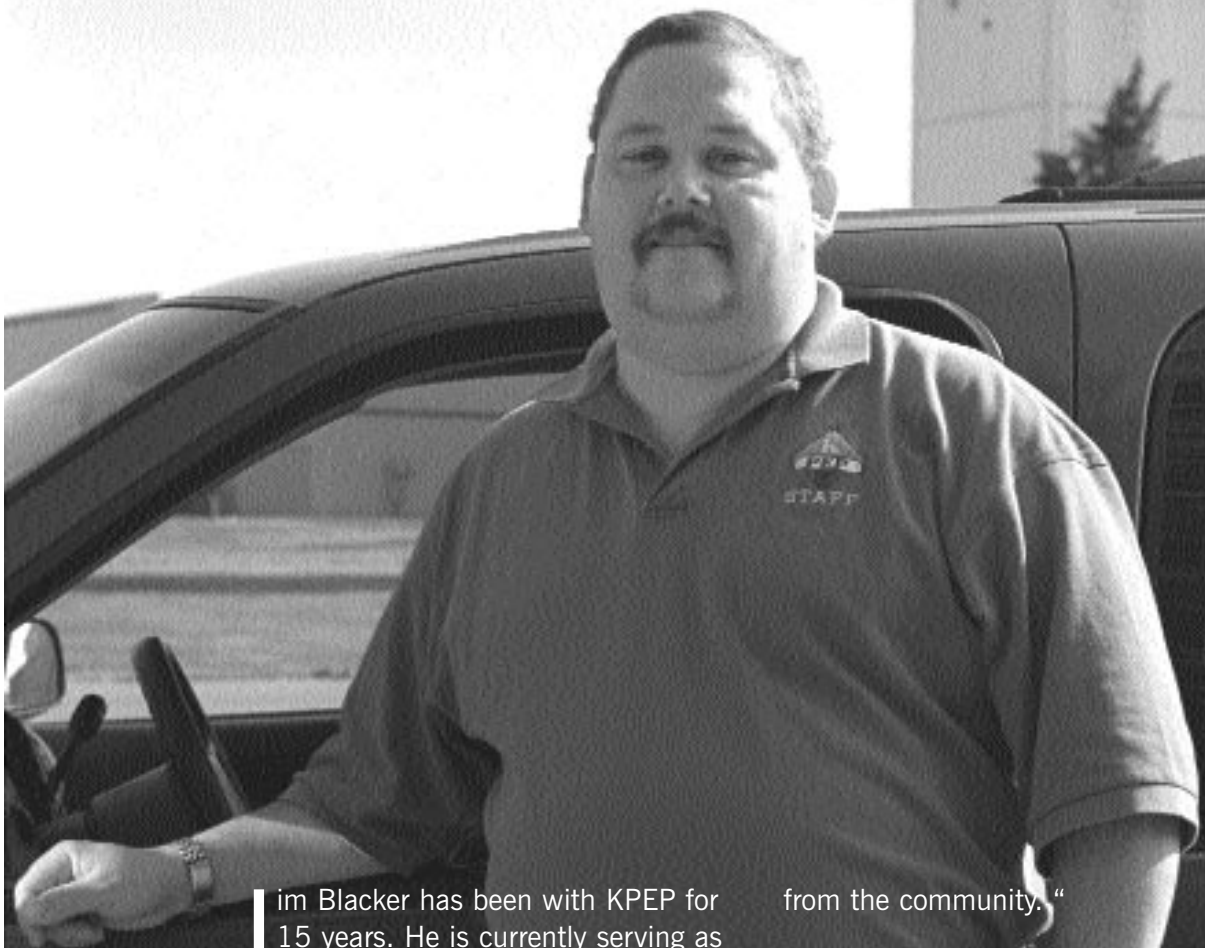


inside&out

Berrien County Community Service Program Shines



Jim Blacker has been with KPEP for 15 years. He is currently serving as KPEP Community Service Coordinator in the Berrien County facility.

“For any non-profit or charitable organization or senior citizen who is financially or physically unable to work themselves, we’ll go out and do the work for them,” says Jim. “The benefit for the guys is that it teaches them to be involved in the community, to be active in the community. It also teaches them that you can’t just take

from the community.”

KPEP community service offers indirect benefits, too. As Blacker points out, “Neighborhoods do not always welcome probation programs with open arms. When people hear that you are going to put a residential probation center in their neighborhood, they tend to get a little nervous. But as we go through the neighborhood and do community service, people find that KPEP residents are actually helping the community.” (See next page)

promoted:



Laura Stover
Group Facilitator/Case Manager

newly hired:

Chasity Adams
Tammy Bicknell
Crystal Cooper
Michael Dziedzic
David Homminga
Keith McGahan
Charles Spencer
Laura Stover

Resident Coordinator
File Clerk
Resident Coordinator
Resident Coordinator
Resident Coordinator
Group Facilitator
Group Facilitator
Resident Coordinator

recent events:

• Suicide Awareness was the topic for a training day held at Gryphon Place for KPEP staff, with 10 people from all four facilities in attendance. Mike Cole, Director of Psychological Services, tells us that the purpose of the session was to teach staff members to assess whether a resident is truly suicidal, using some specific criteria for assessment. He believes that the training was

valuable to the staff because they now feel confident that they know what questions to ask the residents, how to ask them and what to do if an individual is identified as suicidal.

In July, Mike will be holding an American Correctional Association Ethics course for KPEP staff and probation officers.

KPEP provides

assistance to local non-profit agencies, senior citizens and handicapped persons.

In Kalamazoo County:

Jason McCune at 383-0444
or Cynthia Tall at 383-1386

In Berrien County:

Jimmie Blacker at 926-1284

In Calhoun County:

Carl Crawford at 963-2085

(Cover story cont.)

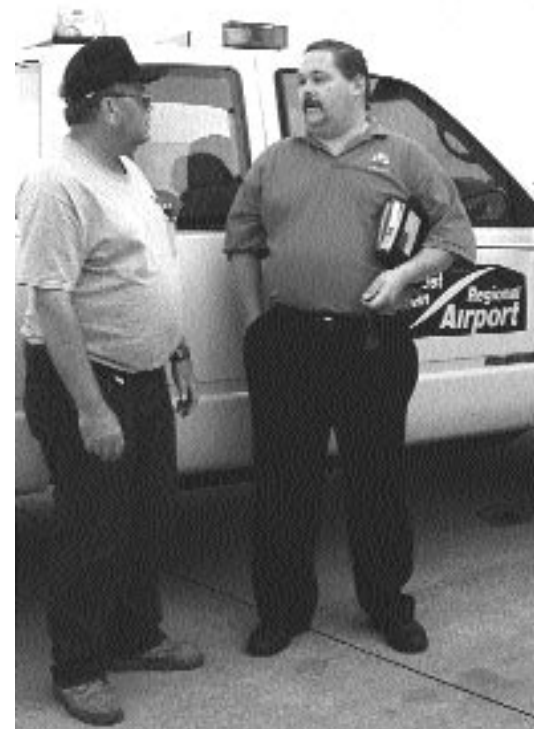
Berrien County KPEP Community service projects include snow removal and lawn mowing at the Berrien County Airport, maintenance and cleaning at the YMCA, construction work for Habitat for Humanity as well as projects for Ebenezer Baptist Church, Red Arrow General Baptist Church, and the Food Bank.

“At the airport, they do all kinds of different things, year-round,” says Blacker. “During the winter months the guys shovel the sidewalks and clean the equipment that they use for spreading salt. In the summer months, they do a lot of mowing. I mean, they get out there and they

work and it’s manual labor. Some of these guys have been involved with drugs and alcohol. They may do twenty or thirty days in the county jail and they still have some toxins in their system. So for them to get out and work some of that off, to sweat and really work it off is also a benefit for them.”

KPEP Community Service is mandatory for all residents. For successful completion of their program, each resident must complete 60 hours of service. As Jimmie Blacker says, “If we’re in the community, we want to help the community..”

photo at right: Blacker talks shop with Airport Maintenance Supervisor John Chaddick.



Megan McGuire looked me straight in the eye.

“I’m in here for drug charges, I’m in here for probation violations.”

She is young and attractive and there is nothing but confidence and conviction in her voice. By the time you read this, Megan will have been released from KPEP. She’ll be “outside”.

“I was in rehabilitation for fifteen days and then I was sent here so for four months now, I’ve been in a really structured environment. I am a little afraid, but I’m excited to get out, that’s for sure.” Not so long ago, Megan was a 4.0 high school student, with dual enrollment at KVCC, graduating in the top 30 of her class. She was a basketball star, good enough that she caught the attention of the University of Michigan at a basketball camp. Drugs and alcohol changed all that.

“It starts like that. I started only smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol. Four years later, I’m doing cocaine and selling it. It’s a really progressive disease. That’s what the kids that start with alcohol and marijuana don’t understand. I didn’t understand it either.”

The KPEP program has been a literal lifesaver for Megan. She is frank and honest about her approach to life before and after KPEP: “You’re not going to change any of the rules here. You break a rule, you get a violation. That’s how it is. And I see a lot of the



girls sit here and cry and whine and I say, look, suck it up and be done with it because there is nothing you can do. You’re here. We don’t like it here, we’ve established that, but you can’t do anything about it, so you might as well make the best of it. The staff members will ask, ‘ Do you think you don’t have to follow the rules? Do you think the rules just don’t apply to you?’ You’ve got to realize, you’re not the special one. And that’s the big thing I had to get over when I came here.”

“If you come in here and you want to do something with your life, this program will help you.”

Having seen jail as an alternative, Megan is an enthusiastic supporter of the program. “If you come in here and you have a positive attitude and you want to do something with your life, this program will help you. But it’s whatever you put into it. If you put your whole self into it, you’re going to

get your whole self out and, be a better person. It’s so much better than jail because it teaches people how to stop and think. “

This is obviously a topic that Megan feels strongly about. She’s all business now. “We have a Successful Thinking Class that we have to complete and we take nutrition classes and parenting classes here. We also have substance abuses classes that we have to complete before we leave. When you come out of here, you come out with a job, you come out with your GED, you come out with skills to live with. You learn how to cook and clean. We even have a computer skills class. We have Employability Skills Classes where you learn to get a job, you learn how to write resumes, how to write cover letters and follow-up letters. You leave with a lot of skills.”

Megan is working full-time at Sweetwater Donuts. Her plan is to go back to school and become a

Substance Abuse counselor, something she feels she’ll be good at. She’ll also be attending AA and NA meetings regularly because, as she puts it “ without being clean and sober, I really don’t have anything; I’ll fall back right back into where I was four or five months ago.and I don’t want to do that.”

9 month program results

Average Daily Count	155.7
Referrals	807
Admissions	671
Successful Graduates	402
Jobs Obtained	309
GED Tests	206

GED Certificates	17
Substance Abuse Completions	
Residents	278
Weekend Intervention	77
Community Service Work Hours	28,825
Resident Income	\$927,118
Rent Paid	\$340,432
Court Cost Payments	\$58,078



Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program, Inc.
519 South Park St. • Kalamazoo, MI 49007

K-PEP is a private, non-profit probation residential center for adult offenders. Our mission is to provide a cost-effective and community-based productive alternative to incarceration. Our program provides the opportunity and structure for men and women to take personal responsibility in all areas of their lives.

Lawn and yard care year-round.

- **spring and fall clean-up**
- **mowing**
- **snow removal**
- **light landscaping**

K-PEP Lawn Service Free Estimates Call Shawn 383-0444