

Lost sight, found purpose

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Rev. Douglas Jerome has been volunteering at area prisons since 1994, and was recently recognized as an outstanding corrections volunteer for the state of Oregon in May for his prison ministries.



Volunteer of the year. Rev. Douglas Jerome was among five people honored by the Oregon State Corrections Department as an outstanding volunteer.

Posted: Sunday, July 10, 2011 10:12 am | Updated: 10:38 pm, Sat Jul 9, 2011.

Lost sight, found purpose By CAITLYN LEHNER East Oregonian

Rev. Douglas Jerome, 71, has dedicated his time to inmates at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution since 1994, and he was recently recognized for his services.

Jerome, an ordained priest since 2002, was named Volunteer of the Year at EOCI in April and an outstanding corrections volunteer for the state of Oregon in May for his prison ministries.

"I never thought anything like this would happen," Jerome said. "But I feel pretty darn good about it."

His story began when he lost his sight after suffering a heart attack in 1993.

He said that at first, he grieved. Then, he became determined.

"I came to the realization that life goes on," he said. "Two weeks after my heart attack, my wife found me digging through the closet and she asked me what I was doing. I told her I was just looking for church clothes."

After that, Jerome began regularly attending church — something he hadn't done since he was a child — with his wife of 44 years, Phyllis. In 1994, Jerome found himself volunteering for communion at EOCI.

Jerome described his first day volunteering at the prison with his previous guide dog, a yellow lab named Brogan.

"I walked in there and that big steel gate slammed behind me — I swear I jumped six feet," he said,

But Jerome said he came out with a whole different outlook on the inmates.

"You can see a change in the guys after getting to know them," he said. "They are more friendly and willing to talk."

After becoming a priest nine years ago, Jerome was assigned to EOCI and became the first ordained priest strictly designated to minister at a correctional facility.

"I knew I was needed there more than at a church," he said.

He's been mentoring inmates through the Education for Ministry program for 12 years. Jerome said the program's classes consisted of theological discussions of the Bible.

EfM is a four-year program where mentors and incarcerated students meet nine months out of the year for classes.

"It takes quite a bit of commitment from the students," Jerome said. He said he enjoyed giving his time to help "the guys."

"I get a lot of satisfaction from seeing the men grow as people," he said.

Throughout Jerome's years ministering at EOIC, 21 inmates have graduated from the four-year program and seven are out on the streets and have yet to return.

Jerome also has volunteered at Two Rivers Correctional Institution and Washington State Penitentiary. During one of his visits to WSP, he reached an inmate through means other than ministering.

"Brogan and I were walking through death row, and there was an inmate with his back to the bars — to us. The prison guard told me not to bother with him, and that he'd never spoken to anyone for the five years he'd been on death row," he said. "Brogan moved forward, sticking his head between the bars. The inmate turned around and bent over, petting Brogan excitedly and talking to him."

Jerome referred to Brogan, who had passed away years ago, and his current guide dog Taz, a 10-year-old black lab, as four-legged religious volunteers. And Jerome is thankful for their service.

"As long as I have my dog in my left hand and God in my right hand, I'm not afraid," he said.

Not only have his incarcerated students experienced personal growth, but Jerome himself experienced a drastic change after losing his sight. He said he used to "smoke and cuss," and rarely attended church.

"Sometimes it takes being near death to get you off your rear end," he said. "It opened my eyes — so to speak."

http://www.eastoregonian.com/news/lost-sight-found-purpose/article_74dedbce-aab6-11e0-8a5a-001cc4c002e0.html

Rescue ends in arrest

[Democrat-Herald](#) democratherald.com | Posted: Friday, July 22, 2011 8:15 am |



Linn County Parole and Probation officers Chris Vosburg, foreground, and Mike Miller escort Joseph Frank Rey after rescuing him from the Willamette River. (Mark Ylen/Democrat-Herald)

Officers pull a parole violator from the Willamette River after he runs

A routine check of the trails between Bowman and Simpson parks turned into a water rescue by two Linn County Parole and Probation officers and the arrest of the man being rescued Thursday afternoon.

Officers Mike Miller and Chris Vosburg were walking along the blackberry bush-lined trails around 4 p.m. when they saw Joseph Frank Rey.

Rey, 33, took off running and jumped into the Willamette River. Miller and Vosburg followed on an adjacent trail until they could make it down to the water.

"He started going under," Vosburg said. "He was going under and yelling for help."

The two jumped onto large boulders in the river, and Miller grabbed Rey and pulled him to safety.

The officers walked Rey, who by then was wearing only his soaking shorts and socks, the few hundred yards to their car and transported him to the Linn County Jail.

Rey was on parole for two identity thefts, a stolen vehicle and possession of meth, said Ric Bergey, director of parole and probation.

He violated parole when he failed to report to his parole officer.

Rey was lodged at the jail on a parole violation warrant.

“In summer, a lot of our folks tend to hang out down by the river there — especially those who may not be reporting in,” Bergey said.

He said the officers saw Rey and recognized him immediately.

“They told him he was under arrest and he headed for the river,” Bergey said. “He got into trouble — it didn’t look like he was going to make it out — and the officers pulled him to safety.”

http://www.democratherald.com/news/local/article_a19a4028-b46f-11e0-bb1e-001cc4c002e0.html

Transitional house is a chance for women to make real changes

9:47 PM, Jul. 12, 2011



Resident Linda Sutton and resident manager Angela Gatlin hold a poster after giving a tour of Shelly's House on Monday in Salem. Shelly's House provides transitional housing and services for female offenders in Marion County. / Capi Lynn / Statesman Journal

Learn more about Shelly's House at www.shellyshouse.org or at www.facebook.com/shellyshouse.

Shelly's House is a place where hopes and dreams are revived, where women such as Angela Gatlin and Linda Sutton can boldly put their lives back together and make a new start.

It provides transition housing and services to female offenders who are currently under parole or probation supervision by Marion County and in recovery for drug or alcohol addiction.

"Living here, staying clean and sober, this place saved me," Gatlin said earlier this week. "This place kept me from prison."

Sutton came to Shelly's House after prison. She served 41/2 years at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

"I was pretty hopeless. I didn't have a lot of dreams left," Sutton said. "You have people who are dedicated to making a difference in our lives, and that sets an amazing example for someone trying to get on their feet. If you're willing and you're ready, this is the best possible place you can be."

Shelly's House has been operating in Salem, under the radar, for 18 years. It serves an average of 40 women per year and manages on a budget of just under \$24,000, less than what it costs the state to incarcerate one inmate for a year.

"It's a statistic we are very proud of," said Sonia Hoyt, chairwoman of the board of directors of PRISM, Inc., the nonprofit organization that sponsors Shelly's House.

I had never heard of Shelly's House until a couple of months ago, when I started receiving email about a motorcycle ride to raise money for the organization. Board member Paul Peloquin wound up riding his Yamaha FJR 1300 to 162 Dutch Bros. Coffee locations in 162 hours.

Peloquin is a former Coffee Creek corrections officer who now works for the Oregon Department of Corrections as a training and development specialist. He was recruited by Hoyt, who has been working with female offenders for 35 years, including time as superintendent of the women's prison when it was located in Salem.

Most of the folks involved with the organization, and with Shelly's House, are current or retired corrections employees. Board vice chair Laura Moreno offers a different perspective as a former offender, past resident manager of the house, and current counselor.

All are volunteers who do whatever it takes to keep the program afloat. It's the kind of nonprofit where the board chair makes a toilet paper run to Costco and sews a quilt for a raffle, the vice chair mentors the resident manager and attends weekly house meetings, and the treasurer rides nearly 5,000 miles on his motorcycle to raise \$5,722.

Their efforts don't go unnoticed, especially by the women who live at Shelly's House.

"The fact that they give us responsibility and trust us to take care of the property says a lot, and they're trying to build people," Sutton said. "The amount of people's lives they've touched, it's just amazing, and they do it on their own time. I want to be just like them when I grow up."

As noble as the board members are, the success of Shelly's House really comes down to the women who walk through the door and commit themselves to successful recovery and re-integration in the community, women such as Gatlin and Sutton.

Gatlin is the resident manager. Before that, she was a resident. If not for Shelly's House, she figures she would have gone to prison. She wonders what her life could have been like if she had known about the program after previous run-ins with the law.

"I wish I would have had this when I lost my kids," she said.

Gatlin and Sutton took me on a tour of Shelly's House earlier this week. The house and adjoining apartments have beds for as many as 16 women, plus the resident manager. There were nine residents at the time of my visit.

The house has a laundry room and exercise room in the basement, three bedrooms with eight twin beds, two bathrooms, two living room areas and a nice big kitchen with an island.

They obviously take pride in the house, which for some is more of a home than they've ever had. Chores are divvied up among residents, and weekly house meetings are held.

"They're held accountable on a peer level, not just with an authority like me coming in and give sanctions or verbal reprimands," said Belle Cottrell, deputy for Marion County Parole & Probation.

Marion County Community Corrections is the gatekeeper for the beds at Shelly's House, which plays an integral in the re-entry process, because many of these women are at risk of homelessness.

"Not having a primary residence when they are released is a huge trigger for relapse," Cottrell said. "At the end of the day, if you don't have a pillow to rest your head on, what do you do? You go to drug houses, flop houses."

Shelly's House provides structure and stability for these women. The hope is that they re-learn day-to-day life management skills, live clean and sober, find and sustain gainful employment, and ultimately shed the label of offender and achieve successful re-entry into the community.

Not everyone can live by the rules at Shelly's House. Some women leave on their own. Others are asked to leave.

Residents are required to attend three substance abuse recovery meetings a week. They are subjected to regular and random drug tests. Parole and probation officers can pop in any time and search the premises. The women have curfews, 6 p.m. for those who live in the house, 10 p.m. for those in the apartments.

They also are required to actively be seeking employment and volunteer opportunities in the community.

Sutton is involved with the volunteer organization HandsOn Mid-Willamette Valley and the Union Gospel Mission's R.O.C. Outreach Center. She has been pegged to replace Gatlin as resident manager at Shelly's House when Gatlin returns to Arizona, where her family lives.

Both women talked about their hopes and dreams as they led me on the tour. Sutton hopes to go to school this fall to get an associate's degree in office administration. Gatlin wants to find an organization like Shelly's House to get involved with once she's settled in Arizona.

"I want everyone to have the success I've had," Gatlin said.

Attached to the house are five apartments, including a two-bedroom unit for the resident manager. The others are one-bedroom units, each with two twin beds. All of the gently-used furniture was donated.

Residents pay \$300 per month to live at Shelly's House. Hoyt said Marion County normally pays the first month for a resident, but the funds haven't been there since March. No one is turned away because of their inability to pay.

The resident manager gets free rent, the closest thing to a paid employee in the whole operation.

The average stay at Shelly's House is six months, but with the job market the way it is, a stay is likely to be longer.

"People who don't have felonies can't find a job," Hoyt said.

Shelly's House is in a tree-lined historic neighborhood, not far from the Oregon State Capitol. The house is tidy, the yard well-kept. There's a small garden out back, with not a weed in sight.

Passersby would never know it's a transitional house for women offenders. There is no sign out front, or anywhere on the property.

Shelly's House is just part of the neighborhood, so much so that Sutton talked about helping a neighbor trim bushes in an alleyway and about how she makes an effort to walk around the area and visit with folks.

"I think it's important for neighbors to know we're good people," she said.

Sign Gets Rosy Welcome



Members of the Madras Garden Club, above, pose with Tucker Bauman, front right, the welding director at Deer Ridge Correctional Institution, and the sign his inmate crew made for the club's memorial rose garden at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. The garden now has nearly 100 roses planted in memory of individuals, including former garden club members Bobby Fortson and Marg Entriken.



Susan Matheny/The Pioneer

Welders used a computer numerically controlled plasma cutter to cut out the thin vines, leaves and letters of the metal sign.

Lifestyles

July 27, 2011

By [Lake County Examiner](#)

WCCF, TVCC host GED graduation for inmates

Warner Creek Correctional Facility (WCCF) and Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC) held the 2011 general equivalency diploma (GED) graduation at the prison on Monday, June 27.

WCCF staff, inmate family members and friends and members of the local community attended the ceremony which recognized these men in a great accomplishment.

Inmate Brian McFarlane opened the ceremony with music and inmate Nicholas Ishaq, a Lead Education Tutor welcomed the group and made the speaker introductions. WCCF Supt. Rick Angelozzi provided a few brief comments before leading those in attendance in the flag salute.

WCCF Chaplain Ken Ball provided an inspirational speech to the inmates on the three things it takes to make a change in your life. Ball went on to quote Dr. Seuss stating, "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who'll decide where to go."

TVCC Dir. Eddie Alves presented TVCC's onsite coordinator, Dr. Emma Cornell with a small gift in recognition for her dedication and years of service to both TVCC and WCCF. Cornell spoke to the graduates and encouraged them to continue to work their brains. She noted that just as you work your muscles by lifting weights and exercising, you need to also work your brain and continue to the never ending journey of learning.

"Tutors and students make choices every day about what to study, when to test, and how to prepare for success on the outside. Making choices helps keep your brain alive so that you can respond effectively to life's challenges. I encourage everyone to become a lifelong learner."

Other guest speakers included TVCC President, Dana Young and Al Buyok, the TVCC dean of instruction. They too recognized the students for their achievement and the tutors, the WCCF staff and the family members for their support and guidance during their education journey.

The graduates were offered an opportunity to speak to their experiences in the GED program. Several students took to the podium and the clear message that came forward time and again was the appreciation they had for their tutors and the Education staff for helping them reach their potential.

Collins-McDonald Trust Fund Recipient

Congratulations to three Collins-McDonald Trust Fund recipients for 2011/2012 who are children of WCCF staff:

Ashleyann Aikins Her father is CO David Aikins
Seth Ballaine His mother is Institution RN Cindy Goudge
Kyle Johnson His father is Lt. Ed Johnson
His mother is Physical Plant OS2 Brenda Johnson

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2011 50 CENTS LAKEVIEW, OREGON

Collins-McDonald Trust Fund recipients named for 2011/12

Ten additional Lake County students were named as recipients of the Collins-McDonald Trust Fund for the 2011/12 academic year, according to a press release. The announcement was made by Dr. Franz Haun, who represents the selection committee for the fund.

Students named include Ashleyann Aikins, Seth Ballaine, Donna Cahill, Joel Chartier, Timothy Clark, Payton Hamilton, Kyle Johnson, Markham Smith, Tessa Weems and Remy Williams.

The selected students included eight 2011 high school graduates and two college undergraduates. Seth Ballaine, Donna Cahill, Timothy Clark, Payton Hamilton, Kyle Johnson, Markham Smith and Remy Williams are graduates of Lakeview High school and Tessa Weems is a graduate of Paisley High School. The college undergraduates are Ashleyann Aikins and Joel Chartier.

The scholarship stipend was increased from \$6,600 to \$7,200 per school year, which is \$2,400 per term or \$3,600 per semester, beginning with the 2011-12 school year. The increased stipend will also be applicable to the undergraduates and graduate school students presently on the fund.

The addition of the above named students will result in a total of 46 students being eligible to attend college on the Collins-McDonald Trust Fund for the 2011-12 school year.

Community

August 3, 2011

By [Lake County Examiner](#)

DOC work crews help around the county



The Lakeview Little League Baseball facilities are much improved, thanks to grounds and building maintenance by a Department of Corrections work-crew from Warner Creek Correctional Center. Similar work-crews have undertaken several other maintenance and restoration projects around Lakeview, including the Lake County Fairgrounds, Lake District Hospital and the Lake County Senior Center.

Over the last couple years, one group of laborers has had a hand in nearly every restoration and community construction project in Lake County. That group is the Department of Corrections work crew, which has used inmates from Warner Creek Correctional Center to help assist those who implement and hire the service.

At a Lake County Commissioner's work session on Wednesday, July 20, Lisa Hammonds, the Inmate work Crew Program Coordinator for the Department of Corrections at Warner Creek Correctional Center gave a PowerPoint presentation as an overview of the program and the projects completed within Lake County.

Local groups that have hired DOC work crews for project include the Lake County Parks and Property, the Lake County Road Department, the Town of Lakeview, the Lake County Fairgrounds, Lake District Hospital and the Lake County School District #7.

"The crews really did a great job and were very easy to address and work with," said Teresa Thomas, manager of the Lake County Fairgrounds.

Part of the appeal of the work crews is the fact that is relatively inexpensive to implement.

For a 10 inmate crew, with one supervisor, the cost is \$458 for eight hours. The Doc provides transportation and food and a porta-potty on site.

Another option is implementing a host agency crew, which, according to Hammond's presentation, "is supervised by an employee of a governmental agency pursuant to an intergovernmental agreement entered into the agency and the Department of Corrections."

Host crew Partners in the area include the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Lake County Fairgrounds and the Lake District Hospital.

Under a host agency crew, each assigned inmate costs \$5.50 per day, and the host agency provides transportation and tools for the inmates.

One of the issues holding people back from obtaining a work crew is a lack of trust or fear of the inmates says Hammonds. Since Warner Creek opened in September of 2005, the facility has not had any incidents with inmates working in the community. Inmate selection for the program is based on a 22 point selection and review process, overseen by the on site inmate counseling staff. The Programs Manager, Security Manger and Superintendent of the Facility have a final review of each candidate.

Inmates who are sex offenders do not get the opportunity to participate in the program.

Pendleton Round-Up Princess

Sergeant Troy Smith's (DOC Transport) daughter, Sarah Smith, is a 2011 Round Up Princess. This is a rare honor, as it is very difficult to be considered and selected for this court. With Round Up coming right around the corner, September 14th - 17th, this is a great opportunity to recognize what a DOC employee's child is accomplishing.



Sarah Smith, 20, is the daughter of Troy and Joanne Smith of Pendleton. Her family has volunteered for Round-Up since 2008. The princess herself has been a pennant bearer, a Centennial flag bearer, worked at the Buckle Club Dinner, and worked in the ticket booth. In addition, she's volunteered for Happy Canyon for four years, has modeled in the Round-Up fashion show, and taken part in the annual work party.

Smith has 13 years riding experience. She graduated in 2008 from PHS. While in high school, she was named to the honor roll and awarded the Citizenship Cup. As a member of Rhythmic Mode she was selected freshman dancer of the year. Her other activities included choir, tennis and Link Crew leader. She is currently a student at Oregon State University where she is studying exercise sports science. She has received a Blue Mountain Community College Foundation scholarship and a Umatilla County Fair scholarship.

<http://pendletonroundup.com/topics/queen-and-court-2/>