections, and can be an undefined technology which helps those impacted to do their jobs better. It must be a quantifiable contribution, which can be measured.

Board of Directors' Award (chosen and voted by Board of Directors)

This award recognizes exemplary service to MCA members through participation in association activities.

For nomination information, please contact MCA Past-President Terry Fawcett at fawcettt@stlouiscountymn.gov

about FORUM

FORUM is published six times a year by the Minnesota Corrections Association, a nonprofit professional association incorporated in Minnesota. Articles submitted by our membership do not express the views of MCA or the board of directors.

Articles may be submitted to FORUM editor [Jennifer Guse](mailto:jennifer.guse@co.blue-earth.mn.us) at jennifer.guse@co.blue-earth.mn.us. Articles should not be of the nature of a commercial solicitation of products or services; rather, they should be informative on topics of interest to MCA membership at large.

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