

inside & out

Doing the Right Thing

Charlotte native Mike Miller entered KPEP at 18, way back in 1989. Today Mike is leading a successful life as a husband, father and GM Facilities Manager. He reflects on his time at KPEP and what he's learned since then.

"There were people in KPEP that wanted to do the right thing and get their lives straightened out and there were some that didn't really care. They were either just barely doing enough to keep from going back to jail, or they were looking to cause trouble at every turn. So it was difficult trying to walk the right path and that's where people like Andy (Jerue) and other staff really helped me along by showing me how to block out the negativity around me. It was a pretty bad time in my life, but there were people along the way that were a big help to me and I enjoy going back to KPEP to say hi.

"I wasn't given a very good start at life. I didn't have many points of reference on how to become a good human being and Andy was one of the people who were instrumental in helping me point my life in the right direction.

"I saw guys at KPEP at their very worst and it really opened my eyes and made me think, 'Do I want to be in that position?'. They were throwing their lives away, just destroying themselves. It had a pretty profound impact to see somebody that was 26 or 27 years old, still living with Mom and Dad, selling drugs. I didn't want any part of that.



"After I left KPEP, I got a job with a concrete pipe manufacturer. I started out at the worst job in the plant, but I wanted to learn as much as I could about every thing and I became a ferocious reader. I would read every book I could get my hands on about everything, and I was willing to say 'What I don't know, I'm going to teach myself.' I ended up becoming a very valuable employee and they put more and more responsibility on me. Later, I went to work at a factory that offered a little bit more money, better benefits and insurance and there I did the same thing.

"I was presented with an opportunity to get into management. I jumped into it head first and learned everything that I could. I've been in management for thirteen years, working for some of the biggest companies in the world. Today I'm the Facilities and Maintenance Manager at the General Motors Cadillac Plant in Lansing.

"I think many times people give up on kids that were like me. A lot of the support that I got from friends, family and eventually my wife, was because they saw that I was really trying to turn my life around and I wasn't going to become a bum.

"I spent three and a half months in jail before I went to KPEP and there were more crimes plotted in jail than anything I ever heard on the outside. Jail gives criminals a lot of time to sit and plan things whereas at KPEP, there is a chance to get away from all of that for those who want to take it.

"In my experience, most of the obstacles I had in my way of becoming a responsible adult were in my own mind. They were really nothing, they were ghosts. Realizing that fact is about 90% of overcoming those obstacles. There is so much opportunity in this world and in this country to be able to do the right thing and it's so much more rewarding than the criminal side of life."

INSIDE:

- *Program Update*
- *Staff promotions*
- *Corrected Board list*

Director's Program Update

Personal Responsibility. This has been a key concept over the years at KPEP. We talk about it in our Mission Statement. "We offer the opportunity and structure for men and women to take personal responsibility in their lives." We try to instill this value in our residents and expect the same from our staff.

Lately, I have been feeling more and more like we are going against the grain of our culture. We don't really want to take responsibility for ourselves, our behavior, our families. It is someone else's fault. Someone else needs to be responsible for me.

The "me first" attitude and the entitlement mentality have had a devastating effect on our society. Keith McGahan, a long-time drug enforcement officer and current KPEP Substance Abuse Therapist, talks about the pill-popping generation. He talks about how young people believe they can do anything without consequence. "If something bad happens or I get a disease, there will be a pill to cure me." I sometimes wonder if the same phenomenon doesn't hold true with our senior population. "Give me a pill for whatever ails me—as long as they are free, of course." I read an article in the *Detroit News* a couple of months ago about the extremely generous retiree health benefits for the autoworkers. They interviewed the wife of one of the retirees. She was on 19 different prescriptions! Mostly, I believe, because they didn't cost her much. As she was going down the list she was identifying what each medication was for. The third one on the list was for her memory. By the time she got to the eighth medication, she couldn't remember what it was for. A funny story if it wasn't so costly to all of us.

OK so this is all well and good, but what is KPEP doing as an organization to further this notion of personal responsibility? We have high expectations for all of our employees. We have high standards in terms of professionalism, appearance and conduct. We expect people to be good representatives of the organization at all times. Annual merit pay increases are just that—based on performance—not simply taking up space. Each employee has to achieve a standard as well as accomplish personal goals and objectives in order to move ahead on the scale. We have structured our benefit package to allow for choice and flexibility as well as promote responsibility. In 1988, I first offered a 403(b) defined benefit retirement plan. Up until that time there was nothing in place. I chose this option over a pension system to allow the employees to take control of their own future.

Several years ago, we switched our benefit structure from one in which we paid a percentage of the cost to one in which we offered all employees a specified amount of benefit dollars each year. From that pot of money they can choose to buy life, health, dental and disability insurance. In addition they could use those dollars for dependant care or medical costs. Our employees are all well-informed under this plan of the true cost of health insurance. They also learned to be discriminating shoppers. I don't know many people who buy the no-deductible automobile insurance when the premiums are coming out of their pocket. Many of us want the "cadillac" health coverage, however, when someone else is paying the bill.

Two years ago a new product was introduced in the health insurance market. Health savings accounts (HSAs) were a part of the Medicare plan passed by the Congress in 2004. These plans combine a high deductible health plan with a tax-free health savings account. Since the KPEP employees were educated in this area, we had a higher than average percentage of people take this plan in the first year. We now have 50% of our covered employees choosing the HSA plan. I believe these plans are going to play a significant role in containing health care costs into the future. The last 10 years have seen an average of 10-15% per year increases in health insurance costs. As those of us in Michigan know all too well, these costs are unsustainable for any period of time and have led to significant job losses in the last few years. At KPEP, we are already seeing the benefit. For the coming year we actually saw our premiums for the HSA plan reduced by 5.2%. This is unheard of, but shows what can be done with work, education, choice and responsibility.



On the Move

October 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006

Promoted:



Sharon Spencer
Full-Time Resident Coordinator
Berrien County Facility



Shawanna Evans
Full-Time Resident Coordinator
Muskegon County Facility



Matthew Koon
Full-Time Resident Coordinator
Kalamazoo Park Street Facility



Jerry Lambert
Case Manager
Berrien County Facility



Christina Hart
Full-Time Resident Coordinator
Kalamazoo Olmstead Rd. Facility



Krista Cohoon
Full-Time Resident Coordinator
Kalamazoo Park Street Facility



Christopher Brightwell
Full-Time Resident Coordinator
Kalamazoo Park Street Facility

Hired:

Part-Time Resident Coordinators:

April Church	Kalamazoo Olmstead Rd.
Louis Donley	Muskegon County Facility
Reginald Ferguson	Kalamazoo Park Street
Bryan Johnson	Berrien County Facility
Scott Underwood	Kalamazoo Park Street
Courtney Vaughn	Berrien County Facility
Linnae Witkowski	Kalamazoo Olmstead Rd.

Part-Time Secretary:

Michele Nagy	Kalamazoo Park Street
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Corrections

Our recently published 2006 Annual Report contained errors in our Board list. The accurate listing of Board members and their affiliations appears below.

President - Judge Vincent C. Westra

Vice President - Jon Haskell

Secretary - Rollie Preuss

Treasurer / Chair, Finance Committee - Karla Campbell

Immediate Past President - Sandra Jo Lager

Chair, Personnel Committee - Mike Anderson

Chair, Olmstead Facility Committee - Mary Jane Doerr

Chair, Berrien Facility Committee - Judge Paul Maloney

Chair, Park Street Facility Committee - Tom Ouding

Chair, Calhoun Facility Committee - Dave Riley

Timothy Bourgeois

Mary Delehanty

Michael Dombos

Judge Samuel Durham

Jeff Fink

Mary Gosnell

Donna Innes

Bruce Jennings

Michelle Hill

Judge J. Richardson Johnson

Jim Penzotti

Brian Uridge

Marshall Weeks

8th District Court, Kalamazoo County

8th District Court Probation Supervisor

Retired, Pharmacia

Connable Associates Inc.

Kalamazoo Public Schools

Kalamazoo County Sheriff

St. Joseph Parish

Berrien County Trial Court

Leet Electric

Probation Supervisor, MDOC, Calhoun

Kalamazoo Township Police Chief

Attorney-at-Law

Vine Neighborhood Association

10th District Court, Calhoun County

Kalamazoo Prosecuting Attorney

Lakewood Neighborhood Association

Attorney-at-Law

Probation Supervisor, MDOC, Kalamazoo

10th District Court Administrator

Kalamazoo County Circuit Court

Fifth Third Bank

Executive Lieutenant, Kalamazoo Public Safety

Deputy Chief, Calhoun County Sheriff's Department

Need a hand? Just ask!

KPEP provides volunteer assistance to local nonprofits, senior citizens and handicapped persons. We can provide volunteers to perform a variety of community service tasks—whatever the need, just ask us.

In Kalamazoo County call: Matthew Koon at 269-383-0444 or Cynthia Tall at 269-383-1386

In Berrien County call: Clotte White-Johnson at 269-926-1284

In Calhoun County call: Ashley Wood at 269-963-2085

In Muskegon County call: Lisa Wright at 231-726-2733



Results

1st quarter:

October 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006

Average Daily Count	255.8
Admissions	547
Successful Graduates	340
Jobs Obtained	243
GED Tests	78
GED Certificates	12
Substance Abuse Graduates	
Residents	305
Weekend Intervention	17
Resident Income	\$394,887.54
Rent Paid	\$142,546.45
Court Costs/Child Support Paid	\$109,568.85

Lawn & Yard Care

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

KPEP Lawn Service

Free Estimates - Call Jason McCune at 269-383-0444



ACA Accredited



KPEP operates residential and non-residential programs for adult offenders as a community-based alternative to incarceration. We offer the opportunity and structure for men and women to take personal responsibility in their lives.

KPEP

519 South Park St. • Kalamazoo, MI 49007

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