

Volunteer Spotlight: Jim White



Jim White

Jim White got involved with Amicus in 2001, working with a sex offender who was then serving time at Stillwater correctional facility. Jim's rewarding experience with this match led him to volunteer for Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (MnCoSA).

At first, Jim said, even those close to him had some concerns about his working with a sex offender. "They're modern day lepers. People just cast them aside," Jim said.

Jim believes that one way to beat the fear society has for sex offenders is by engaging those offenders who are willing to make a change. He said he's involved with Amicus because it's a longtime leader in that work.

"This is the only organization that hooks up people one to one. It's a vehicle that brings people together. It's just so darn important! But the thing is you need volunteers. You need people from the community willing to step up and say, 'I care. This is important enough.' This is a vehicle that allows me to really live what I believe."

Jim said he also receives a great deal from giving his time to Amicus. He's developed close friendships, felt fulfilled from working on a project that's making a difference and gained insights into his own ideas and preconceptions.

"It's a way of being engaged in life - expanding your horizons beyond something more than yourself and your own agenda. I think that's when you really start living - when things become about something more than yourself."

Ask Russel

Dear Russel;

Can an Amicus volunteer visit more than one person?

-KL, One to One Volunteer

Dear KL;

It's possible, but not as easy as one might think. Volunteer visitors are accommodated by the Department of Corrections at least partially because they're affiliated with Amicus, an organization with a track record of respecting DOC rules for over 40 years.

In order for a volunteer to visit more than one inmate, you would need to go to a different facility than the one you're currently visiting. Your request should be made through Amicus and would need to be approved by the warden of the Correction Facility.

One exception for this rule which is normally granted is in relation to a volunteer joining a circle through the Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (MnCoSA) program. We appreciate those who are able to make time in their schedules to visit those who desperately need a connection with the outside world.

The Volunteer Dance



*Louise Wolfgramm,
Amicus President*

From the first year of its existence in 1967 Amicus has been a volunteer-driven organization, and every year we learn a little more about what Community Engagement Director Russel Balenger calls the "volunteer dance."

Right now Amicus has over 160 volunteers actively working with us in many capacities.

We are committed to supporting you, making sure our door is open for questions, helping navigate the challenges of volunteering within a Minnesota Correctional Facility, providing training that can make you a better volunteer. It's not always as easy as it might seem on the surface but it's important work because it connects us with the roots of who we are.

At our core, we are a relationship-based service. Everything we do involves engaging those we serve in friendship, showing that there's someone who cares whether they succeed in making the changes they want to make. The only possible way we can fulfill our core mission is through your help.

So first and foremost, thank you for your work.

I would also ask you to consider making a referral. Do you know someone who "gets it?" Someone who seems to understand that personal engagement is the best and sometimes the only path for change? We'd love to know them too. Amicus might be a wonderful fit for their volunteer time and there is always someone waiting. Have them give us a call!

EVENTS

4/20 - One to One Training at Unity Unitarian

4/25 - MnCoSA Trainings begin at Rochester and St. Paul

5/9 - Men of Rafiki Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast

Men of Rafiki is partnering with Mount Olive Lutheran Church in hosting a pre-Mother's Day pancake breakfast fund-raising event.

The breakfast will take place the morning of Saturday, May 9 2009, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church (3045 Chicago Avenue S. Minneapolis, MN 55407) between 8 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Cost is \$4 per person, \$3 for senior citizens and free for mothers over age 65.

Contact Haywood Kemp at 651-231-2118 for more information or to donate to the breakfast.

WISH LIST

\$2500 - Funding for a VISTA!

The Americorps VISTA program has played a vital role in expanding the capacity of Amicus, especially during our recent budget cuts. VISTA's are involved in virtually every part of Amicus, from One to One, Reconnect, Amicus Institute and Academy and more. One has even become a valued staff-member after leaving the Americorps program.

This year, Amicus is asked to provide \$2500 in support of each VISTA working here full-time in 2009-2010.

It's a wonderful bargain for Amicus (we value this year's VISTA time at about \$200,000!) but we need your help for the seed money. Please consider a gift in support of a VISTA position!

Donate Now

Male Volunteers Needed

Amicus currently has many men inside correctional facilities waiting to participate in the One to One program and needs male volunteers to step up as friends and mentors. Do you have a friend who might be interested?

Contact Robyn at robyn@amicususa.org for more information.

HAVE US VISIT

Have Amicus President Louise Wolfgramm or other Amicus representatives visit your office or organization. You'll hear stories of hope, redemption and humor as we relate what it's like to help those seeking a new start.

Contact Us