



May 10, 2022
For immediate release

Community Services managers announced; will help direct newly combined department

A team of four Community Services managers has been announced, part of a county restructuring plan approved in late 2021 by the Rice County Board of Commissioners.

They are:

- Angela Brewer – Community Corrections Manager
- Christine Sammon – Child and Family Services Manager
- Lisa Stadler – Operations and Family Supports Manager
- Megan Thomas – Adult Services Manager

“I’m excited and grateful to have this team of managers on board. Their skills, experience and knowledge of Rice County, its employees and the community will add valuable leadership to the organization,” said Deputy Administrator-Community Services Rick Gieseke.

“This is an evaluative group that gathers information and data, and using best practices, will help shape the county’s new Community Services department so that services are delivered in an even more efficient and cost-effective manner. We’re looking forward to working together.”

Angela Brewer

Brewer grew up in the Twin Cities, but has worked for Rice County since 1994. Her first position, student intern, led to a job as a temporary probation officer, which in turn led to a permanent spot.

Six years ago, she became a supervisor in the Community Corrections Department, which serves clients of all ages – from juveniles to adults – and is involved in several programs, including Community Behavioral Health and Drug Treatment Court.

Rice County’s probation officers don’t just monitor their clients. The goal for Rice County’s Community Corrections employees, Brewer says, is to help clients gain skills that will help them move away from criminal behavior. Probation officers do that using programs that data shows are effective.

Brewer calls the county’s methods “very progressive,” and is anxious to continue building on its success by helping develop the new Community Services model with Gieseke and her fellow managers.

“I’m excited to see where our new model goes and to help other system partners know what that means,” she said.



The Board of Commissioners have approved the hiring of four Community Services managers. They are, clockwise from top left: Megan Thomas, Christine Sammon, Angela Brewer and Lisa Stadler. The four report to Deputy Administrator-Community Services Rick Gieseke. (Rice County photo)

Christine Sammon

An Albert Lea native, Sammon spent a few months working for Rice County's Children's Mental Health Unit before heading back to Freeborn County where she worked for nine years as a Child Protection/Child Welfare supervisor.

In January 2017, she returned to Rice County as a Child and Family Services supervisor.

It's a job that's often difficult, but necessary.

"I stay in the hard work because I know it's the start of things getting better," she said, explaining that her work often starts when a family's in crisis and her task is to help the people involved get onto a better path.

Sammon said she wanted to help direct the initiatives of the former Social Services department still being developed was a major impetus for applying for the Child and Family Supervisors Manager job.

"I want to help carry out the goals and vision that the county has in a way that's going to impact the supervisors ... so the service to the client is enhanced.

Lisa Stadler

A St. Peter High School grad, Stadler worked in her native Nicollet County for 26 years, even serving as that county's finance director before coming east in 2017 to take a post as Rice County accounting and collections supervisor.

Stadler says she's always been good with numbers and that while she got an opportunity to work for local government right out of college, she stayed because it was a job she enjoyed.

As for her new role, Stadler said she looks forward to learning about county programs she's currently unfamiliar with.

"Continuous learning is exciting to me," she said.

She's also pleased to continue working with her colleagues, who she calls "exceptional."

Among her goals: helping support the managers more effectively with policies and procedures. And, she wants to ensure staff members enjoy their work. That, she believes will help reduce turnover and retain great employees.

"I want our staff to be happy when they come to work," she said.

MEET THE MANAGERS

Angela Brewer

Hobbies: An outdoor enthusiast, Brewer is a runner and fitness coach. She also enjoys hiking and gardening.

Guilty pleasures: Chocolate and coffee. She'll drink it black, but also enjoys matcha tea and flavored coffee.

Christine Sammon

Family: Husband, Rod Sammon, six adult children combined; two grandsons. Two dogs: Jake and Onyx.

Hobbies: Spending time with family, traveling, puzzles and movies of all genres.

Guilty pleasures: Paramount Network's "Yellowstone" and key lime white chocolate from Key West, Florida.

Lisa Stadler

Family: Husband, Mark Stadler; four adult children combined; seven grandchildren

Hobbies: "Crafts that I don't finish," fishing and camping at a seasonal spot in Le Sueur County.

Guilty pleasure: Nachos, loaded, please.

Megan Thomas

Family: Husband, Jesse Thomas; two young adult children.

Hobbies: Golfing, fishing, spending time with family. Watching "Yellowstone" and Netflix's "Ozark."

Guilty pleasure: Ice cream -- anything fruity -- but especially blackberry swirl frozen yogurt.

Megan Thomas

Thomas, who grew up in Faribault, worked in the private sector at Cennedeigh Inc. for 16 years before coming to Rice County more than four years ago.

Her experience includes overseeing group homes, serving as a residential programs supervisor. In Rice County, she worked as a MNChoices Assessor. In short, she helped determine whether clients with physical and developmental disabilities were eligible for specialized services.

Her career in social services came about almost serendipitously. As a high schooler, she took a job at a group home where a friend was employed.

“It just felt good,” she said of the work.

As the national movement to acknowledging the importance of mental health grows, Thomas wants to ensure Rice County’s services continue to keep pace with the needs. She also hopes to improve collections and work with her fellow managers to support Gieseke, who moved into his new role earlier this year.

“I want to make sure we’re always working together to provide the best possible service that we can,” she said.

Background

The board authorized the melding of the county’s former Community Corrections and Social Services departments in late 2021 following the retirement of longtime Social Services Director Mark Shaw.

County Administrator Sara Folsted recommended the restructuring, saying that the departments serve many of the same clients and that combining them into one would allow more collaboration and better coordination, and therefore even better service.

Contact:

Rick Gieseke, Deputy Administrator-Community Services

rgieseke@co.rice.mn.us

507-332-6036

Suzy Rook, Communications Coordinator

srook@co.rice.mn.us

507-384-6509