



Shelly Palsma



Donna J. Knodel

## A Work Of Passion

Of all the things anyone can bring to their work, passion may be the most valuable.

Some jobs, like the positions held by Donna J. Knodel and Shelly Palsma, who work in South Dakota's Department of Corrections, almost demand heartfelt dedication to daily tasks.

Both women work with inmates in South Dakota's state prisons. Palsma works in the Mike Durfee State Prison (MDSP) Parole office. Knodel devotes her days to working as a Chemical Dependency Counselor for the State of South Dakota.

"Before I took this job, I worked at the Human Services Center (HSC) with individuals who had serious deficits," Knodel says. "In working with them, I learned that they had a passion for living a normal life. I gained compassion and respect for them and wanted to help them reach their goals. I have that same kind of desire to see my current clients succeed."

Palsma has the satisfaction of seeing inmates take steps to leave MDSP and go back to their families.

"There are many things that have to be in place before inmates can be released," Palsma says. "It's often challenging to get it all done in time, but we want to give inmates every possible tool they need to succeed once they leave here."

Ensuring that inmates meet all the legal and technical requirements related to ending their incarceration, seeing to it that plans are in place for them to receive prescription medication and making sure their housing needs are in place helps parolees successfully re-enter their community.

"When inmates have no family or friend helping them after their release, they have to accumulate a certain amount of funds before they leave," Palsma says. "Those funds assist them with deposits for rent and other needs they have once they return to their community."

Both women juggle many responsibilities in their workplace as well as in their personal lives. While they face daily challenges in both aspects of their lives, Knodel and Palsma have no second

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