



CHARIS OF MINNESOTA INCORPORATED

The Olive Branch

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Charis President:
Cliff Johnson**

Charis board has had a productive year.

I am happy to report that our board has had a very productive year. One reason is that, beginning in July 2012, we have followed a consent-agenda format for board meetings. Committee and institution reports and other background material have been emailed to board members one week prior to meetings, so directors can study and discuss issues (via email and phone) prior to meetings.

By approving consent-agenda items swiftly at the start of the meetings, we've been able to devote much more time looking to the future and discussing how we can improve the Charis method.

Each month we take a look at one or more "spotlight" topics. This might be an outside speaker or a report or

discussion on some prison -ministry related issue. We devoted five separate meetings to excellent in-depth reports on our five Charis prisons (Rochester, Sandstone, Waseca, Shakopee and Faribault).

We were sad to say goodbye in June to three outstanding board members whose terms expired: Maria Thoelke, Barb Dickie and Wyn Ray.

In July, we welcomed three new board members: Kristin Ploetz, Molly Sliminski and David Hibbison.

I've been on many boards and committees in my life and the Charis board has been, for me, the most spiritually enriching and productive. All our board members share a strong sense of our mission: to present God's reconciling love in Jesus Christ to inmates in Minnesota correctional institutions. The balance of this summer will be a busy

time as four teams are formed and meet in preparation for October Charis weekends. Please pray daily for the Charis teams and weekends at Rochester, Waseca, Shakopee and Faribault.

One additional thought: Have your renewal group prepare a personalized single-sheet palanca note, signed by each of you (first name only), that can be read by the Spiritual Director giving talk #4. The men and women attending weekends are truly blessed by these expressions of prayer, grace and love.

Our Mission:

**Presenting
God's
reconciling love
in Jesus Christ
to inmates in
correctional
institutions in
Minnesota**

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Meet the New Board Members



Kristin Ploetz

*Thanks
for
saying yes!*



Rev. David Hibbison



Molly Slominski

Kristin Ploetz

Background: Born in Minnesota, grew up in Tucson, Arizona and returned to Minnesota during high school years; graduate of St. Cloud State University with MBA. I have worked in the technology industry for 20 years in many capacities. I've recently started a new job in downtown Minneapolis as a client engagement manager for an energetic and growing firm. I've been married 15 years to Alan and live in Maple Grove. We attend Plymouth Covenant Church and have served on six Charis teams together, all at Faribault.

Gifts for the Board: I have served on six Charis teams in multiple roles and enjoyed all of them. Most recently I have been truly blessed being on the Palanca team and in lay leadership. The experiences I have had in my professional life have helped me develop the gifts of organization and administration/leadership. God has blessed me with a heart for offenders and helping them grow closer to God.

David Hibbison

Background: Born in a slanted one room school house on the plains of South Dakota! Ok, not in a one room... but still in South Dakota. I'm the 5th of 7 kids, made Minnesota home for the majority of

my life. I have four wonderful children (three adult, and one (9) trying to make it there). My wife Bobbi and I just celebrated our 11th anniversary. We make our home in Clearwater. I have an associate's degree in business (or some may say "in giving the business!") and a bachelor's degree in Christian ministry and theology. But my main experience in getting to know Jesus was at the University of Sandstone, also known as Sandstone FCI (Federal Correctional Facility). I presently serve as the pastor and executive director of New Life in Christ Ministry, a discipleship/re-entry ministry to those coming out of incarceration, treatment, and other sin bondages. I also pastor the Change of Heart Church in Monticello MN.

Gifts for the Board: As soon as I can, I'll be bringing frankincense, myrrh, and gold, but for now I hope to bring pastoral guidance as well as a unique perspective as a former inmate. After serving on four Charis teams on the inside, and then on teams from the outside for the last five years in both Faribault and my alma mater, FCI Sandstone, I hope those experiences guide the board as well. I try to see everything from God's perspective, and focus on the future that is filled with hope for the men/women inside. I strive to be an encourager to each board member as they exercise the gifts given them

by the Holy Spirit. Lastly, I bring a sense of humor (the 10th fruit of the Spirit) to keep everyone filled with joy, and to keep an eye on Dan Hartinger!

Molly Slominski

Background: I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, the middle of 13 children. My husband, Ron, and I have been married 30 years and have three grown children, one grandchild and another due any day. I've been a stay-at-home mom since moving away from St. Louis when our children were very young and I enjoy having the opportunity to volunteer through our church and community. My first and favorite thing to do is going to the nursing home in Excelsior and giving manicures something I have been doing since 1996.

Gifts for the Board: What I can offer to the board is simply my love for the women in Shakopee and helping in any way I can to bring Jesus Christ's love to them. Visiting the imprisoned is one of the corporal acts of mercy and also the least practiced. I believe this is so because it truly is a calling and one that I feel so blessed to be given and through Charis have the opportunity to say "yes" to. When my term is up, my prayer is I can look back and know I made a difference in some small way.

Thank You Sister Emilie

Congratulations to Sister Emilie Borman on her retirement from Rochester FMC after decades of service to the men at that medical institution. Sister Emilie has been around since the beginning of the Charis program at FMC in 1986. The Rochester Charis family had an opportunity to celebrate with Sister Emilie on May 18, 2013 at Christ United Methodist Church in Rochester. It was a fun time of honoring Sister for her service and sharing numerous memories of Charis throughout the



years. Since Sister Emilie has served on numerous Cursillo weekends in the past, we gave her this rooster platter as a token of our appreciation, to which she responded,

in the unique way that only Sister could, "Cock a doodle doo!"

We will miss Sister's presence on the Charis weekends. Her soft, sweet, gentle spirit was a gift from God to the weekenders and to the Charis team. The Charis community wishes her years of happiness and joy as she continues to get pleasure from doing things she loves: enjoying the beautiful outdoors on her motorcycle and having more time to golf. Congratulations, Sister!

'It's All About a Job'

After many years of working on Charis teams Jerry Snyder says the one thing he heard most often from inmates was the challenge of finding a job after release. This job issue weighed on Jerry over the years and one day his good friend and future partner, Al Johnson, jokingly said, "Maybe we should start a worm farm." Now Jerry knows all about worms and a whole lot more!

After finding out from internet research that worm castings (poop) are the best organic fertilizer one can get, Jerry and his partner got serious with their plans to form a new company. Out of all their discussion came the idea for Worm Farms of Minnesota which is a Christian company whose mission is "to provide a second chance to those who have been incarcerated and are willing to make a change."

Jerry's connection to worms started as a child when his father couldn't hold a job but loved to fish, so he had his children help him raise worms in the basement. Jerry tried that too with his children but with not very good results. Returning home from a vacation, they found out that the furnace had failed and all the worms had frozen. That won't happen again!

The long-range plan for this new company is to have 20-30 ex-offenders on staff by the end of 2016 with 10 operations in place. They also plan to provide employees with a mentoring program to help them become good citizens plus provide an employment track record with skills and recommendation to assure their next employer



of the type of person they are hiring.

Eventually, with God's providence, they hope to not only offer ex-offenders a chance for a job but to also give them an opportunity to own their own company. But for now, Jerry is working to build up the business by offering the products at farmer's markets and through gardening groups. Go to www.wormfarmsofminnesota.com to find out how you can purchase this product, and in doing so help an ex-offender.

Charis #3
FCI Waseca
Weekend Verse

Establish my
footsteps in Your
word and do not let
any iniquity have
dominion over me.
Psalm 119:33

Charis #10
MCF Faribault
Weekend Verse

We know that God
causes all things to
work together for
good to those who
love God, to those
who are called
according to His
purpose.
Romans 8:28

Charis #41
MCF Shakopee
Weekend Verse

Do not fear for I have
redeemed you; I have
called you by name;
you are Mine! When
you pass through the
waters I will be with
you; for I am the Lord
your God, your Saviour.
Isaiah 43: 1b-3a

Charis #48
FMC Rochester

So do not fear, for I
am with you; do not
be dismayed, for I am
your God. I will
strengthen you and
help you; I will up-
hold you with my
righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

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Grand Reunion Coming Soon
Coming to a location near you, in April 2014, a Charis Grand Reunion
featuring prayer, praise and potluck! Look for details to follow.

Trying Something New: combined team meeting

It was a serendipitous moment—three teams gathering in one place at one time. So great minds melded and decided to make the most of this momentous occasion and the first Charis combined team meeting was held at Colonial Church on August 24. The time together featured a chapel service, Day 2 training (complete with skits) and breakfast. More photos of this event will be appearing soon on the Charis website, www.charismn.com.

