

# WHY DOC?

#WICORRECTIONSWEEK



*We asked staff to tell us their reason for choosing a career in the Department of Corrections. Staff from every division and department shared the variety of reasons why DOC is a great place to work. From great benefits and amazing co-workers to wanting to make a difference in the lives of others, see what some of our amazing staff had to say. What is your WHY DOC?*

Full time employment - 5 hours sick leave per pay period - vacation time - work environment

## **ARLYN ADAMS**

*Office Operations Associate, Division of Adult Institutions*

I very much like helping those in need who have substance use disorders. I have always been a helpful person to those I've been exposed to. After working with offenders in the community, I was very pulled toward correctional institutional work.

## **SANDRA ALLARD**

*Social Worker/Substance Abuse Counselor, Division of Adult Institutions*

20 plus years ago I joined the DOC primarily because of the pension, paid vacation, health insurance and the ideal that I wanted to help others. Additionally, I knew the DOC offered the best opportunity to provide a solid living for my family, especially for a college drop out with a landscaping and construction background.

## **ERIC BARBER**

*Deputy Warden, Division of Adult Institutions*

With having a graduate degree in Clinical Forensic Psychology, DOC is the perfect combination of mental health with law and justice. I am able to provide a service to PIOCs to assist with mental health stabilization while being a piece of the puzzle that helps keep the community safe.

## **SARAH BLACKBURN**

*Psychological Associate, Division of Adult Institutions*

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Persons in Our Care continue to return to prison and many have not been given the chance to participate in programs that can help them to make better choices. I joined the DOC to facilitate the Thinking for a Change program and help prevent the return to prison that many in our care face. The men and women in our care have a chance to start fresh when they leave these walls. I hope that through my interaction, that they will take advantage of opportunities for growth.

## **NATHANIEL BROWN**

*Social Worker, Division of Adult Institutions*

I want to help lower the recidivism rate and working with the PIOC I can help be the change the world needs.

## **TONYA BRUNNER**

*Treatment Specialist 1, Division of Adult Institutions*

I started as an intern at TCI in 2010. Since then a passion within me grew for rehabilitation, social services, and empowering the populations we serve to making better choices. If we give them the tools and the support, we can show them that they can choose a different path for themselves and they are worth it.

## **DELLA BRUNO**

*Corrections Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions*

I chose a career in corrections because I wanted to make a difference to people who are incarcerated so they can change the cycle of being incarcerated over and over again. I have worked with PIOC to help them realize they have a unique opportunity to change their story when they go home and be the person they want to be.

## **CHERYL BRUNSWICK-SCHWARTZ**

*Guidance Counselor/Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions*

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As a teacher, and a life-long learner, I thought that this was great way to share some of what I know with people who may have not been exposed to some of the great ideas that are out there for everyone to learn and benefit from.

## **WILLIAM P. DEMPSEY**

*Teacher ABE Adult Basic Education, Division of Adult Institutions*

I chose a career in the Department of Corrections as I have always had a passion to help people. Working with the Department provides me the opportunity to help individuals make better decisions and successfully discharge from supervision with skills to remain in the community. I am reminded why I do this job when past clients call and let me know that they are doing well due to the help I provided.

## **SARA DEWITT**

*Corrections Field Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections*

I knew from a young age I wanted to teach; by the time I reached high school I knew I wanted to teach in a prison. Going to school in Madison allowed me to spend time as a student at Oakhill and see what the DOC was really about. Once it was time to apply for a job I knew I wanted to work for the DOC and make a difference in the lives of the individuals in our care. I spent 20 years teaching in DOC and realized that I really wanted to move to social work and continue to help the individuals in our care. I was lucky enough to finish my schooling, get my Social Worker Certificate and continue to work for the DOC. There are so many opportunities and experiences the department makes available. Helping impact the lives of others and the community is an extra bonus!

## **MARGARET A. DONE**

*Social Worker, Division of Adult Institutions*

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I choose to be in corrections to be a voice for the unheard. There are too many unfair and unjust ways to treat people in the DOC. I stand for social justice and the appropriate boundaries that lie within this social worker principle.

## **JANELLE EARLE**

*Social Worker Senior, Division of Adult Institutions*

I chose Corrections because I enjoy bringing hope and encouragement to a population that many people have given up on. Prison is a place where a lot of negativity resides. When I can help someone on their path to earning a GED, you have helped them reach a goal that many didn't think they could achieve. I get a chance to witness the success and joy that this accomplishment brings. I get to help that PIOC have a moment of pride and joy while incarcerated.

## **DOUG ENGELBERT**

*Guidance Counselor, Division of Adult Institutions*

Initially, I chose a career in DOC for insurance and other benefits. I then realized that I found what I was looking for in a career. I enjoy helping others reform and find joy and pride in my work. Witnessing and playing a small role in someone changing their life is very rewarding.

## **SUE FISHER**

*Social Worker, Division of Adult Institutions*

I enjoy making a difference for PIOC with my job in nursing. Helping them change into life outside the prison is rewarding. I help teach them ways to be independent as much as possible.

## **STEPHANIE FOTH**

*Nursing Assistant 3, Division of Adult Institutions*

In 1995 I chose it because I needed benefits. At that point I didn't plan to make a career out of it, I just didn't know what I wanted to do when I grew up. As the years passed I was given opportunities to explore various aspects of DOC, and found areas that were intriguing and challenging at the same time.

## **KEVIN GARCEAU**

*Deputy Warden, Division of Adult Institutions*

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I believe my occupation should have a purpose. Hopefully, those who have stumbled along the way will learn from their past and I can be a conduit to help them get back on their feet.

## **JAMES GILLES**

*Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions*

When I started for the State, I worked at Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center. My husband did not want me to work in a correctional setting. He told me that he knew that I thought I was making a difference, but that in reality, I wasn't. I thought about that and decided "baby steps" - if one guy remembered one thing, especially something encouraging, that I said to him 10 or 15 years later, then I had, in fact, made a difference. This was my thought process when I came to work with the adults. If I could do this with the kids, why not the adults?

## **JANE M. GREEN**

*Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions*

I had a young family and needed steady income and insurance.

## **TOM GROTENHUIS**

*Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions*

To help people learn how to critically think, problem solve and be productive members of society.

## **DONNA HARRIS**

*Assistant Regional Chief, Division of Community Corrections*

I got interested in the DOC pretty fast because I also wanted to be a Police Officer and I thought that this would be the best way to get my foot through the door to see how it is and how things will be dealing with people with a past and a future.

## **BRISTOL HITSMAN**

*Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions*

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I had a fairly traumatic childhood before I was adopted at the age of 7 and for many years after I struggled with some pretty bad behaviors. Despite the handful of times I got in trouble, acted out and pushed people away I was still provided support, stability and care. I had the option to let my past continue to affect me or I could work to change my patterns and use my past as motivation and experience to help others. I try to stay mindful about where I came from, providing guidance and support for others so they can get to where they want to be.

## **SARINA HOFFMAN**

*Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections*

Because of Covid-19, I became permanently laid off from my prior job of 23 years. A friend had made the transition to DAI and suggested I try it. It feels good knowing that I am helping to keep the community safe. Also, the benefits and pension are a big plus!

## **WENDY JENSEN**

*Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions*

I was going to school to become a Police Officer. I wanted to help people. When a classmate came in with the state application I was curious. Once I looked into it, I decided that this was how I was going to help.

## **PAUL C. JOHNSON**

*Captain, Division of Adult Institutions*

My grandfather always instilled in us that we should always at some point do some type of civil service and how important it is.

## **STACY M. KEHL**

*Dental Assistant, Division of Adult Institutions*

The Department of Corrections gives individuals a great opportunity to make a difference in the lives of individuals who may have not had the best upbringing. It gives us a chance to be role models when these guys/gals may not have had that chance.

## **KELSEY KEMNITZ**

*Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions*



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I chose a career in the WI Department of Corrections after a probation agent spoke in one of my general courses during my freshman year of college at UW-Whitewater. I was instantly interested in the career field and declared a Sociology/Criminal Justice major. I was not only interested in learning more about the workings of the Criminal Justice System but I also really wanted to have an impact on the lives of people who were struggling and play a part in keeping the community safe. I was able to intern during my senior year at the Elkhorn probation office and I was lucky enough to have three mentors who reinforced my desire to be a probation agent. I was hired as an agent in Milwaukee shortly after graduation and have been a Probation/Parole agent, Corrections Field Supervisor, and now an Assistant Chief. I have truly loved all of the roles I have had during my 15 year career in DCC and plan to retire here!

## **SARAH KRAHN**

*Assistant Regional Chief, Division of Community Corrections*

I had the best career possible in my field, and the privilege of providing direct patient care for 38 years before retiring from the University of Wisconsin Medical School in 2011. As primarily a child, adolescent, and family psychiatrist, I wanted to do something to benefit people who probably never had good mental health care. I found more than I could have imagined at Taycheedah, an opportunity I believe is the most important work I've ever done. Good psychiatric care for the women we treat at Taycheedah may lead to improvements for their children, their families, and their communities.

## **DOUGLAS KRAMER**

*Staff Psychiatrist, Division of Adult Institutions*

I chose to come to the DOC because I wanted more of a work-life balance. The DOC offers "better" hours with being done at 2:30. I also like the fact that we work as a team but the DDS is not my boss and I am in control of my own schedule...no sales, marketing and taking stress home with me. I will say I took a huge pay cut to come to the DOC and working 5 days a week is not as favorable as being able to work the 3-4 I was prior-but getting done to watch my kids sporting events is priceless!!!

## **MICHELE KLUSS**

*Registered Dental Hygienist, Division of Adult Institutions*

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As a computer programmer, I seek to work with the latest technologies that challenge my skills. Here at the DOC, I can work with the up-and-coming platforms like low code.

## **SCOTT KULAS**

*Low Code Programmer, Division of Management Services*

Being able to help others, and try to give others the help they need.

## **KAYLA LANGER**

*Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections*

When I was 16 years old, I had the opportunity to shadow a probation and parole agent who worked for WI DOC. The job she did, the challenges she took on, and the mission of her job intrigued me. I decided I wanted to be a probation agent. Once I was hired by DOC and started my career as an agent, I saw how varied, rewarding, and interesting the work is. I also saw how challenging the work can be. At times it can be overwhelming and you can feel lost in the large world that is DOC. However, the reward of helping make a victim whole, assisting a client to improve their life skills, and working with some of the most amazing coworkers makes the more challenging parts of this job worth it. Honestly, if I went back and talked to the 16 year old girl, I would tell her thanks for choosing that job shadow, because it truly started me on the path to a career I love.

## **LIZ LECK**

*Probation and Parole Agent Senior, Division of Community Corrections*

To make a difference.

## **TOM LINDH**

*Financial Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions*

A commitment to being honorable and fair in every aspect of your life. A high level of moral integrity. A desire to lead by example, using interpersonal skills to maintain order and safety.

## **URSZULA MARSCHKE**

*Employment Support Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions*



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I started my nursing career as a LPN at CCI and DCI. I completed my BSN while working at DCI. I am now a RN at OCI. After graduation last year, I worked in a hospital setting for six months. I did not enjoy my new nursing career in the hospital. I am very excited to be working in corrections again. I love the challenge of helping others who can't/don't help themselves. I want to make a difference in someone's future healthcare wellbeing.

## **MICHELLE MATTS**

*Registered Nurse, Division of Adult Institutions*

I believe that my years of experience in local emergency departments makes me a good fit for helping care for this vulnerable population.

## **JEFF MILLER**

*Registered Nurse, Division of Adult Institutions*

I choose this path to help make a difference in the lives of victims and offenders. I wanted to help people make choices where others are not hurt by those actions. The ultimate goal to reduce the number victims in our communities, families would be healthier and the cycle of incarceration would be reduced.

## **WENDY MONFILS**

*Office of Management and Budget Director, Division of Adult Institutions*

I chose a career in the Department of Corrections because I enjoyed criminology and restorative justice courses during my college years. I am a believer in second chances and I enjoy helping individuals fit back into their communities.

## **RYAN MURRAY**

*Office Operations Associate, Division of Community Corrections*

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Everyone deserves a chance to have an education. Many in the prison system were either just shuffled through school or dropped out prior to earning a diploma. Research has shown that recidivism drops by about 30% if a person gets a GED/HSED while incarcerated. When each person releases they will live next to someone's grandparent, parent, or child. If each can get a job that supports himself and a family there is less of a chance he would be likely to harm someone else and end up back inside the walls of a prison. We have to rehabilitate, not just incarcerate.

## **DIANE NOBLE**

*Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions*

Why DOC? I chose DOC because first and foremost the great benefits the DOC offers i.e. Health, Vacation and the Ability for early retirement. The opportunity to be able to move or work in many parts of the state. DOC also gives the chance for professional advancement opportunity in many areas.

## **JAMES NYABWARI**

*Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions*

I have great managers. Our team is very supportive with resources that help us do our jobs very well but to me the atmosphere is what makes me happy. I'm very pleased with so many managers within the BTM department and I hope to stay here for a very long time.

## **JIMMY OKECH**

*IT Desktop Support, Division of Management Services*

In a previous career I would watch individuals go to jail, get out and return. It was a cycle that I felt could be prevented and wanted a career where I could be a part of that change.

## **TRACI OLSON**

*Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections*

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I chose Probation and Parole because it is a challenge. I have always been interested in police work and the law and once I was working in the P&P front office I saw what the job entailed and was excited to apply for agent.

## **DARLENE PACKARD**

*Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections*

A friend of mine was a CO at RCI. She found out I was leaving my 2nd - Grade teaching position at a local Catholic Elementary School. She said, "Why not apply with the State, to teach at the prison(s)?" It was an eye-opening conversation. I'd never heard of the possibility. Shortly thereafter, I submitted applications. Then -- a couple of rounds of interviewing, and "VOILA," I began my career @ RYOFC.

## **SHELLEY R. PRUDHOM**

*Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions*

I chose a career with the Department of Corrections because I want to make a positive impact for those who are seeking change and a new beginning. I feel as though the Department has given me the skills and resources I need to be effective at guiding my clients towards being positive members of our community.

## **DAVID SCHNEIDER**

*Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections*

At the time I had started with the DOC, the area that I was living in, there weren't many jobs around that would support myself and my kids at the time. I had an extensive background in food service, so I applied.

## **TAMI SCHULT**

*Food Service Manager, Division of Adult Institutions*

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I wanted to help people learn and give them hope and help them find positive goals for their lives following release from prison.

## **MARGARET I. SCHYVINCH**

*Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions*

I wanted to challenge myself.

## **SETH SHERMAN**

*Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions*

I was 23 years old when I started. I wanted a job where I wouldn't be stuck behind a desk all the time, stability for a career, benefits and most importantly, a pension.

## **LINDA STEINER**

*Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections*

My father worked for the Department of Corrections for 26+ years and retired as a Sergeant. I also had two older brothers who worked for the Department as an Officer and Captain. They had shared many stories with me about their careers which inspired me to apply. I now have over 23 years of dedicated service to the Department of Corrections. In this time I have worked with great staff, participated in countless growing opportunities and was able to affect positive change to countless persons in our care. I wouldn't trade this for anything!

## **CHRIS STEVENS**

*Deputy Warden, Division of Adult Institutions*

I have the opportunity to help people turn their lives around. I am able to put my educational and life skills and experience to good use. I'm also able to work in an environment that can be challenging and yet rewarding at the same time! I love my career choice.

## **DENISE TAYLOR-BACON**

*Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions*

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I have never had as much support as I have had through CVCTF! This field is hard mentally and emotionally so it was important to me to have a sense of belonging doing a job I love.

## **MARISA TAINTER, SAC**

*Treatment Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions*

For me, the main appeal to the DOC is the endless amount of opportunities for advancement. There are numerous routes one can take in their career in Corrections, it just depends on how much someone wants to challenge themselves. If you ever feel “stuck”, get involved with a committee that you’re passionate about. Become an FTO or member of ERU. Promote. Sign a different job. Take advantage of additional training. Try out another institution or a different division of the DOC. Don’t ever stop learning. Don’t ever stop listening.

## **JENNIFER TROCHINSKI**

*Corrections Sentencing Associate, Division of Adult Institutions*

This is the only Law Enforcement agency that genuinely cares and respects the wellbeing of their staff. There were two devastating events in my life last year, when I was struck by Covid and then the loss of my Mother. During those tragic moments in my life, Captain Koenig, Captain Amin and our Security Director Brad Everson reached out to me and expressed their love, caring compassion and assured me that they are available to speak with me anytime I needed anything. DOC and MSDF also gave me an opportunity to promote within when other agencies won't even give me a chance to prove myself. Thank you very much DOC and MSDF. I've worked with other agencies before DOC, and I can truly say that this agency gives everyone a fair chance to prove themselves to be the best in what they do without partiality and discrimination. This gives me the motivation and confidence to come to work every day and make a difference in other people's lives and to improve our society. I am very proud to be part of DOC most specially with MSDF.

## **GILBERT VILLAJUAN**

*Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions*

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I chose the DOC because I wanted to be able to make a difference with individuals who have committed actions that were of poor judgement. I want to help not only rehabilitate but also set them up for success when they enter back into the general population. I also heard about the endless opportunities available and I wanted to be a part of something that could help shape not only my career in the DOC, but also help bring a consistent balance into my life.

## **REECE VOLP**

*Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions*

I liked that I could hold someone accountable all the while providing opportunities for them to make positive changes. Really enjoy seeing people succeed.

## **SARA WASSERBERG**

*Corrections Field Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections*