**Meet Rachel Dreon**

Drug Courts Work. As a 2004 Thurston County Drug Court graduate, Rachel Dreon has a come a long way. Rachel entered Drug Court as a result of criminal charge of possession of methamphetamine and possible pending charges of theft and forgery. Rachel suffered many tragic losses as young single mother at 19 and turned to drugs to fill the void. Without any prior knowledge of recovery she was given a second chance with the option of Drug Court. Drug Court changed her life, it introduced her to 12 step programs which she is still highly active in today. It also gave her and her young family a sense of community and the mental health resources to begin healing unresolved trauma.

Goal setting during drug court treatment is one of the biggest factors in Rachel’s long term success. Of the 12 long term goals she set back in 2004 – she has accomplished all but one, learning how to sew. The other goals Rachel has accomplished and exceeded include, returning to college and graduating with a Bachelors and a Master’s degree, purchasing her own home, volunteering in her community, traveling with her family to places such as Disneyland, France, England, Italy, Washington DC, New York, Mexico and just a few a weeks ago her whole family spent a week in Hawaii. Another goal Rachel set was to have an administrative role somewhere in public service within the state. She met that goal and today is giving back to her peers in many ways.

Rachel has served as the Budget & Finance Office Chief, for the Department of Social and Health Services’ (DSHS) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) a post to which she was appointed to in June 2017. As part of delivery of mental health services and supports, the Office Chief has the responsibility for oversight of the financial operations and strategic budget planning of three state psychiatric hospitals and the Office of Forensic Mental Health Service all of which work towards transforming lives by supporting sustainable recovery, independence and wellness. Rachel most recent position is as the Business Operations Administrator for the Office of Forensic Mental Health Services supporting many elements of the Trueblood Settlement Agreement. Trueblood v DSHS (Trueblood) is a case challenging unconstitutional delays in competency evaluation and restoration services. The settlement agreement aims to resolve the Trueblood lawsuit by creating a plan delivering an array of services expanding residential mental health with crisis services; additional training for jail staff and law enforcement; hiring additional forensic navigators and more mental health professionals to educate courts about the availability of supports that could meet the needs of individuals who have to wait in jail for evaluation and restoration services.

Over the past decade, Rachel has provided leadership in a number of positions in Washington State public service which include Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Community Budget Manager for the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, Inpatient Hospital Rates Manager within the Health Care Authority, Management Analyst within Health Finance at the Department of Corrections, and started her career as Program Coordinator at the Department of Labor and Industries where she worked on the team that spearheaded and implemented the formation of a Washington State Medical Provider Network.

Rachel participates on a number of boards and workgroups, including the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Finance and Policy Division (FPD) Executive Committee Member at Large (2017-Current): the Finance Policy Division (FPD) was established to support NASMHPD and its members in developing sustainable funding models and strategies to finance effective mental

She holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in Leadership & Change Management and a Bachelor’s Degree in Business and Public Administration both completed at The Evergreen State College.

A mother of three, Rachel enjoys activities with her children, sports, movies, volunteering and mentorship in recovery-oriented groups as well as the opportunity to transform lives within her career.

Rachel is proof that drug courts work.