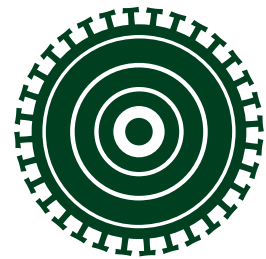


CELL COUNT



YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

THE AWARENESS ISSUE - #92

Illustration by Joey Toutsaint



Criminal Lives Matter

By B.G. Kerr

Just like Jeremy Phillips, who was brutally murdered in his sleep by an inmate who was mysteriously transferred from a maximum-security facility to his medium security institution, his life mattered.

Shawn Spaulding, who died 3 days after arriving at an Ontario jail, and his family still has no clue how or why, his life mattered.

Or the sadly missed Ashley Smith, God bless her soul, who suffered self-inflicted strangulation, while under Institutional Correctional watch - aka supervision. Charges against prison staff were laid, then dropped; they were fired, then rehired. Her life too, most assuredly mattered!

Soleiman Faqiri, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia, died while shackled in his cell wearing a spit hood, with signs that he had been badly beaten. No charges were laid against any prison staff for his death. His life too, mattered.

Eddy Snowshoe, Paul Steele, and many others who had their lives snuffed out, either by their own hands or with the help of others... Their lives too, most assuredly mattered.

The list goes on and on... Question is, when will it end? Or will it?

Most prisoners in Canada make \$5.25 per day, with around 30% taken away for food, accommodation, phone fees and fines, leaving it down to \$3.67/day, and these wages don't change with inflation. "Did I say 'in Canada?' Yes, in Canada, now how disgraceful is this?"

The community calls for change. Can you blame them? I mean really, how do you expect these people to survive in jail?

I mean if such people were so almighty and successful in the community in the first place, do you really think there is such a huge likelihood they would be in jail? And who do you expect to care for them? The jail guards? Are they going to put money in the inmates' accounts?

Why then do you suppose it's so convenient to expect their families to do it for however long they may be incarcerated? I mean, do not criminal's lives matter?

For instance, I haven't seen my child since he was four years old. I've been calling him every two weeks for the past 14 years. I've sent him money I've managed to accumulate, due to Correctional errors and malfeasance throughout this same period of time.

Imagine if none of us actually stood up for our rights or were even allowed to.

Imagine if the system was successful in their attempts to keep us quiet about the wrongs we have suffered and continue to suffer at the hands of such negligence.

It's like an abuser committing their deviant deeds upon a victim amidst the statement that they will reward the victim for their loss, so long as the victim promises not to tell. It's disgusting and brings to mind the horrendous, traumatic tragedies many of us, especially "criminals," have suffered and endured most of our lives.

Where is the responsibility in this?

cont'd as "Kerr" on page 9

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SENA HUSSAIN

Hello Cell Count readers! I want to start by thanking everyone who has submitted work to this issue of Cell Count. I am awestruck by your ability to create during such an uncertain, unstable, scary, sad, tumultuous and grueling time that has been this pandemic, especially hearing about what all of you on the inside have been dealing with because of it. Your submissions are what make Cell Count, and I'm sure you know how important a resource it is to your fellow inmates.

Many of us on the outside have been complaining about how difficult it is to have our freedom and choices restricted by lockdown measures - but you all have been dealing with much worse during the course of your incarceration and moreso during the COVID-19 outbreak. Please do not think that this has gone unnoticed.

I want you to know that, although we have had to adapt our work to keep our staff, peer workers, clients, volunteers and placement students safe by limiting our time being physically present in the office to answer phones, and nearly all of us have had to pause coming to see you inside the prisons, you are still at the forefront of the work that we do.

I have a request and this may be the last thing you all want to do and it's ok if you don't, you don't have to listen to me. This has been a very unique time in our history, especially for all of you inside, and I think it is important for our future generations to remember. Write down your experiences of this time, or create art about it, and send it into Cell Count. Don't let the stories of what you all went through get buried. Your stories deserve to be heard as much as anyone else's. Thank you for hearing me out. Cell Count, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

Below you will find updates, dedications and words of comfort and support from some staff members of PASAN.

CHRIS McNAB

From COVID-19 to the Black Lives Matter protests, 2020 has been a rollercoaster year filled with much uncertainty and a lot of unrest. I hope you all have been keeping well in spite of the many surprises this year had to offer. 2020 has also been a year of showing our strengths and resilience - we've made it this far and we will continue to make it in the best ways we know how!

Whether we've spoken over the phone and not gotten a chance to meet, we've met in person but not gotten a chance to talk one-on-one, or this is the first you're hearing from me, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as one of the Federal In-Reach Workers at PASAN. I started at PASAN in October of 2019, and since then a large focus of mine has been to deliver workshops to prisoners in Federal prisons and connect with prisoners who have been long-time sources of knowledge for PASAN and instrumental in shaping the work that we do in and outside of prisons. Though COVID has made it difficult to stay connected, I am hopeful that the new year will bring new opportunities for PASAN and myself to be a source of support for prisoners. I hope we get to connect in the new year! But, until then, happy holidays and happy new year when it comes.

AMINA MOHAMED

Hi everyone, I am the Women's Community and Programs Coordinator at PASAN. I am writing to send my support and gratitude to all incarcerated folks in Canada. This past year was very challenging however through the Summer and Fall,

in collaboration with The Confluence Arts Collective, I facilitated an 8-week theatre program called "Whorearchy" for fifteen HIV positive and ex-incarcerated women.

The program name "Whorearchy" refers to the hierarchies in sex worker communities that unfairly give some sex workers more stigma and others more privilege due to reasons including race, class, gender identity, and nature of sex work. This project attempts to push back against those spoken and unspoken hierarchies, which are distractions that prevent sex workers from working together, on a united front, toward our collective liberation. This project is a celebration of sex workers.

This project centered sex worker self-determination. The participants created "living portraits" of themselves and others in our communities through different combinations of art forms. "Living portraits" are, in part, unfinished portraits - this is meant to capture the fact that we, too, are unfinished, and always growing. The portraits are nuanced depictions of sex workers, celebrating complex identities and questioning simple stereotypes like "good/bad", "harmful/helpful", and "disempowered/empowered".

If there are any women identified folks inside that need support, feel free to call me at PASAN. Also to those inside GVI - we are working on coming back to do programming soon. Please get in touch with me if you need/to keep me up-to-date about how you are.

~Sending healing and solidarity ~

CHERISA SHIVCHARRAN

Always remembered, Never forgotten. Educate yourself, connect with those who care. May you continue to find inner strength as you prevail. You are loved and in my prayers. Stand tall as I walk beside you with Love & Respect. Never forgotten, Always remembered. In Solidarity Forever

CLAUDIA MEDINA

Hi all, sending you powerful healing energy on a regular. There are people out here that care about your happiness, your heart, your spirit and physical well-being. We continue to stand in solidarity with you. Always.

LINDSAY JENNINGS

Still I Rise

Written by Participants of Raising Liberated Children Workshop in a California Women's prison - February 2018

My family may have kept secrets, still I rise
I am not a mistake, still I rise
Love like you never hurt before, still I rise
I am not my mistakes, still I rise
God is with me, still I rise
I was looking at 15 to life, still I rise
I had no education, still I rise
I didn't know who I was because of addiction, still I rise
Through all the assault and odds against me, still I rise
I was told that I would never be anything, but just like the sun in the morning, still I rise
They put me in prison for life, still I rise
I give 7.5 years of my life to prison, still I rise
Even though my child was taken from me, because of the man I was with, still I rise
I will keep rising to not make the same mistake twice.
Being ashamed as a mother by family, but proving to my kids I am the best mother I can be, so still I rise
They might put me down, still I rise
The system wants to hold me down, but

still I rise

They say I will never overcome my addiction, still I rise
They say I am an awful mother, still I rise
They say I'm a monster, still I rise
They say my kids deserve better, still I rise
They say I am worthless, still I rise
They say I won't amount to anything, still I rise
Can I? Will I? I know I can change now and later.

Still wet from the rain, God keeps my heart, like the bleeding veins, still I rise
Sobriety, still I rise

Coming from violence, still I rise
Breaking free of codependency, still I rise
Surviving impossible circumstances, still I rise

Learning to thrive despite it all, still I rise
I came to prison, still I rise

How long it took, still I rise

I was told I was stupid, still I rise

I was molested, still I rise

I'm in prison for life, still I rise

I wake up inside these walls, still I rise

No matter my selfish mistakes, still I rise

No matter if some doubt my change, still I rise

No matter if from time to time I slip, still I rise

No matter what I went through, still I rise

Revisiting the past, I opened my wounds of my childhood I am different but I am uniquely created for a handcrafted purpose

Seeking my truth, no more secrets, open to the internal freedom, still I rise.

It's not as good as it gets, I love and rise strong.

You may have never seen the strength in me, still I rise

I want to make the rest of my life, the best of my life, still I rise

They may have said that she went to prison...but I survived, I cried and I rose from the concrete walls and walked out the gate 3 years later, still I rise

I rise. I rise. I rise!

ARPA AZMILLA

Hi Everyone,
I joined PASAN as the Harm Reduction and Hep C Program Manager on Prisoners Justice Day this year. I thought that was a very appropriate start to this new role.

When I started doing HIV and harm reduction work years ago, I learned about GIPA/MEPA (Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS/ Meaningful Engagement of People Living with HIV and AIDS) and "Nothing About Us, Without Us". I thought it was extraordinary and beautiful in the way HIV and harm reduction work values, includes and respects the voices of people with lived identities and experiences in their own care and in the creation and delivery of services. I remember thinking it was so cool (still think it is) how so many voices and experiences went into creating the service a person is receiving...how maybe without them even realizing it, they are forming a connection with people who may have gone through similar experiences as them. Cell Count I think does just that. It creates connection. It is made for you, by you and about you. Cell Count contains words and art of the people who are or have gone through similar experiences as you. As you are reading this, there are others reading this that have gone through or are going through the same. I hope that makes you feel connected to others and less alone somehow.

We at PASAN are thinking of you too.

STEPHANIE MOULTON

Hello readers!
The pandemic has changed so many things this year. I miss being able to have

regular conversations with folks by phone, going into Toronto South to talk about harm reduction and overdose prevention, and seeing your faces when you visit us at PASAN. As we wrap up this year, I want to express my appreciation and respect for drug-using, sex-working, harm-reducing, radical-accepting, stigma-fighting, advocacy-crushing, passion-having people that make up our community.

You are the real ones. Thinking of you all as we navigate what is a tough time of year for many of us.

RESOURCES FOR THOSE OF YOU BEING RELEASED IN TORONTO

For HARM REDUCTION services, search "harm reduction" at Toronto.ca, or call 211
Open Drop-ins

Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (1499 Queen St. W. - homeless individuals only) Mon to Thurs 9am to 1pm, Fri 12:30 to 4:30pm, Sat & Sun 11am to 3pm

Sanctuary (25 Charles St. E.) Tues & Fri 11am to 4pm, Thurs & Sun 5pm to 9pm

West Neighbourhood House: The Meeting Place (588 Queen St. W.) Tues & Wed 11:30 to 4pm, Thurs, Fri, & Sat 10am to 4pm

St. Stephens Community House: The Corner Drop-in (260 Augusta Ave.) Mon to Fri 7:30 to 11:30am, Sun 8 to 11:30am

Church of St. Stephens in-the-fields: Safe Space Drop-in (103 Bellevue Ave) Fri 6 to 10pm

St. John the Compassionate: Broadview Drop-in (155 Broadview ave) Tues 5 to 11am, Wed to Fri 5am to 4pm, Sat 5am to 2pm

Friends of Ruby (489 Queen St. E - LGBTQ-125+ youth, 16 to 29) Tues (BIPOC) & Weds 1:30 to 6:30pm, Thurs 1:30-7:30pm, Fri 1:30 - 4:30pm

Margaret's (323 Dundas St. E) 7d/w- 7am to 6pm

Evangel Hall Mission (552 Adelaide St. W) Mon to Fri 10:30am to 12:30 pm

Covenant House (20 Gerrard St. E, Youth 16-26) Mon to Fri 12 to 5pm *If possible, call first: 416-598-4898

The 519 (519 Church St. LGBTQ2S+, gen. pop.) *register first online or front desk - call: 416-392-6874

All Saints Church Community Centre (315 Dundas St. E) Mon, Tues, & Thurs 8a - 3pm, Wed 11a - 3pm

Fred Victor CRC Drop-in (40 Oak St.) Mon 10:30- 11:30am, Tues & Thurs 9-11:30 am, Wed 9a-1:15pm

Our Place Community of Hope (1183 Davenport Rd) Mon - Fri 2 - 5pm *by appointment only: 416-598-2919

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto: Native Youth Resource Centre (655 Bloor St. W. - Indigenous youth, 16 to 24) Mon - Fri 11am - 7pm

Yonge Street Mission (YSM): Evergreen Centre for Youth (365 Spadina Ave. - youth, 16 - 24) Mon-Thurs 12 - 4:30pm, Fri 12 - 3pm

WIFI Access
Wifi has been reported to work outside of several public spaces (Libraries, Subways, some café/food chains)

Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (1499 Queen St. W. - homeless individuals only) Mon to Thurs 9am to 1pm, Fri 12:30 to 4:30om, Sat & Sun 11am to 3pm

West Neighbourhood House: The Meeting Place (588 Queen St. W.) Tues & Wed 11:30 to 4pm, Thurs, Fri, & Sat 10am to 4pm

Sanctuary (25 Charles St. E.) Tues & Fri 11am to 4pm, Thurs & Sun 5pm to 9pm

Church of St. Stephens in-the-fields: Safe Space Drop-in (103 Bellevue Ave) Fri 6pm to 10pm

St. Stephens Community House: The Corner Drop-in (260 Augusta Ave.) Mon to Fri

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7:30 am to 11:30 am, Sun 8 to 11:30am
Church of the Holy Trinity (19 Trinity Square) Mon to Fri 11am to 1pm
Friends of Ruby (489 Queen St. E - LGBTQ-I2S+ youth, 16 to 29) Tues (BIPOC) & Weds 1:30 to 6:30pm, Thurs 1:30-7:30pm, Fri 1:30 - 4:30pm

Our Place Community of Hope (1183 Davenport Rd) Mon - Fri 2 - 5pm *by appointment only: 416-598-2919

All Saints Church Community Centre (315 Dundas St. E) Mon, Tues, & Thurs 8am - 3pm, Wed 11a - 3pm

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto: Native Youth Resource Centre (655 Bloor St. W. - Indigenous youth, 16 to 24) Mon - Fri 11am - 7pm

Clothing

Sanctuary (25 Charles St. E.) Tues & Fri 11am to 4pm, Thurs & Sun 5pm to 9pm
The 519 (519 Church St. - general population, LGBTQ2S+) Sun 1 pm (Emergency clothing)

All Saints Church Community Centre (315 Dundas St. E) Mon to Thurs 8am to 3pm - (Emergency only)

Evangel Hall Mission (552 Adelaide St. W) Mon to Thurs 10am to 12:30 pm

Covenant House (20 Gerrard St. E, Youth 16-26) Mon to Fri 12 to 5pm *To access, call first: 416-598-4898

Food Bank

Call 416-203-0050 (The Daily Bread) or 211 for info

Most information found at TDIN.caw
COVID-19 Resource Guide

A basic resource list put together by the folks at The Redeemer's Common Table Drop-in (Nov. 16th, 2020)

Meals To-go

The Stop Community Food Center (1884 Davenport Rd.) Breakfast: Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri 9 to 10am,

Lunch: Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri 12 to 1pm
Our Place Community of Hope (1183 Davenport Rd - Adults who self-identify as living with mental illness)

Meals: Mon to Fri, 2 to 5pm

Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Center (1900 Davenport Rd) Meals: Mon & Weds, 5 to 7pm
Native Child and Family Services of Toronto: Native Youth Resource Centre (655 Bloor St. W. - Indigenous youth, 16 to 24)

Breakfast: Mon to Fri, 10am, Lunch: Mon to Fri, 12 to 1pm, Dinner: Mon to Sat, 5 to 6pm, Brunch: Sat, 1 to 2pm

Good Shepherd Ministries (412 Queen St. E.) Meals: 7days/week, 2 to 4pm
The 519 (519 Church St. - general population, LGBTQ2S+) Lunch: Sun 1pm

Yonge Street Mission (YSM): Evergreen Centre for Youth (365 Spadina Ave. - youth, 16 - 24) Lunch: Mon to Fri, 12pm, Dinner: Mon to Fri 4 to 5pm

St. Stephen-in-the-Fields (103 Bellevue Ave) Meals: Fri, 6 to 10pm, Breakfast: Sat & Sun, 7 to 8:30am

Church of the Holy Trinity (19 Trinity Square) Lunch: Mon to Fri, 11am to 1pm

St. James Cathedral (65 Church St.) Meals: Tues & Fri 1:30 to 3:30pm

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre: The Gathering Place (439 Dundas St. E.)

Breakfast: 7days/week 9am, Lunch: Mon to Thurs, & Sun, 12 to 12:30pm, Fri & Sat 1 to 1:30, Dinner: Mon to Thurs 3:15 to 3:45

Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre Drop-in (854 Bloor St. W) Meals: Mon to Fri 10am to 1pm

The Stop Wychwood's Open Door (729 St. Clair W.)

Breakfast: Wed 9 to 10am, Lunch: Wed 12 to 1pm

Woodgreen Community Services (650 Queen St. E.)

Meals: Tues 11am to 1pm

All Saints Church Community Centre (315 Dundas St. E - general population, women and trans-identified Sex Workers) Breakfast: Mon, Tues & Thurs 9:30am, Fri 8 to 11am, Lunch: Mon to Thurs 12 pm

Margaret's Drop-in (323 Dundas St. E) Breakfast: 7days/week 7 - 8:30am, Lunch: 7days/week 10:30 to 11:30am, Dinner: 7days/week 5 to 6pm

Sistering (962 Bloor St. W. - Women and Trans-identified folks) Lunch: 7 days/week 12 to 1pm

The Scott Mission (502 Spadina Ave)

Meals: Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm

Christ Church Deer Park (1570 Yonge St.) - Breakfast 1st, 3rd, 4th, & 5th Sat 8 - 9:30am

South Riverdale Community Health Centre (955 Queen St. E) Meals: Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm

St. Stephens Community House: The Corner Drop-in (260 Augusta Ave.) Breakfast: Mon to Fri 7:30 to 11:30, Sun 8-11:30 am

Haven Toronto (170 Jarvis St. - men, 50+) Breakfast: 7days/week, 8:15 to 9:15am, Lunch: 7d/w, 12:15 - 1:15pm

Fontbonne Ministries: Mustard Seed Drop-in (791 Queen St. E) Lunch: Fri, Sat, & Sun 11:30am to 1pm

Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (1499 Queen St. W) Breakfast & Lunch: Mon to Thurs, 9:15 to 10:15am, Fri, 1 - 2pm, Sat & Sun, 11:15 to 12:15

Fred Victor: Women's 24/7 Drop-in (67 Adelaide St. E - women & trans-identified) Breakfast: 7days/week, 9 to 10am, Lunch: 7d/w 12 - 12:45pm, Dinner: 7d/w 6 - 7 pm

Fred Victor: CRC Drop-in (40 Oak St.) Breakfast: Mon & Fri 9 to 10am, Lunch: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 12 - 1pm,

Sun 11:30am to 1pm, Dinner: Sat 5 to 6pm
Fred Victor: Friends Community Meal Program (145 Queen St. E) Brunch: Mon-Fri 10 to 11:30am, Dinner Mon to Fri 4 - 5:30pm

Salvation Army Bloor Central (789 Davenport Rd) Meals: Sat 4 - 6pm

West Neighbourhood House: The Meeting Place (588 Queen St. W.) Lunch: Sat 1pm

Covenant House (20 Gerrard St. E - Youth 16-26) Meals: 24/7 until meals run out (restocked in the AM)

Met United (56 Queen St. E) Meals: Wed 11:30 - 3pm

St. Felix Centre (25 Augusta Ave) Breakfast: 7 days/week, 7 to 8am, Lunch: 7days/week, 11:30am to 1pm, Dinner: 7 d/w, 5 to 6:30pm

Seeds of Hope (6 St. Joseph St.) Meals: Tues & Thurs 1 to 5pm

St. Basil's Catholic Parish (50 St. Joseph St.) Meals: Tues & Thurs 11 to 12pm, Sun 3 - 4pm

Evangel Hall Mission (552 Adelaide St. W) Meals: Mon - Fri, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, Sun 5pm

St. John the Compassionate: Broadview Drop-in (155 Broadview ave) Breakfast Tues to Sat 9 to 11am

Church of the Redeemer - The Common Table (162 Bloor St. W.) Lunch: Mon to Wed, 10 to 11:30am

Lamp CHC (185 5th St.) Meals: Mon-Sat 9:30-11:30am

Friends of Ruby (489 Queen St. E - LGBTQ-I2S+ youth, 16 to 29) Tues (BIPOC) & Weds 1:30 to 6:30pm, Thurs 1:30-7:30pm, Fri 1:30 - 4:30pm

Central Intake/Shelter

In-person services at 129 Peter St. are temporarily closed. To access shelter intake and referral, call Central Intake at 416-338-4766 or 1-877-338-4766

Phone Access

Church of the Holy Trinity (19 Trinity Square) Mon to Fri, 11am to 1pm

All Saints Church Community Centre (315 Dundas St. E) Mon, Tues, & Thurs 8am - 3pm, Wed 11a - 3pm

West Neighbourhood House: The Meeting Place (588 Queen St. W.) Tues & Wed 11:30 to 4pm, Thurs, Fri, & Sat 10am to 4pm

St. Stephens Community House: The Corner Drop-in (260 Augusta Ave.) Mon to Fri 7:30 am to 11:30 am, Sun 8 to 11:30am

South Riverdale Community Health Centre (955 Queen St. E) Mon to Fri 10am to 5pm

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto: Native Youth Resource Centre (655 Bloor St. W. - Indigenous youth, 16 to 24) Mon-Fri 11am-7pm

Friends of Ruby (489 Queen St. E - LGBTQ-I2S+ youth, 16 to 29) Tues (BIPOC) & Weds 1:30 to 6:30pm, Thurs 1:30-7:30pm, Fri 1:30 - 4:30pm

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (1499 Queen St. W. - open to homeless individuals only) Mon to Thurs 9am to 1pm, Fri 12:30 to 4:30om, Sat & Sun 11am to 3pm

Margaret's (323 Dundas St. E) 7d/w- 7am to 6pm

Showers

Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (1499 Queen St. W. - open to homeless individuals only) Mon to Thurs 9am to 1pm, Fri 12:30 to 4:30pm, Sat & Sun 11a to 3pm

Sanctuary (25 Charles St. E.) Tues & Fri 11am to 4pm, Thurs & Sun 5pm to 9pm

West Neighbourhood House: The Meeting Place (588 Queen St. W.) Tues & Wed 11:30 to 4pm, Thurs, Fri, & Sat 10am to 4pm

Margaret's (323 Dundas St. E) 7days /week - from 6:45 to 10:45 am & 11am to 12pm

St. Stephens Community House: The Corner Drop-in (260 Augusta Ave. - showers emergency only) Mon to Fri 7:30 am to 11:30 am

Evangel Hall Mission (552 Adelaide St. W) Tues & Thurs, 9am to 12pm

Harrison Pool (15 Stephanie St) Tues - Sat 8a - 3pm

Lampport Stadium (1155 King St. W) Sun - Th 8a to 3pm

Covenant House (20 Gerrard St. E, Youth 16-26) Mon to Fri 12 to 5pm *If possible, call first: 416-598-4898

Laundry

West Neighbourhood House: The Meeting Place (588 Queen St. W.) Tues & Wed 11:30 to 4pm, Thurs, Fri, & Sat 10am to 4pm

Covenant House (20 Gerrard St. E, Youth 16-26) Mon to Fri 12 to 5pm *If possible, call first: 416-598-4898

Evangel Hall Mission (552 Adelaide St. W) Tues & Thurs, 9am to 12pm

Public Washrooms

*As of October 1st, the City of Toronto has closed most park washroom facilities

Alexandra Park 275 Bathurst Regent Park 600 Dundas E.

Moss Park: 150 Sherbourne
Scott Mission: 502 Spadina Ave.

Nathan Phillips Square: 100 Queen St. W (7 d/w 8am to 10pm)

Union Station: 65 Front St. (M-Su 5:30am to 12:45am)

South Market: 91-95 Front St (T-F, 9am to 5pm, Sat 5am to 4pm)

Washroom access at all open drop-ins

Please note: if you are getting out in another city, please call us at PASAN and we will look up places in your area that will be helpful for your specific needs wherever possible. We are available from Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm EST; 6am - 2pm PST; 7am - 3pm MST; 8am - 4pm CST; 11am - 6pm AST; 12pm - 7pm NST

BODY ART ON THE "INSIDE" AND HEP C

By Lindsay Jennings

Body art, also known as tattooing/piercing, has been apart of the prison culture for centuries. Tattooing has been dated back to 3370 BC and 3100 BC, and is connected to many cultures all over the world.

Body art from the "inside" has been proven to be a symbol of time served, an entrepreneurial hustle, and a beautiful way to express one's self. Inside our jails and prisons, there are an abundance of very talented and creative individuals. These talents could be supported to gain employable skills, make money on the inside to prepare for release, and to exhibit their beautiful pieces of art.

As body art is prohibited within the walls of a prison, it can lead to unsafe tattooing or piercing practices such as; homemade unsterile equipment, lack of post healing supports, increased risk of transmitting HCV or HIV, and other serious health concerns.

PASAN and CATIE in collaboration with prisoners created a safer tattooing in prison resource called 'Staying Healthy Behind the Walls: Tattooing, Piercing and You'.

If you choose to participate in body art activities, here are 5 easy tips to remain safe from 'Staying Healthy Behind the Walls: Tattooing, Piercing and You':

1) Do not share tattooing equipment (needles, ink, or ink pots). Hep C can stay alive in ink pots and the ink.

2) Use nontoxic metal for body piercings, such as surgical steel, solid 14-karat or 18-karat gold, titanium or platinum.

3) Carefully dispose of everything and DO NOT re-use someone else's equipment.

4) Wash hands and the working area before and after.

5) If you experience redness, tingling, itching, swelling, tenderness, pain, greenish-yellow pus, rashes and fever after a few days, you may have an infection, PLEASE seek medical attention.

If you have any further questions about the 'Staying Healthy Behind the Walls: Tattooing, Piercing and You' resource and Hep C, please connect with me, Lindsay Jennings, the Hep C Coordinator, at PASAN: 1-866-224-9978 ext 231



Transitioning from incarceration to the community: Reducing risks and improving lives of people who use substances

PUBLISHED DATE NOVEMBER 23, 2020
BY MICHELLE PROCTOR-SIMMS, LINDSAY WALLACE, CINDY MACISAAC, MATTHEW BONN, MEGAN HOROCHUK AND MELODY MACLACHLAN

People who use substances in Nova Scotia face many risks at the time of their release from provincial correctional facilities, including increased risk of overdose and hepatitis C or HIV. There is also very little provisional support, such as linkage to care or help obtaining housing, and limited access to opioid treatment options and other healthcare and support services.

To help incarcerated people who use substances successfully integrate back into their communities, Direction 180 started the Peers Assisting and Lending Support (PALS) program in January 2019 through harm reduction funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Direction 180 is a community-based organization that offers an opioid treatment program in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

PALS: the first program of its kind in Canada

PALS is a 28-month, peer-driven outreach project for people who use drugs in Halifax who are being released from the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF). The overall objective is to reduce risk-taking behaviour of 75 to 100 people who use substances at the critical time of their release.

PALS employs current and former substance users as peer workers (also referred to as PALS) who are trained on topics such as overdose awareness, confidentiality, and harm reduction. Incarcerated people who use drugs can be referred by a case management officer at the CNSCF or self-refer to the program.

After making contact by phone, clients are met by the program coordinator and by two peer staff on the day of their release. They are offered harm reduction supplies, help in obtaining identification, hygiene products, bus tickets, grocery gift cards, phone minutes and linkage to services like hepatitis C testing and treatment.

A performance monitoring and evaluation plan for PALS was developed to determine if the program was achieving its goals. Given the uniqueness of this project, the evaluation committee also looked at the implementation process.

The inclusion of people who use substances as peer workers into the program is integral, so we also explored the impact of the training provided, paying particular attention to skill-building and the staff's ability to deliver harm reduction and health promotion services to their peers.

Interim findings

Data collected from February 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, show that PALS is meeting the needs of people who use substances and increasing their capacity to reduce risk behaviour and harm from drug use.

All of the 44 people assisted accepted at least one type of supply or material and at least one referral to a service. More than half indicated that, if not for PALS, they would not have accessed naloxone, safer sex supplies or been able to get an identification or health card; and some would not have felt comfortable using naloxone or accessed safer drug using supplies. Some did not want harm reduction

supplies because they intended to not use substances when they got out of prison.

Over 75 percent of people reported PALS reduced their risk of hepatitis C and HIV; educated them on the risk of overdose following release; and helped them get an ID, transportation home or to appointments, or connect to health services. Five people were taken directly to an opioid agonist treatment appointment upon release.

All people were referred to at least one organization for support and many accessed important services like needle exchange, criminal justice support (offered by the Elizabeth Fry Society), food or income assistance, substance-use support groups, primary healthcare services (at Mobile Outreach Street Health), or housing and emergency shelter services. A lack of accessible housing, in particular, was cited as a significant challenge for clients integrating back into the community. What people had to say about PALS

Staff and project partners believe the program benefitted people who use substances. As one PAL stated, it "helped to keep them away from [using substances] a little, if not a lot, longer... We helped them breach some barriers that would otherwise be there."

Another person said, "We get to help them get their IDs back and to help them get housing."

A project partner stated, "Individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system are a highly stigmatized group, which makes many afraid to ask for help or to seek support because they have been so judged for most of their lives. [PALS have] people with lived experience who interact with their peers in a positive and respectful way, without any judgment."

All PALS staff reported increased ability and confidence to deliver harm reduction and health promotion programming, as well as increased skills and confidence in reducing personal risk behaviours. Competencies were strengthened through training on topics such as overdose prevention, community resources, confidentiality and harm reduction. They gained paid employment and increased self-efficacy through "giving back" and helping those being released.

Conclusion and next steps

The evaluation of our program shows that PALS was implemented as planned, making course corrections to barriers and challenges as they emerged. For example, the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in a temporary suspension of activities, and thus reduced the number of people reached by March 31, 2020. Protocols were revamped to ensure the prisoners released were being offered adequate supplies and support during the pandemic, particularly as this population is among the most vulnerable when there is a public health crisis and economic collapse.

PALS effectively builds the capacity of peers to deliver harm reduction services and to reduce risk behaviour among substance users in transition from incarceration to the community. Data collection will continue to chart the evolution of the program.

Michelle Proctor-Simms, Lindsay Wallace, Cindy MacIsaac, Megan Horochuk and Melody MacLachlan are part of the PALS evaluation subcommittee. Matthew Bonn is a former lead PAL and former member of the evaluation subcommittee.

ABOUT OAHAS



Oahas (Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy) is a provincial organization committed to keeping our circle strong. Founded by Laverne Monette, the goal of our programming is to provide culturally respectful and sensitive programs to respond to the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic among Indigenous people across Ontario. We are guided by Indigenous knowledges and experiences, as well as harm reduction principles to support everyone in our community.

About Alison B: Aanii, se:ko. My government name is Alison Bray and my spirit names are Thunder Wolf Woman and Woman of the Heart. I am Ojibway and Mohawk. I am 42 years old and was born and raised in Toronto. Substances have been part of my story for almost my entire life. I had my wits and avoided trouble for longer than most would expect, but substances guided me down a path of self-destruction and violence. I didn't care about my life and lived as if the next day didn't matter, because it didn't matter to me. My addiction took me to places I never knew existed. In 2013, I was faced with 13 offences and looking at 10 years inside. When it was all said and done with I received a 2-year sentence and total of 5 charges.

I started as a peer at Oahas (Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy) in 2009. Oahas has always had my back – the staff showed me care, compassion and love in the darkest times of my life when I did not want to be alive. In 2017 I became the Harm Reduction worker, and a year later I became the Indigenous Provincial Community Development Coordinator. I love what I do – being able to support people who feel as lost as I was is important to me. I want people to know that there is someone who cares about them.

This is only a small portion of my story and of who I am. I have lived through many experiences and continue to face challenges each day. I have been on my journey off alcohol and street drugs for 6 and a half years. I have a beautiful family and get to come home to my baby boy every day. While some may think I have a simple life, I feel fulfilled – all of my needs are taken care of, plus some. I do the work I do for my life and my community. My love and support for community includes everyone, regardless of where they are on their journey in this life.

About Marie L: Tansi and greetings. My name is Marie L and I am First Nations Cree from Saskatchewan. I have been living in Toronto for 37 years. Substances have been part of my life for a long time, and I have been living with addictions for many decades. I was incarcerated at Grand Valley Institution for Women for 3 years, and just passed my 10-year release date on September 2nd of this year.

I have been living with HIV for the last 10 years. I started working at Oahas 7 years ago – the care and support I received since starting from fellow peers and staff has helped me stay grounded. I've been through so many ups and downs since starting, and it is an amazing feeling to know I have the care and support from the community I've built for myself through Oahas. I am proud to be doing the work I am doing and supporting others on different parts of their journey. As of November 30th, I have been abstinent for 14 months. I am always growing and am doing work to heal myself and help those around me. I love being able to connect with community, share stories and listen to those who need to be heard.

Marie and Alison will be working with PASAN each week to offer over-the-phone support for Indigenous people who are inside.

GREETINGS FROM THE TORONTO PRISONERS' RIGHTS PROJECT!

WHO WE ARE

The Toronto Prisoner's Rights Project (TPRP) is a volunteer organization of former prisoners, people with loved ones inside, front-line workers, artists, researchers, educators and students. We engage in direct action, public education, and mutual aid work to shed light on the harms caused by incarceration, and connect prisoners with social, financial, legal and health supports. We are committed to building sustainable communities rooted in community care, transformative justice, and accountability.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

We would love to work with you! We accept written work and visual art from current and former prisoners to raise awareness about issues behind bars and support our advocacy and fundraising. Submitted artwork can be used in educational campaigns and for merchandise and prints on our new online fundraising shop. If you send artwork, please let us know what we can use it for. We offer consignment for items that we sell. Please see our mailing address below.

If you have been released from prison/jail and would like to get involved with our group, please email: torontoprisonersrights@gmail.com.

THE PRISONER EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUND

Communities care about you! Since March and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Toronto Prisoners Rights Project and the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project (CPEP) has raised over \$150,000 in donations to support prisoners and those reentering the community. The fund provides a one-time \$225 stipend to cover costs related to hygiene supplies, canteen, phone bills, legal aid, housing, food, clothes, and transportation. We understand that this is a small amount of money, but we are working towards offering more impactful support.

Thank you to everyone who has applied for funds and we appreciate your patience. We have twice as many applications as funds, and our volunteers are working tirelessly to fundraise so we can continue supporting you and your loved ones. If your circumstances change (and you are in a different location or no longer need money) please let us know right away.

See the fundraiser and encourage others to donate: gofundme.com/f/prisoner-emergency-support-fund

You can apply for the fund if you need money and have no other financial alternatives (such as family support, investments, employment, or other income). Please note that due to the high number of requests, you may wait several months to receive funds.

Application Instructions:

Have a social worker, family member or friend fill out the form online at this link: tinyurl.com/PrisonerEmergencySupportFund

Please note that these funds are only available for people in Ontario, also it is very hard for us to send money orders. We prefer sending an e-transfer to you or someone you trust, who can bring the money to you. Thank you for your understanding.

CONTACT US

General Email: torontoprisonersrights@gmail.com
 Support Fund Email: prisonerfund@gmail.com
 Mailing Address: Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project, PO Box 291 Toronto P, Toronto, ON M5S 2S8

In solidarity and with love



PRISON LABOUR

By Justin Ling, Sept 16, 2020, CBA/ABC National

Inmates in Canada's federal and provincial institutions can get hired on a number of jobs — sweeping floors, preparing food, or even performing repairs for National Defense equipment. Most involve menial labour, but they offer a chance to do something productive while inside, and to make a little money. At least, they're supposed to.

Over the years, Canada has — much like the United States — become increasingly reliant on prison labour. All the while, pay for prisoners has declined as the correctional system tries to keep costs down.

It's no small matter; having money in prison is important. For starters, prisoners often need to seek out extra food from the canteens to round out their diet. The quality of prison food has gone from bad to worse in the past decade, as the federal government sought cost savings inside.

And then there are routine expenses. In 2016, the federal government finally implemented a long-planned "national inmate purchasing catalogue." According to a report from the Correctional Investigator of Canada that year, "the quantity and quality of items offered is inadequate and the prices are far frequently more expensive when compared to those in the community." A television set in the catalogue, for example, can cost double what it would in the community. Inmates must buy their own soap and shampoo as CSC no longer provides them.

No wonder prisoners increasingly rely on employment income. The trouble is that Ottawa decided to slash their pay in 2013 by 30%. Today, inmates can expect between \$5.25 and \$6.90 per day, with most earning at the low end of the scale. But deductions can reach as much as 30 per cent for "food and accommodation" and phone fees, on top of other deductions for outstanding fines.

Add inflation to the mix and prisoners have to contend with "continued and progressive erosion of inmate purchasing power," according to the Correctional Investigator. For most, there is little left at the end of the week to be set aside for savings or maintain contact with families, or purchase everyday hygiene items. With no resources upon release, former inmates face significant challenges in transitioning to a crime-free life after incarceration.

In a normal workplace, such sudden and drastic wage cuts would likely inspire a union drive. And that's what happened at Kent Institution, in British Columbia. Prisoner David Jolivet requested permission to visit cells in the facility to get inmates to sign union cards. The institution refused, so Jolivet took his case to both the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board and the Canadian

Industrial Relations Board.

His case was straightforward, arguing that offenders in federal penitentiaries retain the same fundamental rights and privileges as ordinary citizens, including the right to participate in a labour organization.

The public service labour board found that inmates are not employees per se, and if they were, they would not be considered public sector employees. The industrial board came to a similar conclusion.

Asaf Rashid, a Toronto-based lawyer who has focused on an array of legal issues facing inmates, penned a 2017 paper laying out the case for how the courts and tribunals may yet recognize the status of federal inmate as workers capable of exercising their statutory and Charter rights.

Rashid notes that inmates compete for positions and receive remuneration, much like employees do. Meanwhile, the institution exercises control over their method of work, as an employer would, and can discipline or dismiss the workers. What's more Correctional Services Canada, "obtains a real economic benefit through the labour provided by [federal inmate workers]."

Technically, inmate employment in Canadian prisons falls into two categories. The first is the rehabilitation program of CSC — known as CORCAN — which helps offenders acquire employability skills for after their release. The other is labour, intended to support everyday prison functions — like cleaning, or staffing the canteen. Both benefit the institutions and the Government of Canada.

And both jobs pay equally, though until 2013, CSC offered bonuses for inmates who performed CORCAN work. That benefit was also eliminated with the pay cuts in 2013.

And both jobs pay equally, though until 2013, CSC offered bonuses for inmates who performed CORCAN work. That benefit was also eliminated with the pay cuts in 2013.

Though CSC reported \$57 million in revenue in 2018, coming mostly from the sales of goods and services produced by low-cost inmates, the CORCAN program is not exactly profitable. According to a detailed report from the Financial Post, it cost between \$32-51-million a year. The report concluded that the program needed a total overhaul, or be shut down.

Instead, the Canadian government appears to be trying to squeeze ever-more profits from it. The workers, meanwhile, have no real power of recourse.

The federal inmate workers "exist in a very vulnerable condition where they may be subject to discipline by their jailer-employer if they are seen to be unreasonably refusing directions of their employer, which can impact their rehabilitation score and their release date," Rashid writes.

Even if these workers are not

considered public sector employees under the law, Rashid argues that a Supreme Court ruling, which paved the way for labour representation for the RCMP, establishes a precedent which could apply here. "There is now a constitutional basis to allow inclusion of employees previously excluded from collective bargaining rights," he says.

"Without the relatively low cost inputs of [federal inmate workers] in CORCAN, the business could not have experienced the same level of success and expansion CSC has noted; nor could CSC and other federal government departments benefit from relatively cheaper products and services provided through the program," he writes in his conclusion.

The effects of that business success and expansion were at the heart of arguments made in Federal Court in a 2017 case. Lawyers argued that federal pay cuts for prisoners and the general state of work inside Canada's penitentiaries amounted to cruel and unusual punishment, and engaged the Canada Labour Code.

More than a dozen current and former inmates brought the application for judicial review, alleging they were pressured to work for the institution — even as that work ultimately impoverished them.

Claude Joy, one of the applicants, told the court that he felt the prison pressured him to work in CORCAN because it was understaffed. When Joy refused, he claims, they placed him in solitary confinement.

"[Joy] was never pressured to work for CORCAN and could have applied to other positions," reads a summary of the government's affidavit, which also contended: "Inmates not participating in programs must remain in their cells with the doors locked during business hours and that this is not considered 'isolation' under the [Corrections and Conditional Release Act.]"

Other inmates alleged that the cuts to their pay made it impossible to afford over-the-counter medicine and reduced their ability to support their family.

The wide-ranging challenge, which tried to invoke international treaties on labour rights, failed. The Federal Court found that was no clear case for constitutional infringement. It then went on to dismiss the argument that the Canada Labour Code established an employee-employer relationship. It held that the Corrections Act is "unambiguous in establishing that the payments made were to encourage participation in institutional programs and social reintegration, rather than as compensation for work."

The court went on to award the government of Canada costs.

The applicants have since applied to have the case heard at the Federal Court of Appeal.

Marie-Claude Lacroix, of Simao Lacroix, was counsel for one of the inmates filing for the judicial review. She acknowledges that

winning at the appeals level "is going to be hard," but says she's confident in the relatively novel legal arguments that were brought before the court. She says the position of the court in last year's decision was fundamentally more "a political position than a legal position."

Lacroix points to a 1990 Federal Court case that affords them some hope that they can convince the appeals judges that inmates who work for Correctional Services Canada are, in fact, employees. A former inmate had sued for ownership of art he created while incarcerated. The Crown won its case by arguing that the plaintiff had been paid for the work, thereby giving it ownership over the final product.

According to Lacroix, there are also several rulings on what constitutes cruel and unusual punishment in Canadian prisons, which may convince the court on the need for better safeguards around employment and pay. She notes that in some institutions, participation in CORCAN is required for some length of time. "You have to. It's not an option," she says.

And the growing disparity between payment and the cost of living inside these institutions should, she says, push the courts to consider the impact on inmates' Charter rights. "That was the point that I tried to make in the appeals division court, but the judges seem really reluctant to think of it that way."

The courts have evolved on recognizing prisoners' rights, says Lacroix. But progress has come slowly, and requires more attention and pressure. At present, many inmates are forced to represent themselves, and access to counsel is an ongoing problem.

"In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia there are almost no lawyers who do prison law, so the inmates have to do those cases alone," she says. Even for provinces with lawyers who specialize on that front, "the work is way more than we can get from legal aid."

And given the potential impact a win for Lacroix and her clients could have, she thinks this may ultimately have to reach the Supreme Court.

For the time being, Lacroix says the Canadian government can still get away with a lot. Public opinion, coupled with hesitation from the courts in pushing the envelope on expanding prisoners' rights too far, have made tackling prison poverty an uphill climb.

OPINION: PRISON ABOLITION IS A FEMINIST STRUGGLE

By Marlihan Lopez, Nov 23, 2020, CBC News

Abolition is a vision that aims to eliminate imprisonment, policing and surveillance, and pushes for the creation of vital systems of care that many of our communities lack. For some, prison abolition and feminism do not go together. As a Black feminist, I believe otherwise. My years of

organizing within the Quebec feminist movement, specifically the movement to end sexual violence, have convinced me that abolition is feminist at its core.

My experience as a survivor of intimate partner and gender-based violence, moreover, has taught me that the police cannot protect us and that the struggle to end violence cannot be found within punitive and carceral systems.

But what does abolition mean for feminist struggles? For starters, it helps to distinguish between abolitionist feminism and carceral feminism. Carceral feminists rely on increased punitive state power in the fight to end violence against women (VAW). They believe that we can stop gender-based violence by putting perpetrators in prisons and imposing harsher sentences.

One problem with this position is that it ignores and leaves unchallenged the ways patriarchal and racialized violence is exercised through policing and prisons. This position is also based on the false assumption that the threat of punishment will stop violence from occurring. Whereas abolitionists within the feminist movement centre non-punitive, transformative community-based responses rooted in care, such as investing in life-affirming social services.

They call for equipping communities with the tools they need to disrupt and intervene in patterns of harm, but also developing accountability processes for those who enact it.

But if we defund the police, who will protect us? One of the most common questions I get as an anti-carceral feminist is "what will we do with rapists?" and "how will we keep each other safe?" After working with survivors and hearing testimonies from women who have been victims of gender-based violence, my answer is simple and straightforward. The police have proven their inability to protect us, which explains why an overwhelming majority of victims do not report their assault to the police.

Recognizing the violence and re-victimization survivors face when they report their assault and considering the number of police officers accused and convicted of intimate partner and gender-based violence, many victims believe that reparation cannot be obtained through the criminal justice system.

On the other hand, divesting from the police and carceral systems and investing in transformative community-based strategies can create innumerable possibilities for obtaining reparation and healing. Imagine investing in mental health services, shelters and sexual assault centres that are accessible and where Black, Indigenous, Trans, Disabled and other survivors of gender-based violence that face systemic discrimination can seek support.

Imagine investing in education, **cont'd on pg 6**

social housing and the creation of unarmed service teams outside the police to address mental health, drug-related crises and gender-based violence. All these efforts would address the root of systemic violence.

Alliances between anti-prison and VAW movement? Working for rape crisis centres, along with my own personal experiences with the justice system, have led me to explore abolitionist frameworks within feminist organizing. Unfortunately, there isn't much collaboration between anti-prison and feminist anti-violence movements here in Quebec. Considering the ways in which these two struggles intersect and how sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence are reproduced by the carceral state, convergence seems necessary.

Over time, the Quebec VAW movement has grown through state funding, becoming institutionalized, increasing professionalization and undermining its capacity to effectively address gender-based violence. In the process, there has also been a strong shift toward dependence on punitive responses.

These groups also pushed forward governmental agendas that conceptualized sexual violence within a framework of criminal law reinforcing broader trends erasing the systemic nature of gender-based violence. Grass-roots movements such as INCITE in the United States, have tied the rise of carceral feminisms to the state's co-optation of women's anti-violence movement by attaching funding to collaboration with law enforcement.

Healing through transformative justice

As a movement, where do we go from here? If we are to move forward, we must start acknowledging how gender-based violence is situated within structures of state violence. Our social movements can't claim to be intersectional and support institutions that enact and uphold racism, sexism, colonialism and violence.

We need to mobilize and switch responses to gender-based violence from the carceral state to community-based responses rooted in care. We must invest in transformative approaches to gender-based violence prevention that not only help us heal, but prevent further harm.

Montreal activists lay out blueprint for defunding police. This is our moment. Black Lives Matter, alongside other racial justice movements have pushed abolition out of the margins. Movements to defund the police have gained unprecedented support across North America. Through abolitionist frameworks, the possibilities for ending gender-based violence are endless.

FEDERAL PRISON INVESTIGATORS PRESS FOR CHANGES IN USE OF 'DRY CELLS'

By Shaina Luck, Nov 10, 2020, CBC News

Both the present and former ombudsman for federal prison-

ers say the Correctional Service of Canada must make changes to a prison practice called "dry celling" — a recommendation the CSC has refused to accept for eight years.

"In Canada, we don't send people to prison to be held in demeaning, undignified and painful confinement," said Howard Sapers, the correctional investigator of Canada from 2004 to 2016.

"You're sent to prison to serve a sentence and to be prepared for release. And you can't do that while you're isolated in a dry cell under 24-hour surveillance."

"Dry celling" is a practice where prisoners are kept in a cell with the lights constantly on, without a flushing toilet or running water, and watched through a glass window and security cameras 24 hours a day, even while using the toilet.

The expectation is that if an inmate has ingested or hidden contraband inside their bodies, the item will come out in their bodily waste.

Court challenge

This week, advocates for criminalized women launched a court challenge against the use of dry cells in a court in Truro, N.S. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia is backing the challenge by Lisa Adams, an inmate at the federal prison the Nova Institution for Women. Adams was held in a dry cell for 16 days in May 2020 after guards alleged she hid contraband in her vagina.

Eventually, a doctor's examination revealed that Adams had no foreign objects in her body. Her lawyers argue she suffered extreme stress, which aggravated some mental illnesses she already had.

Adams' lawyers have said her experiences "amount to torture." The CSC has said it will not comment on Adams's case as it is before the courts.

Adams and her lawyers are asking the court to strike down the section of corrections law that permits the use of dry cells, arguing it is cruel and unusual punishment, and discriminates against women and people with disabilities such as mental illness.

Recommendation on cell use

In the 2011-2012 annual report of the Correctional Investigator, Sapers recommended an "absolute prohibition on dry cell placements exceeding 72 hours."

In an interview in October, Sapers said he made the recommendation after gathering evidence from prisoners and their families, medical staff at the CSC, psychologists, corrections policy and international practices.

"Dry cell placement and other forms of restricted custody were constant themes that were reported to my office and many prisoners or their families would contact our office and they would talk about the arbitrary, punitive nature of it, the inconsistent application of these kinds of interventions — almost a capriciousness about when dry

cells or other forms of restriction were being imposed," Sapers said.

He said that 72 hours is in some ways "an arbitrary figure," as other international jurisdictions use different time limits.

"But what we wanted to make sure [of] is that the human rights, the dignity and the administrative fairness issues were all being appropriately dealt with," he said.

In response to Sapers's recommendation, the CSC declined to place any time limit on dry cells in 2012 but agreed to some policy guidance, including having the warden of the institution review the placement daily. It said there had been incidents where offenders swallowed or reinserted objects, which took the need for dry cells beyond 72 hours.

A renewed call

Those oversight measures have not satisfied the current correctional investigator of Canada, Ivan Zinger.

In June, Zinger reissued his predecessor's recommendation to place a 72-hour limit on dry celling in the 2019-2020 annual report.

He made the recommendation after his office investigated an incident where a male offender was kept in a dry cell for nine consecutive days — and no drugs or contraband were ultimately found.

In its response to the 2019-2020 report, CSC again declined to place a limit on dry cells. It said inmates in dry cells must always be provided with bedding, food, clothing and toiletries, and are given "reasonable access" to medical, spiritual and psychological help.

It also said a medical professional must visit the inmate daily, as required by the latest legislative changes in Bill C-83, which amended some prison conditions last year.

"Dry cell placements exceeding 72 hours cannot be explicitly prohibited as it is more than feasible to delay bowel movement beyond 72 hours," the CSC's response read.

Zinger declined an interview on the topic but released a Feb. 2020 letter he sent to CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly to CBC.

In the letter, Zinger wrote that on average, dry cell placements are shorter than seven days, but told Kelly his office continues to get complaints of dry cell placements that appear to be "stretching improperly."

"When these placements drag on for several days, great care must be taken not to violate the basic rights of the people subject to them," Zinger wrote in French, calling the conditions in a dry cell "by far the most restrictive imaginable — even more so than the conditions of administrative segregation."

He called on Kelly to implement the recommendation put forward by Sapers eight years ago, and further recommended that if guards believed an inmate had reinserted or re-swallowed contraband that she personally

should have to authorize dry celling beyond 72 hours.

'Less effective' for women

In Lisa Adams's court challenge, she has argued the law as it stands is discriminatory because objects are not expelled from the vagina, which could lead to longer dry cell placements for people accused of hiding objects in that cavity.

In Oct. 2011, the then-warden of Edmonton Institution for Women, Andrea Markowski, testified before the federal Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

"A woman's ability to hide items in her body cavity for long periods of time can impede our interdiction efforts. It certainly makes dry cell interventions ... a less effective intervention for us," she told the committee of MPs examining how drugs and alcohol enter prisons.

Markowski also testified that women in prison do not have the resources to move hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of drugs. She said women who smuggle drugs or tobacco in their body cavities are usually doing so in small amounts, trying to manage their own personal withdrawal symptoms or anxiety about going to prison.

A last resort

Howard Sapers said dry cells may play a role in safe institutions, but they should only be used as a last resort and with the strictest possible oversight.

COMPASSIONATE RELEASE SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED OVER MAID IN CANADIAN PRISONS, SAYS EXPERT

By Tahiat Mahboob, Nov 17, 2020, CBC

With the number of elderly, sick and mentally ill inmate populations increasing in Canadian prisons, law experts and Canada's prison ombudsman are pushing for compassionate release or parole by exception for those who are contemplating medically assistance in dying (MAID).

"It's much easier right now in this country to receive medical assistance in dying than to receive approval for a medical release or compassionate release. And that's a problem," said Adelina Iftene, an assistant professor at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, who has spent several years researching end-of-life care in Canadian prisons.

According to her research, parole by exception "is the closest Canada has to release on humanitarian grounds, but it fails to fulfil this role."

The criteria for exceptional parole are too stringent, she said, making it difficult to judge whether inmates who opt for MAID are providing true, voluntary consent.

Inmates who are suffering deserve better options so they "can be able to decide, in that context, what it is that they choose for their end of life," she told The Sunday Magazine's Piya Chattopadhyay.

Since its legalization in 2016, there has been ongoing discus-

sion in Canada about the ethics and logistics involved in implementing MAID. In 2017, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) established its own guidelines for MAID inside prisons, which outline parameters on matters such as eligibility and assessment. Since then, CSC told The Sunday Magazine that it has received 13 requests from inmates, four of which have been carried out (one within a prison and three outside.)

Correctional investigator Ivan Zinger, who has monitored MAID in CSC facilities since 2017, said the cases raise ethical and legal questions.

"The state should never be in the business of shortening people's lives inside a prison. It's just wrong."

"The preferred option should always be to release people early in the community, especially those that may end up requiring MAID so that they can make those decisions in the community," he said. "That's the best possible scenario, one that is more consistent with the MAID legislation."

In an email statement, CSC spokesperson Isabelle Robitaille said, "the MAID process as currently set out in CSC policy is comprehensive and contains numerous safeguards to ensure that inmates get full legal protection."

Watchdog calls for MAID moratorium

In his most recent annual report, Zinger called for a temporary moratorium on MAID in prisons, until the necessary policy changes have been instituted.

But Iftene is concerned that a complete moratorium could be ill-advised.

"[It is] a little counterintuitive to say that the solution to the complete lack of autonomy of individuals is to further remove their choices, and to infantilize [them] by saying that they cannot consent," she said.

"The solution would be, in fact, to increase their choices — and to ensure the circumstances in which they make these choices are actually conducive to a proper informed consent."

Zinger agreed that inmates should not be denied access to MAID, but maintained that assisted deaths should only occur outside prisons.

"The point is where would the procedure take place? Ideally you should see people who are getting sick, have cancer, and no longer pose risk, [be] eligible for parole."

These individuals should be released into the community, nursing homes, hospices and halfway houses with geriatric care where they can make an informed decision about MAID, he said.

"The problem is that we're allowing too many people to die in custody because of the lack of efforts to transfer those individuals. And they don't have alternatives."

In an email statement, Parole Board of Canada (PBC) spokes-

person Iulia Pescarus Popa said the board works closely with CSC to expedite a review for inmates who are terminally ill or have requested a medically assisted death. She added that in November 2018, changes were made to its policy for reviewing cases for parole by exception involving terminally ill inmates "to clarify that it is not necessary to require a defined period of life expectancy."

Popa said parole by exception cases have increased amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 1, 12 parole by exception cases have been granted and another 11 cases are currently pending decision, versus only four parole by exception cases granted in 2019-2020.

Seeking accountability Zinger noted that current legislation exempts CSC from conducting an internal investigation and issuing a report when an inmate requests and receives MAID — something that is a statutory requirement for any other death in prison.

"For me, that's a problem with respect to openness, transparency and accountability."

"They should investigate whether everything was done to release the person quickly and they should look at the medical file to see whether the standard of care that was provided in the dying days and leading up to it was all in compliance with the law and best practices."

Inmates have access to "sub-standard" end-of-life care inside prison, Iftene added, lacking palliative care, pain management, and access to family and community supports.

In an email to The Sunday Magazine, CSC spokesperson Marie Pier Lécyer noted CSC health-care providers are accredited by health-care accreditation body Accreditation Canada.

"Accreditation is an ongoing process of assessment against established standards to assess what is going well and what needs to be approved. When offenders are not released by the PBC at end of life, CSC provides end-of-life health care services to offenders."

In October, the House of Commons gave approval in principle to Bill C-7, which expands medical assistance in dying. Zinger says he might have the opportunity to make his recommendations before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights as it reviews it. The deadline to amend the original legislation is Dec. 18.

"I'm hoping that on the issue of openness, transparency and accountability, that the bill will introduce a section to amend the previous bill to remove that exception — that the service does not have to investigate MAID cases," he said.

While CSC said Public Safety Minister Bill Blair commits to a review of MAID in prisons by the end of 2021, Iftene is skeptical about the prospects of more structural change.

"There is no political will to

change anything for prisoners, and even less so for MAID," she told Chattopadhyay. "I am quite disheartened by the little progress that we have seen regarding upholding of prisoners' rights generally and regarding the will of the governments — any of them — to do something to ensure that the rights of prisoners are being protected."

INMATE AT B.C. PRISON SAYS RESPONSE TO MASSIVE COVID-19 OUTBREAK WAS 'NOT NICE AT ALL'

By Sean Boynton & Srushti Gangdev, Global News, June 17, 2020

An inmate at the site of the largest federal prison outbreak of COVID-19 in Canada says staff at the facility wasted weeks when responding to the rapidly spreading health crisis, and even slowed progress further to quell rising fears.

The inmate, whom Global News is not identifying so as to ensure his safety, is among the 120 inmates at Mission Institution in B.C.'s Fraser Valley who got infected with the novel coronavirus earlier this year. About a dozen staff members also tested positive before the outbreak was declared over on May 28, and one of the inmates later died of the disease.

The outbreak forced the prison to go into lockdown in early April, which remains largely in place to prevent future cases within the facility.

Although he had a mild case, the inmate said he had trouble breathing and lost his sense of taste and smell. Yet he didn't learn he was positive until weeks into the outbreak.

"They said they didn't have enough (tests)," he told Global News. "I kept telling them I was in contact with someone (infected) before the lockdown, and they just wouldn't give me a test. I was writing requests and just complaining every day."

"They tested me maybe three weeks into it. I tested negative at first, and I asked them for another one and I tested positive."

As he waited for his test results, he said he watched as inmates around him became infected, often severely.

"Day after day, there were people going to the hospital in my unit," he said. "They were getting taken out on stretchers. It was pretty serious."

Despite the growing number of infections, the inmate said staff were slow to put the necessary physical-distancing measures in place. Inmates were still being gathered together in the eating and health-care areas of the prison, he said, which helped the virus spread further.

The inmate said he believes he caught the virus from a correctional officer or a health-care worker who themselves may have contracted it from someone in the prison.

Once the prison was finally locked down — confining inmates to their cells and isolating those who were infected — conditions quickly deteriorated, the inmate said.

"For the first two weeks, they were only giving us two meals a day, and it was at different times so we were hungry all day," he said. "We also weren't getting any showers or phone calls. No lawyer calls, nothing."

"Those couple of weeks were really not nice at all, actually. It was like they were treating us like we did something wrong." The inmate said he also heard from a correctional officer that before the lockdown, the warden had told staff not to bring in their own personal protective equipment because "they didn't want to scare us by them wearing it."

Conditions did steadily improve as the lockdown went on, the inmate said.

Meals that were delivered to the inmates' cells became more consistent, he explained and more precautions were put in place to ensure no contact with staff during those deliveries.

The inmates are also being allowed out for 20 minutes a day for showers and phone calls, when at the start of the lockdown the inmate said they would only be freed for as little as five minutes.

But he said being isolated for most of the day for more than two months has taken a toll on his mental health.

"I'm just scared," he said. "I just don't know what's going to happen here."

In late April, Canada's prison ombudsman Ivan Zinger said strict isolation of inmates is a violation of their human rights, even during a pandemic. At the time, he said that prison authorities had flagged about 400 inmates as under some form of medical isolation in facilities across Canada, which Zinger called "deeply concerning."

The inmate's account is similar to the one shared with Global News in April by Jennifer Metcalfe, a B.C. lawyer who has multiple clients imprisoned at Mission Institution.

Metcalfe said at the time that she had heard concerns from her clients about a lack of testing, sporadic meals and little to no time for showers or phone calls.

"The whole situation is just totally out of control," she told Global News at the time, which was less than two weeks after the prison was locked down.

Metcalfe also raised concerns about staff not being given gloves or masks at one point, saying they had only been issued the protective gear "recently."

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers spent the early weeks of the outbreak in Mission also voicing concerns about before the gear was finally provided.

Correctional Service Canada has maintained that all necessary health and safety precautions were followed as soon as cases were identified within the prison.

Cleaning was increased in all areas of the facility, officials said, and staff were given strict instructions to limit the transmission of COVID-19.

Officials also insisted that inmates were given three meals a day and ample shower and phone time.

In a statement to Global News following the inmate's interview, Mission Institution's assistant warden Sheila Bonn said staff remain in close contact with Fraser Health, the local health authority, on their response and are working with Health Canada on safety measures.

"We are currently transitioning from our medical lockdown to provide more inmate movement within the institution," Bonn said, adding that all personnel are being provided with masks and that enhanced cleaning measures remain in place.

"Our protocol involves medically isolating inmates who show symptoms of COVID-19, removing them from the general population promptly to prevent the spread of infection," she said.

According to Fraser Health, no new infections have been reported at the prison since May 1, after providing "extensive consultation on infection prevention and control measures" in April to help contain the disease.

SENIORS, LONG-TERM CARE WORKERS SHOULD BE FIRST IN LINE FOR COVID-19 VACCINE, COMMITTEE SAYS

John Paul Tasker, CBC News, Dec 04, 2020

The independent committee charged with deciding who should be the first Canadians to be vaccinated against COVID-19 today released its final directive recommending that long-term care home residents and seniors over the age of 80 get priority access to shots.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) said the initial, limited quantity of vaccine doses should be reserved for people who are most at risk of contracting the virus and developing severe symptoms.

While the federal government is procuring the vaccines and consulting with bodies like NACI to help coordinate distribution based on need, it will be up to the individual provinces and territories to decide who gets vaccinated when.

Canada's long-term care homes have been hit hard by the novel coronavirus, with thousands of deaths reported since the onset of this pandemic.

NACI said that since the elderly residents of long-term care and assisted living facilities, retirement homes and chronic care hospitals face "severe outcomes" and a much greater chance of dying from the disease, they should be at the top of the list for the initial batch of roughly six million doses that will be made available in Canada in the first three months of 2021.

Pfizer's vaccine, which is expected to be the first product approved by regulators for use

in Canada, requires two doses — so roughly three million people should be inoculated in this first stage of the rollout.

NACI said it's not just the residents who should go first — it's also recommending that provinces and territories prioritize the staff who work at these sites for early vaccination.

After long-term care home residents and staff are immunized, NACI said the next priority group should be all Canadians over the age of 80.

"All adults of advanced age should be prioritized for initial doses of authorized COVID-19 vaccines, beginning with adults 80 years of age and older, then decreasing the age limit in 5-year increments to age 70 years as supply becomes available," the final directive reads.

After the 80-plus cohort is vaccinated, front line health care workers should be next in the queue, said NACI.

The committee said that doctors, nurses and other staff at hospitals should get their shots early to maintain staffing levels in the health care system.

"Immunizing health care workers and other workers functioning in a health care capacity (e.g. personal support workers) minimizes the disproportionate burden of those taking on additional risks to protect the public, thereby upholding the ethical principle of reciprocity," the directive reads.

NACI also expressed concern about Indigenous adults living in communities "where infection can have disproportionate consequences, such as those living in remote or isolated areas."

Because health care options are limited at the best of times in these remote areas, Indigenous individuals can face an elevated risk of death and "societal disruption," NACI said.

For that reason, the committee said that some First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities should be in the first cohort to get vaccinated.

These four groups — long-term care residents and staff,

the elderly, front line health care workers and some Indigenous adults — are expected to consume all of the six million doses to be delivered in the first three months of 2021.

"As a ballpark, these four groups of people, as things are rolled out, should be covered by the initial doses," said Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer.

Second phase vaccinations for essential workers In the second phase, which could begin in April 2021 as more supply comes online, other essential workers will have access.

The vaccine advisory committee said first responders — such as police officers, firefighters and health care workers not included in the initial rollout — should be next in line in this second phase.

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The residents and staff in other "congregate settings" — such as migrant workers, prisoners in correctional facilities and people in homeless shelters — should then follow, NACI recommended.

Canada has seen a number of outbreaks in correctional facilities and places like farms and meat production and packing facilities where maintaining physical distancing is challenging and infection prevention and control measures are limited.

NACI said it would be prudent for provinces and territories to make shots available in these high-risk places early to stop further caseload spikes.

Other essential workers should be included in the second wave of vaccinations, NACI said. Ultimately, it will be up to the provinces and territories to more precisely define who qualifies as an "essential worker," but the committee suggested grocery store staff could be on that list.

Dr. Howard Njoo, Canada's deputy chief public health officer, said Canada is expecting more product to arrive from the other drug companies that have developed promising vaccines — such as Massachusetts-based Moderna and Johnson & Johnson's pharmaceutical division, Janssen — in the months to follow.

"We'll have enough for everyone because there's nothing magic that happens between the end of March and the beginning of April. These shipments will be coming and more doses will be coming," he said.

Public Services and Procurement Minister Anita Anand announced today that Canada will buy 20 million more doses of the Moderna vaccine than originally planned.

The risk of spoilage Data from the company's final clinical trial are encouraging, demonstrating the vaccine is 94.1 per cent effective at preventing COVID-19 and 100 per cent effective at preventing severe cases of the disease.

Because initial quantities are expected to be quite limited, given global demand, NACI urged provinces and territories to implement measures to avoid "dose wastage."

NACI said these jurisdictions should be prepared to vaccinate groups that don't easily fit within the predefined categories to avoid losing usable product through spoilage. The Pfizer vaccine needs to be kept at approximately -80 degrees Celsius to remain stable and cannot be easily transported from one setting to another.

"If doses of COVID-19 vaccine(s) have been delivered to an immunization setting and have been used for a group recommended in Stage 1 but cannot be re-located to another setting for other groups recommended in Stage 1, remaining doses on-site may be provided to individuals in the groups recommended in Stage 2 in order to minimize the risk of vaccine wastage and maximize the benefits of vaccination," the committee said.



The Arabian Night: CAMEL MAN!

By Zakaria Amara

10:30 P.M – Prison Cell #128

I was lying in bed with the lights off, watching the premier of "Camel Man" – the first Hollywood movie to ever feature a Middle-Eastern superhero. It starred Lightning Larabie – who in real life is a popular camel race announcer-acting as Jay Jamal, a 20-year-old petty criminal, who should have probably chosen a different career.

The movie begins with Jay trying to rob a bank without a mask, and a rusty paintball gun. As he bursts into Royal Bank's central branch and shouts at everyone to "GET DOWN!" he fails to notice the presence of 10 heavyweight boxers, along with the entire line up of the Toronto Argonauts Football team, who happen to be there for a promotional event.

The next scene shows Jay being carried out on a stretcher. He ends up serving his entire sentence in the prison infirmary.

Since resiliency is an essential superhero quality, just a day after his release from prison, Jay tries to rob a convenience store that's inconveniently located next to a police station. Since it's only 6:00 A.M and the store has just opened, the cash register contains only 52 cents and a few rubber bands.

Still without a mask, Jay runs into the store, points his rusty paintball gun towards the cashier's head, and while channeling his inner Queen Latifa, demands the cash. The Chinese lady behind the counter remains calm, and with grace and composure befitting a devout Buddhist, smiles and hands over the 52 cents to Jay, as she wishes him good luck with the rest of his

day. Jay accepts the loot with confusion, and as he walks out, is still unsure whether he has just failed or succeeded; and so in order to alleviate his doubts and tip the scales in favour of success, he violently snatches a large bag of pretzels off the shelf as he walks out the door.

The police arrest Jay a few yards away, when they find him on all fours, chocking on a pretzel.

The next scene shows him in prison again, but this time is different. Instead of

recovering in the infirmary, he gets the chance to rub shoulders with real criminals who could teach him the tricks of the trade.

One day while walking in the prison yard, Jay comes across Teez Ala Teez; a 50 year old, red bearded, bald, heavy set, career criminal – who also happens to be a brethren from the desert. The two bond together like bread and butter and soon become cellmates.

On the outside, Teez was a smuggler of every illegal product you can imagine. And since he is serving a long sentence, he needs someone he could trust – or rather manipulate -to carry out his work on the outside. Jay strikes him as the perfect protégé, and like an old wise sage with his devout student, Teez uses each night to teach Jay how to become a professional criminal.

Finally, on the night before Jay's release, Teez gives him a farewell talk. He tells Jay that he has never met a young man with so much potential to strike it big in the criminal underworld. As Jay beams like a boy who just found out that school is cancelled forever, Teez pumps him with praise after praise until he is like a balloon that's ready to burst.

"Look Jay, I have a shipload of camel milk in powder form, ready to arrive in Montreal in a few days. I have no one to trust but you. I need you to deliver it to Giuseppe, the Godfather of the Featheroni clan. He should pay you in cash when you make the delivery. Once you have the money, I want you to come back to Toronto and deposit it in this account," Teez says as he hands Jay a piece of paper with the information.

Jay accepts the job without hesitation, and feels great pride that someone has finally recognized his potential.

The next day Jay gets released. Everything goes according to plan. He travels to Montreal and picks up the shipment using a U-Haul truck. (Since importing camel milk violates Canada's dairy regulations, the packages are labeled "Real Powder Milk", which fools everyone.) Only a criminal mastermind like Teez could have come up with such a clever diversion, a smiling Jay thinks to himself, as he drives to meet Giuseppe at an abandoned warehouse.

Jay then delivers the product to Giuseppe, who is flanked by armed guards. (The movie doesn't explain how a one eyed rooster became head of a crime family, but I guess anything is possible in a Superhero movie). Not a single word is exchanged between the two, and the transaction is completed without a hitch.

With the money secured, Jay heads back to Toronto and deposits it in Teez's account after taking his 0.001% cut, which he uses to buy a brand new paintball gun. (He doesn't bother to buy a mask).

With the most successful day of his life behind him, Jay goes to sleep that night grinning from ear to ear. He has finally made it!

An hour later, four masked men kick in his door. Jay wakes up startled, immediately reaches for his paintball gun, and fires off several blank shots in the direction of the unknown assailants (He forgot to buy paintballs). One of the men snatches the gun away from him and swings it back at his head like a baseball bat.

Jay is out on the first strike.

When Jay wakes up again, he finds himself in an open grave that must have been a 100 feet deep.

Thunder booms, signalling the coming of rain.

As Jay looks up at the cloudy night sky, he sees a silhouette of a rooster wearing a trench coat, standing at the edge of the grave. Jay feels something raining down on him that isn't water. He quickly realizes it's sunflower seed shells.

"You crossed me!" Giuseppe says, sounding like Al Pacino.

"What do you mean?" Jay cries out like a child.

"The camel milk... the camel milk was cut with goat milk! You tried to make a fool out of me!"

"Mr. Rooster..." Jay whines, "I had no idea...Look, I didn't know!"

"That's what they all say..." Giuseppe says as he signals to his men to fill the grave with a huge pile of camel shit that he somehow acquired.

"No please!" Jay begs as the first load of dung lands directly on him like a wet blanket.

"Mr. Rooster!" he cries out as a second load lands on him like bad slushy.

Jay struggles to breathe, and as the weight of the accumulating dung becomes overbearing, he realizes that he is about to die. So he begins to think about his life and how he had wasted it; he

thinks about all the bad things that he had done, and at that moment makes a vow that if he somehow makes it out alive, then he will become a "reproductive member of society" - a term he misremembers from his time in prison.

A moment of silence follows, then suddenly, lightning strikes the grave initiating a freak symbiotic reaction. Jay's face contorts as he yells out in agony and fear. His body begins to transform, as his muscles explode in size, and a giant hump bursts out of his back.

The next scene shows a distant shot of the grave as the night sky unleashes hundreds of lightning bolts. Suddenly, camel dung explodes out of the grave in every direction, as a silhouette of a giant figure with a large hump and a camel head leaps out of it. As he lands on the ground, he looks up at the stormy night and lets out a primal cry.

Lightening strikes all around him...

PAUSE II

I don't know about you, but I tend to quickly lose interest in Superhero movies soon after the genesis part of the story is told. They're really all the same after that – Villain appears; Hero struggles to defeat him due to inner demons; Hero overcomes his inner struggles and defeats the Villain. The End.

So at this point in the movie, I began to doze off and faded away...

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As I slept, I dreamt of Camel Man ripping the back wall of my cell away as if it was a piece of cardboard. He had Camel Joe's head, the Hulk's body, and wore a cape-less Superman suit with a "C" emblem instead of an "S".

I stood there startled, looking at him not knowing how to react.

He extended his hand towards me, and with a sense of urgency, asked me to come with him.

The night behind him was full of stars – and possibilities.

When he saw that I was hesitant, he urged me to hurry up. He said that I had spent enough time behind bars, and that it was time for me to become a "reproductive member of society".

"Productive" I corrected him, but it just went over his head.

As I stood there staring at his extended hand, time seemed to pause, and I began to think about what being out there again meant for me. I've spent the last 14 years buried alive in this grave...that can alter you in ways that can't be undone; it can make you forget what it feels like to be free. Sometimes I catch myself thinking that there is no place in society for people who have seen too much.

Still standing there at the border between the two worlds, I thought of a passage from a novel that I once read...It always comes to me whenever I think about being free again.

"When you come home", Nadya had written. That was the horror

Amara cont'd from page 8

of it. For "you" there could be no homecoming. After fourteen years in the army and in jail, not a single cell of your body would be as it had been before. You could only be a newcomer. A new man, an unknown man bearing her husband's name would turn up, and his former wife would see that her first, her only love, for whom she had waited fourteen years, shutting herself off from the world, no longer existed, that he had evaporated, molecule by molecule.

All would be well if in this new, second life they came to love each other all over again.

But what if they did not? And anyway, would you yourself want freedom after so many years; would you want to go outside into the frenzied whirl, so inimical to the human heart, so hostile to the peace of the soul? Would you not pause on the threshold of your prison window and peer anxiously out; should I or shouldn't I go there?"

Finally, I answered him: "There is no place for me out there," I said, as I bowed my head and tears began to flow down my face.

His hand retreated and a sad expression began to cloud his face.

"I know exactly how you feel," He said, and then turned around and took a leap into the dark night...

Epilogue

"...Much as a prisoner rebels at first against the structured carceral environment with all its rules and regulations and rigid routines, over time, he becomes ever more dependent on it. In every aspect of his daily life, he is relegated to the powerless status of a child. Deprived of privacy, he is told when to go to bed and when to get up, when and what to eat, when he can move from one part of the prison to another, when he can go outside, when he can see or speak to his loved ones, and so on. In this extremely controlled environment, the prisoner becomes infantilized, losing both his autonomy and his sense of self-worth as a valuable functioning adult.

At the same time, the prison environment is also extremely hostile and dangerous. The prisoner must be hyper-vigilant around other inmates, adopting a "tough guy" persona to protect himself. Deprived of security, his daily life in this dystopia is shaped by fear, distrust, suspicion, and paranoia. Not only must he abide by the rules of the institution that govern all aspects of his behaviour, but also he must constantly navigate the perilous twists and turns of the convict code of behaviour as well. Adding to this toxic and chaotic stew of power, control, and manipulation is the fact that those who are institutionalized have little or no insight into what imprisonment has actually done to them psychologically and even less idea of how to cope with or begin to reverse this damage after they are released." -Diane Schoemperlen



Illustration by Brian Kerr

Kerr cont'd from cover story

Where's the accountability?

What does this say about the institutional and judicial systems' credibility and sympathetic ability to relate, make appropriate determinations and just empathetic and respectful, copesetic decisions and resolutions?

Quite the contrary, it is so deplorably hypocritical it reeks of what can only be described as totalitarian, biased and factious.

I want those of you on the outside who are reading this to know, that though we are deemed as "criminals" - our lives still matter. You know why? Because they do. We, like you have families and loved ones, many of whom have been unfortunate enough to pass while their loved ones were being apprehended in custody. I myself have lost my mother, two uncles, an aunt and a brother. Since my last bout of incarceration spanning as far back as Aug 2005 to date.

During this time, I was completely ostracized from my family, as I was given a 100-mile radius restriction from my hometown. Yes, that's right (miles), again is this not Canada? Should it not be measured in kilometers? Nevertheless, where's the empathy in this? How come my family, a four-year-old child, a 63-year-old mother, a brother, a sister and two nephews weren't taken into consideration?

After all I was a long-time, born and raised Native resident of my hometown in which I was ultimately sentenced. Surely, the courts were aware. It's not like it was my first rodeo before the judicial system. It's not like they weren't familiar with me; as they so like to keep reminding me of, every time they pass a sentence or write a judicial report. I mean they know me better than most of my childhood friends do! Or at least, they seem to think they do!

But this, like most instances in respect to the judicial/institutional correctional system, dare I say "Criminal Justice System," is entirely one-sided. They only seem to consider the negative attributes in one's life or historical background. Very little reflection

of goodness or beneficial accomplishment is ever truly given.

To date, I have completed 4 college level studies: Business Law, Business Fundamentals, International Business Concepts and Life-span Development Psychology. None of which are or have been acknowledged or made mention of in any way shape or form by those who decide what happens with me.

Dentistry: On or about the 17th Aug 2020, I went to the dentist about a severely sensitive tooth. I know it's only the one tooth which is the aggravative problem. However, I'm being told it's two teeth and that I need a root canal. Surprisingly, he didn't want to pull it or should I say, pull them. I know it is more lucrative for them to perform root canals than extractions.

On this same day I inquired into having my teeth cleaned. I again was quite surprised when the Dentist told me I would have to put \$80 transferable to the Ministry of Corrections and Community Safety, aka the Attorney General.

OK, I know Ontario Premier Doug Ford really screwed some things up for Corrections on the Provincial side of things, for instance he made it next to impossible to hold Correctional Officers and the Ministry of Corrections and Community Services, aka the Attorney General, accountable for any wrongdoing or mistreatment towards inmates. But really, what the hell's going on here, on the federal front? I mean Stephen Harper's gone. Harris is but a fart in the wind... I, like many others, thought Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, aka "Super Canuck" was different. Did Trudeau not get the memo from both Provincial and Federal inmate votes? OR is the percentage of inmates + the influenced relatives + whoever else they manage to influence, not a big enough percentage for him to consider or worry about as having a significant impact on his next federal election?

Privileged Mail: Then we have the issue of Correctional officers reluctantly opening Federally protected mail, contrary to Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitutional law and fundamental principles. Wow, if Ford had any impact upon this, as to the explanation of why and how they set away with it, Kudos.. Buddy, Kudos. Nothing like over-stepping your boundaries.

Today, in response to a grievance I filed, it is stated that there is no evidence to substantiate my claim that Federal legal Correspondence is being opened by V&C officers at the institution that I currently reside. Interestingly enough, they didn't say this in response to the first initial complaint I filed in this regard.

It seems Correctional manager

Pardy and his constituents find it much more convenient to simply ignore the situation and to pass it off like just another everyday simple infraction.

When in reality it constitutes as a very serious Federal offence, absolutely criminal in nature and carries a penalty of life imprisonment, according to section 345 of the criminal code.

Well, if some of this didn't convince you of the possibility that our lives matter, perhaps this will shed a little light.

Indigenous Rights: During my first initial stay here, I encountered an officer who reluctantly would come on range yelling, "Open the f*ing window," or, "That shit f*ing stinks", and other such statements in reference to Indigenous spiritual smudge/medicine (the Indigenous prisoners are, by law, allowed to burn and partake as part of their spiritual practices).

This is a major slap in the face of Indigenous people, who take such practices and matters rather seriously. It is an insult not only toward us, but also towards our ancestors.

Prisoner Justice Day: The Inside Perspective of an Outsider
By Casey Dauphin

I give myself the label of 'outsider' only because this is my first prison sentence, and I had never heard of Prisoner Justice Day until it was announced late last week. Immediately, I knew I had to take part, to the fullest extent that I could. This would surprise many who know me, as I'm not invested in politics or causes and rarely take overt stands on social issues. However, this is different. By marking the day with the minor sacrifice of denial, I stand not only in solidarity with, but also in gratitude for those who went before me and those whose lives were ended during their journey through the criminal justice system.

I understand the significance of this day through the lenses of who I am as a person; a historian and a veteran. The latter of the two is fairly self-evident as to my comprehension of sacrifice, and especially of honouring the memory of fallen comrades. I might not know their names, when and how they died, but they were men and women like myself, being held to account for our actions against society at large. Being a historian might be a bit more work to justify, so bear with me. It needs to be considered that the history of criminal justice is not my specialty, but I do know a few things. One is that treatment of prisoners today is vastly different than it was in the past. By no means am I asserting a prisoner in the present is always treated with equality and humanity, but I am fond of saying "things don't have to get better, but they can always be worse." Much worse, in fact, where facilities failed to meet even basic human needs; when corporal punishment was common and often brutal; where

These people progress to take our ways into consideration, yet spit in our faces while we're performing them.

There is a NILO (Native Institutional liaison officer) who is responsible for bringing the Native Smudge medicine to the unit and ensuring that all listed Indigenous prisoners are in receipt of such provisions.

At first, she came on average once a week (this being every Friday). Then somehow it was reduced to once every two weeks (every second Friday). I'm expecting it to be soon reduced to once a month, given the way it's been going, if not somehow eliminated altogether.

So, I leave you with this one final thought...

Get to know the injustices and struggles those of us who are on the inside/caught up in the judicial system face, and let the world know that it is wrong and unacceptable how we are treated. Because our lives matter.

Special thanks to the following inmates:

John Goodall, Shawn Ditrish & Alex Cunningham

shackling for indefinite periods was permitted; when inmates were forbidden to speak and capital offences were statute.

Progress has neither been instantaneous nor confined to the efforts of a single group. As much as politics and civil advocacy have been responsible for enacting change, so have inmates given their voice. In a situation where most effective avenues of protest are moot, one expression of grievance remains: the hunger strike. Such protests have called attention to disparities within the system as well as putting public exposure to injustices such as the detention of women suffragists and the politically motivated incarceration of vocal opponents to government policy during the Great Depression.

Today, I take part in abstaining from daily routine and fasting in cooperation with my fellow inmates. The statement I wish my participation to make is that any preventable death - by overdose, violence or suicide - within prison walls should be just that; preventable. Accountability is not enough even if it were imagined that accountability was a consistent condition. Actively including addictions counselling, pro-social rehabilitation, education and mental health services as part of restorative justice does not have to be at odds with punitive justice. While some restorative measures exist, they remain substantially inadequate in content and availability. Canadians held to terms of confinement do justice to the system by not continuing to break the law. Better treatment and more opportunities to healthily reintegrate into society would reduce recidivism and strengthen our communities.

As for me, I'm making sure my first Prisoner Justice Day is my last one behind bars but shall not be the last one I will observe. There's work to be done.



A lesson you won't see coming

By Michael Hector

I remember this particular lesson quite vividly even if I can't quite remember if my mother gave the bag to my dad or if he somehow found it himself. But that really doesn't play a part in this particular story so I will start by telling you, we lived in a not so large complex, 3 bedrooms one bath, kitchen dining area and a living room all on the main floor. The basement was unfinished. A wide-open space with a laundry area at the far end and a makeshift rec room almost smack dab in the middle of the basement. A 15 by 20-foot orange and brown remnant framed by an old 4 seat beige sofa with a matching lazy boy, reserved for our dad, even when he wasn't there. A solid oak coffee table, two miss matched end tables and a floor model TV.

When my dad called my name, I was in the living room upstairs sitting on the couch watching TV waiting for my mom to call us to the dinner table. Before I could answer back, he rounded the corner, one of two entrances to the living room. There were two ways into the living room, one at the front connecting the living room to the front door and the dining room. The second connected the living room to the kitchen and the hallway, which would lead you through the rest of the house, which included a stairway to a landing at the side door and down to the basement. As my dad rounded the corner, I notice he was carrying my gym bag. The one I was sure was hidden properly, in the very back

of my bedroom closet. My heart sank at the sight of the gym bag because I knew what was in the bag. And by the look on my dad's face, he knew too, and was not at all pleased with what had been discovered inside my gym bag.

The only time I ever use this bag is to stow away my treasure. The word treasure refers to all the jewelry I have lifted from numerous stores in and around my neighborhood. These treasures were not the loot or spoils of a life lived as a pirate but the ill-gotten gains of a boy stealing for attention, but not really sure he wants the attention he is about to get. Yup, nothing more than a 14-year-old "klepto".

"Michael, what's this doing in your closet?" asks my dad as soon as our eyes meet

"What. That's my gym bag." I reply weakly

Reaching into the bottom of the gym bag, in what I thought was a secret compartment; my dad pulls out a handful of jewelry. Asking again, a little more forcefully. "What is this Michael? And What was it doing in your closet?"

Trying not to look away, I shrug my shoulders and simultaneously say "I dunno."

I can see the color in my dad's face begin to change to a peculiar shade of red, a shade it seemed only I was able to bring to my dad's face. "What do you mean you don't know?"

Once again, I shrug. Out of fear and an inability to formulate any kind of plan to get myself out of something I know I have no way out of. "I dunno."

We go back and forth for a couple of minutes. Same questions with identical responses, each

one of mine includes a shrug of my shoulders.

Looking back, I would have to say that the shrug of my shoulders was even more infuriating than my inability to adequately answer my dad's interrogation. Finally, my dad sends me to my room, letting me know that I will be waiting for the conclusion of this situation after everyone else finishes dinner. "No, Michael. You won't be eating dinner with us tonight." Are his last words. As I walk down the hall to my room, the hallway seems to grow longer with each step. My mind filling with memories of every punishment I have ever received. Each thought more painful than the last, each one like a flash as though my life is flashing before my eyes.

As I reach my room, my dad's words were still ringing in my ears like an evil bell rung by the keeper to the gates of hell.

"I'll deal with you after supper, go to your room!" Is what he said. Even though I hear them with my ears, I could feel those words all through my body.

Sitting in my room waiting, I knew the one question he would need me to answer was the one question I feared most of all. I knew he was going to ask me where all the jewelry came from? And I honestly couldn't tell him. Man, oh man, what a dilemma. I knew I would have to be honest with him, but I had no way of being completely honest since I truly could not remember every one of the places I had stolen all that jewelry from. I had taken something from just about every store I ever walked through. I couldn't tell you how it started, not even sure I can even accurately tell you why.

I can tell you that there was a time when I took things to get accepted by some of the people I tried to befriend or rather I had hoped would befriend me. That is where the looking for attention thing came into play, at least in the beginning. Somewhere along the line, I found myself continuing to take things with no means to make use of what I was stealing. Hence the gym bag full of pirate's booty. I am sure in my teenage brain I found myself often justifying what I was doing but looking back I don't know how.

When my dad walked into my bedroom, I was sitting on my bed still trying to figure out how I would answer the question I was sure he was going to ask.

"Michael, where did all that jewelry come from?" Was, as I guessed, his first question.

"Zellers, the one in the South Ward Mall." I said in a very small, panicked voice.

No way could I have told the full truth on that one.

I have to admit I was somewhat confused as to why he sounded so calm. I was hoping against hope that it was because he had time to think and after a big meal like dinner, he always laid down for a 30-minute nap. Perhaps, that had slowed him down a bit too.

"Why Michael? What the hell

do you need with all that jewelry?" Another question I knew was coming but a lot harder to answer.

"I dunno Dad." Was all I could think to say as I once again shrugged my shoulder. With that one response, I could again see that specific shade of red I know as my fault.

I was ready for his next question but not my reply. "What do you think I should do? What should your punishment be?" I could hear the frustration in his voice, and I was pretty sure I was only going to make it worse. "I dunno." My voice still small. "I guess I should give it back?"

"Well go put your shoes on. We are going to Zellers and YOU are going to give it all back." My dad sounded determined and I think I may have sensed just a hint of pride that his son came up with the solution.

I can't say that I remember too much about the ride to Zellers outside of the fact that it was really quiet and tension filled. We arrived at the mall and it was getting dark outside. The diminishing daylight bringing with it an eerie sense of despair, only increased by the continuity of silence since we had first got into the car.

It was a little more off-putting to have the automatic doors open ever so smoothly and quietly as if they too knew I was walking to my doom.

It was a blur of fear of prosecution and retribution as I vaguely heard my dad ask for the manager as we approached the information desk. "Excuse me miss, could we please speak with the manager?"

"Mr. Beaumont to the information desk. Mr. Beaumont to the information desk please." Could be heard from one end of the store to the other.

The young lady behind the counter stated with a very calculated smile. "Mr. Beaumont should be with you directly sir."

"Thank you." My dad replied. I am certain of two things at this point, well three if you include the fact that I am sure I am destined for prison. First of all, I know it was only a minute or two before the manager showed up and second, it felt like an eternity. Something I am sure it feels like to be forced to walk the plank.

"My name is Mr. Beaumont and I am the manager. How may I help you sir?" Is what he said as he approached myself and my dad. His hand outstretched toward my dad.

My dad shook his hand firmly and a little bit like he was applying for a job. I think we were both nervous. I am sure I would have won any prize that might come from the "he who is the most nervous" contest.

"Sir, my son has taken a number of pieces of jewelry from your store and he would like to return them." Said my dad in a very matter of fact tone.

Mr. Beaumont turned his head ever so slightly as my dad pulled all the various pieces of loot from my gym bag. Which for the

record, I had not even noticed he had in his hand until that very moment. I can't even remember seeing the bag after my dad brought it to my attention in the doorway of our living room.

Now here is where the lesson comes into play. I can remember distinctly my fear dissipating slowly as I notice a look in the eyes of the indignant Mr. Beaumont. Something that I really couldn't have explained at the time but I know I have seen it many times since and shamefully I have worn that very look too many times myself. But I will say with a unique sense of pride that I have never seen that look in the eyes of my dad.

The look I saw in the eyes of Mr. Beaumont, the manager of Zellers was one of greed, cold and calculating greed.

As I mentioned earlier in this little anecdote, I couldn't tell my dad that I had stolen from just about every store I had walked through in the last year or so. Which meant that very few of those pieces of jewelry were actually from Zellers and in fact a few of the chains I knew for sure I had stolen from P.'s Jewelers and were significantly more expensive than anything that could have come from the store I was presently standing in.

I can't be sure but I think that Mr. Beaumont saw the same evaluation going on in my eyes as I saw them in his because as I was putting that little nugget together he turned to face me directly.

"Well young man I hope you can see what a big deal it is to steal and how important it is not to take things that don't belong to you?" He said in a voice that seemed to hold just a little too much authority for the manager of a Zellers.

"I'm sorry sir." I knew my part in this little dance albeit not completely.

"Surely you can see how lucky you are to have a father who cares enough about you to keep you honest." I surely didn't appreciate the way his eyes sparkled at the use of the word honest.

Now to be honest I can't say verbatim what all was said next but suffice it to say he was willing to let me off with a warning and would like to suggest I not frequent his store any time soon. I was honestly relieved not to be going to jail but I also recognized how unrealistic that was.

I want to say that the lesson here is related to the obvious dishonesty to the manager, Mr. Beaumont but I think it is important to mention or make note of the fact that I have never once saw that dishonest flicker in the eyes of my dad. I can't deny that I let the lack of integrity of the manager of a Zellers influence some of the decisions I made growing up but the thing that sticks with me as an adult is the example that my dad was always willing to be for me. My whole life, from our first days together right up till this very moment. Thanks Dad.

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Illustration by Nolan Turcotte

FROM THE ASHES

By Michael Hector

Short brown hair brushed back, with a little bit of what he likes to call “product”, to keep it looking good all day, the way he had set it this morning. About six feet tall, fair complexion and a confidence that makes the air around him almost palpable. He is wearing light grey track pants, a white t-shirt and a pair of black and white running shoes. He has just finished his morning 5K run and since he has barely broken a sweat, he is considering the pros of doing another one.

As he walks along Balmoral Street, he becomes acutely aware of the suns slow and incremental climb toward its purchase on high noon. Somehow lost in thought he has burned up more time than one would think possible. He feels less and less relieved at the end of his runs these last few days. He knows that her birthday is fast approaching and feels powerless to find any creative way to avoid that particular days’ passing. It was once a day, sometimes even a week, of celebration. This will be the first one since... “Knock it off Calvin. You know better!” He

says to himself out loud.

He looks around self-consciously to see if anyone noticed his little outburst. Too often he has found himself somewhere other than the present. Nothing has been the same since the day he put that piece of his life into that little shoebox under his bed. He puts his head down and walks on with an even greater sense of purpose. He tells himself he just needs to get past her birthday and things will start to feel normal again. “Fat chance of that” he tells himself. He knows that in his heart of hearts, nothing will ever be the same again. The sky is a little less blue, the sun shines a little less bright and even water feels a little less wet. Something you would never think possible, but he knows this to be true, ever since... “Just flippin run you freakin idiot!” He yells it out this time, his mind still drawn to where he doesn’t want to be. However, he doesn’t run, he just keeps walking. He notices with some relief that he is able to use the words he prefers to use instead of actual curse words. He has always felt he was better than that and for a not so brief time he was brought down to a

level of personal debasement, where curse words felt proper as they passed through his teeth. As he rounds the corner where Balmoral meets Smyth Street, a fire truck with its siren wailing, swooshes past. The sound and movement somewhat jarring, forcing him out of his head and into the present. As his gaze follows the passing fire truck, he follows it as it turns left onto Tortuga Crescent. Almost immediately, a stone of dread weighs down the pit of his stomach. With that thought, his pace quickens and within two or three strides, he finds himself running. Fast and deliberate, each footstep bringing him closer to what he realizes with horror, is his house, burning from the inside out. Smoke is billowing out of two open windows on the second floor as well as the open door facing the street. There are a number of firefighters quickly and loudly moving around the front house. For a moment, Calvin wonders where all these people came from. There are only six houses on this Crescent and it is barely noon.

“Where the hell did all these people come from and why aren’t they ALL helping put out the fire that is consuming my house?” He wonders aloud.

Walking toward the house, he is stopped by a firefighter. Clad head to toe in a fire retardant drab brown firefighter’s outfit, big black rubber boots and the whole thing capped off with a bright red fire helmet. An open-faced helmet, noticeable because every other firefighter buzzing around is in similar rigging with the exception of air masks attached to their helmets and air tanks on their backs.

Which begged the question, “Why the hell are you all out here? Shouldn’t you all be inside putting out the fire?” A question he had to ask aloud as he approached the firefighter with the open-faced helmet.

“Sir, you need to stay back. It is not safe.” Says the firefighter with his right hand help up at chest level.

Trying to force his way forward, Calvin half yells, “This is my house. I need to get inside.”

“I’m sorry sir but there is no way I can let you...”

The firefighter didn’t get to finish his sentence. Calvin was past him and up the few concrete stairs to the front door.

It defies reason but only he knows the values of what lays inside that little shoebox. Regardless, if there is no value to anyone else, he is going to make sure that it doesn’t perish in the fire that appears to so quickly be devouring their house.

With the shouting of the firefighter ringing in his ears, he pushes through the smoke at the threshold of the front door. Just inside, at the mouth of the long hallway, he has the presence of mind to close his eyes and crouch down, as low as his six-foot frame will allow. Eyes closed breathing as shallow as he is able, he moves through the smoke like a drunk after last

call. He bounces lightly, off each wall almost completely unobstructed. Slowing only twice, as his shoulder catches the edge of a doorway. At the end of the hallway, he stumbles up the first three steps and climbs one hand over the other, up the other thirteen. Like a man possessed climbing Everest. Although on Everest, as the air thins, it doesn’t fill with smoke. Once at the top of the stairs the air is thinned by the thickness of the smoke. Thick clouds of smoke, grey as a winter storm, there is very little air to be had at the top of these stairs. At least none free of that grey acrid lung stabbing cotton he tries to hold off with every short right breath.

Just past the landing at the top of the stairs on the right side of the hall, there are two-bedroom doors, about eight feet apart. As luck would have it (like luck was going to play a part in this little bit of insanity) the door he needed to reach was not the first one. He can feel the heat of the fire growing with every inch he covers and the smoke that fills his lungs, also fills his vision to the point of darkness. His senses now reduced by a factor of two, he moves viscerally through the small void of the hallway.

Crawling on his belly now, beaten down by the weight of the heat and smoke, he is only inches away from his bedroom door. With his arms stretched painfully to their limit, he starts to pull himself through the threshold of his bedroom doorway. He feels something take hold of his ankle. He doesn’t even try to look back through the curtain of smoke, but he hears the muffled voice of who he assumes, is one of the fire fighters. It is the first time he notices how loud the roar of the fire is. The fire that is aware of the growing force of the blaze, he yanks his ankle from the grip that holds him and surges forward with every bit of strength and energy he has left. His last thought as the grey of the smoke curtain turns black as the night sky, minus all the stars, is of her smiling face as she handed him... Then even the black is gone.

Calvin hears voices calling from so very far away that it makes the words indistinguishable. As his mind moves out of the black and into a fog, he thinks he can just make out her face. “Mona, I have missed you.” Were the words that escaped his mouth even though his eyes are still confused. Then her beautiful face fades from view. The voices he hears are those of the medical staff around his bed. A nurse is telling him, “Mr. Mathews, we were very worried about you.” “The box I - I - I’m sure I - I - I had it in m-m-m-my hands?”

Calvin can only stutter and cough the words out. He shuts his eyes tight trying to remember those last few seconds before everything went darker than dark. He is sure he had reached the box under the bed right after he pulled his leg away from someone. He tries to remember...a firefighter had grabbed my ankle. Yes, yes, I know I made it

to the bed, I had the box. But he can’t remember anything after that.

With his eyes still closed, he can feel something being placed on his chest. A nurse says quietly as she lays it there “I think this is what you are looking for Mr. Mathews?” she continues, “You should know, they were only able to save you, Mr. Mathews. Your house I was told, burned to the ground.”

Almost absent-mindedly, Calvin says to no one in particular, “I can always build another house.” Reaching into the box, as his fingers touch the wooden turtle, a familiar and warm sense of relief washes over him. As he opens his eyes he remembers. He knows, even though he didn’t understand why she had to go, in his heart of hearts he knows it was important to her. The wooden turtle she had given him that day she told him that she loved him too, is a reminder for him. A reminder that when you love someone, sometimes you will need to set them free, if they come back, they are yours, and if they don’t, they never were. He is still, to this day, sure she will be back, and he loves her enough to wait.

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In and Out

Dave Yaroslowsky

I got out of the pen in July... I stayed in a halfway house for a year and on full date got to get my own place. I stayed out all the way to my warrant expiry in 2018 April and kept going to last June, so June 2019... I am now a journeyman roofer and grew so much... I found the hardest part of staying out and being out after coming in, in 2012... Was making a good plan, goals and sticking to them. I deleted almost 600 friends on Facebook, completely changed my life especially since coming in and out on installment since the age of 12 and I’m 39 this year. Being lonely, as people who are adults have lives, families, work, day-to-day hustle and bustle, it’s not like being a kid hanging with the homies or even in jail with all the people around, chillin, all that. I’d say get right with yourself and be able to be alone by yourself because that’s what’s real out there in the world. Loneliness and boredom, eventually it gets better. Slowly meeting people through work/ friends from work, check out a NA meeting if you’re an addict or if you’re an alcoholic go to AA. Lower risk at switching it up. From there, take it one day at a time and hopefully you meet someone special as I did and have a family now! I tripped up and I’m back and I’m working to forgive myself for that.

WRITINGS ON THE WALL SUBMISSIONS

We are looking for more long article submissions to Cell Count. Tell your real story or write some fiction, it’s up to you! If you feel the words wanting to burst through, grab a pen and paper and write it out, then send it to us!

NOLAN TURCOTTE

Practice what your preach.
I preach revolution & culture.
The vultures are watching, waiting for the greenlight to swoop down & sabotage the progress I've made.
Temptation surrounds me.
Creator is within me.
Achieve. Prosper. Conquer.
Reach the summit... Again & again.
Giving up isn't in my blood.
Thrive. Redeem. Salvage.
Back with a vengeance.
I respectfully ask you to stay the fuck out of my way.



FORGOTTEN WARRIOR

He had loved passionately
In the passionate love of a lover - will 2 give every piece of your body and soul and love in a flooded ocean fairly drown the beloved and 2 find it was not wanted
- 2 find that the caresses and kisses were only sport, selfish amusement - this being cast alone must be 2 teach me something, if it was the ungovernable love that possessed me 4 so many yearz, pouring out, pouring out, wasted and unwanted, til ill and worn with the waste of it I wrenched it out of my being - threw it from me and grew cold and hard and dead - but the rootz sprouted again and again and wanted 2 grow but there wasn't any good earth - it was all built over in brick and steel and pavement - lovez poor little rootz try 2 get a hold but can't and will never again - I am moving it seemz - more and more 2wardz a kind of aloneness - not beause I wish it but because there seemz no other way

Missing someone feelz like hunger
an instatiable emptiness right at the core of yourself
if you linger, thinking about em, it'll swallow you up
and I can't disappear just yet, yet the recollection of happiness, of life can have a counteract, knowing the experience is not only past but never 2 be spoken of again - that knowledge bringz a whole new kind of pain

Every brotherhood has a pecking order

W brotherz like mine, you don't want 2 be
At the bottom of that order! - you're liable 2 get pecked 2 death!!xxx

As the shadow followz the body
As we think so we become xxx

--
- Marriage -
I experienced something real
- BUT -

That part of me is over xxx
"Fuck sakez"
She crafted her love in 2 poetry
Then fucking read it 2 someone else

"Wisdom"
the smarter a man is 0 the more he needz creator 2 protect him from thinking
he knowz everything

"3 Choicez"
When something bad happenz, you have 3 choices
You either, let it define you, let it destroy you or
Let it strengthen you

--
If I advance
Follow me
If I stop
Urge me on
If I retreat
Kill me
Forgotten Warrior

"Bronzed Skin Sin"
I am guilty of no greater sin
Then that of wearing a bronzed skin

"The Cycle"
Do you know how 2 break the cycle of hatred?
- the way 2 break the cycle is 2 kill every single one
Of the bastardz that fucked you over!!xxx

--
Friendz are the family we choose
"Duality"

I'm not blaming anyone 4 anything, but the C.A.S and then the C.S.C are what made me a mean son of a bitch

The only way the system can truly punish me is if I allow my incarceration 2 bother me, so I won't allow that 2 happen

What did one time trouble me - deeply - was the loss of my wife...

My buddha grll, my baby and 4 the most part I don't allow myself 2 remember that experience, but when I do, it getz 2 me, knowing that I lost her to a bullshit case that I'm innocent of yet was convicted in the end

I don't allow myself 2 think of the experience still... I loved my wife more than ever, told her how much, wrote her letterz 3x a week, poured out my heart 2 her, told her how much I ache 4 her touch, but you can't change those that don't want 2
I am not looking 4 an excuse or someone 2 blame 4 the path I've walked in this life, itz better than the other reality that I could have taken, become a sheep instead of the wolf I am

I will go 2 my grave, believing that therez no more sunrise or sunsetz left 4 me, no peace, no nothing, SHIT HAPPENZ!!!

C.A.S and C.S.C made me, I didn't create myself, I never chose 2 be this way, 2 be who I am now, yeah I 4 sure wish my life took another path, that I had an education, a good job, but none of that was in the cardz 4 me, I am what I am and the truth is I don't give a fuck what anyone thinkz of me
All nothing now but

"DEAD MEMORIEZ"
--
When you realize that the primary purpose of religion is the expiration of guilt, 2 provide people w forgiveness 4 being less than they were meant 2 be

FRIEND
In that single word
He found something he thought he had lost forever
A sense of belonging
A feeling of community
Hope
Bitterness a dead end
Hatred hurtz no one more than he who harbourez it

I had a love, I think she loved me 2 but...
I had given up the sweetest part of my soul 4 a woman.
She had made beautiful promi-sez and kept none of them
What a waste

"She who carries fire"
She had been his best friend and they had been loverz but only 4 a few yearz she had been in love w him - that was the truth, he knew this now and supposed in the deepest corner of his heart he had known it then and choose 2 ignore it

He didn't know how 2 feel the same way and couldn't allow himself 2 feel the same
She had given him the loft he needed and he'd always owe her 4 that, but he couldn't spend his life w her - what they had was 4 a matter of survival - his survival and herz she belonged 2 a life where he had been hurt and scarred, and almost broken, she had convinced me 2 stay strong, stay on the path, I need 2 keep going, she would have 2 find someone 2 help her but it couldn't be me and that was life - goodbye strong mind woman, take care and all the best of luck

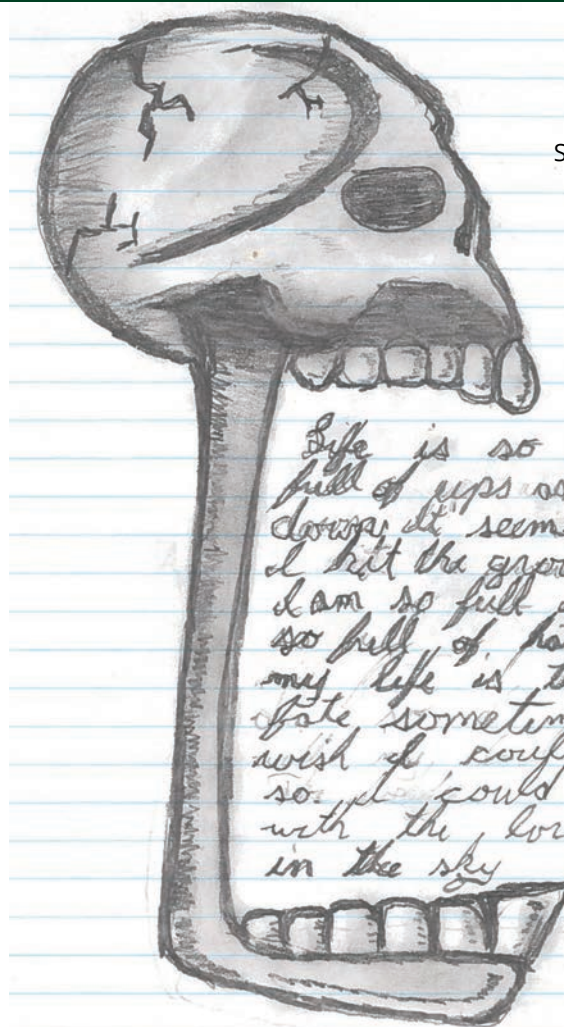
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"if there isn't a way then I'll make one"

-KML-
"Dragonz never die their just reborn"

"Now what?"
His existence stopped, he stopped and finally wept, wept either 4 his sufferingz, neither 4 the loss of her, but 4 the final destruction of all hope w which their relationship had begun, the burnt-out hope 4 love, family, friendship, mutual goalz and shared dreamz, a civilian existence, a normal life who more violence, no more hatred and no more loneliness, yet if thingz don't change then this existence will be over, and peace will follow hurt

BLAKE KOWALCHUK
L.I.E.S (Living.In.Everyone's.Shadow.)

Lies only have made my life hard and I hate who I am. Corrupted life of lies. I lie so much I don't know if I ever tell the truth. It's become a sickness and I don't stop lying. I've tried to stop, I can't, and ever when I'm telling the truth, somehow the lies slip in and that's why I'm Living In Everyone's Shadow from my LIES. Stuck behind as my family moves forward without me and my lies.



Life is so Full of ups and downs. It seems I hit the ground I am so full of anger So full of hate. Is this My life? Is this my Fate? Sometimes I Wish I could fly So I could be With the Lord In the sky
By Dan Whalen

STEVEN VOLLRATH

When you're locked up - life isn't the same -
It's like a whole new world - that's dark and plain - you know in your mind - it's not a game -
You could tell by the boyz - that went insane -
With no 1 to trust - not even the dust -
ya can't make a friend - who'll be true till the end -
That's how it is - when you're locked in the pen -
Surrounded by men - in an old little den -
It's your soul - that's your best friend -
Just keep your "Word" - don't say what you heard -
Be real with the real - recognize this verse -
Watch your back - ya can't relax -
Watch and learn & try to adapt -
When you're locked in a cage - ya feel same rage -
But you did the crime - so do your days -
There're people on the outs - that think we're low -
But they'll never know shit - until they go -
We're the same as them - In the pen -
The only change - Is we live in a cage -
It's in our hearts - we hold our rage -
Straight
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E-MAX 2020

B. G. KERR

The Pure, United and Strong!
"Pause for our warriors"
One cannot express enough!

The gratitude I have towards our standing tall, the brave and tremendously tough.
We are the true warriors who in the face of oppression stand as one in peaceful aggression.
There is no distinction, colour or racial infraction.
Just good old heroism... (a call to optimistic and well-determined action.)
We are as a nation, of many complexions... with one deliberate goal in the evil smiling face of fascism.
So help us in our stand, "Pillars upon the Earth and fore founders' of our land."
For we are the force against totalitarianism, the parents of right and wrong.
We will truly stand as warriors...
"Yes ~ The Pure, United and Strong ~

ZAKARIA AMARA

New World

"Never waste a good crisis" - Winston Churchill
Welcome to the new world
Say goodbye to the old
There is no turning back
Shed your fears and your tears
Move on, move on...
Don't just sit there Grow!
Grow like a giant tree
And spread your branches heavenwards
Up towards the glittering stars
Kiss the moon
And light a torch from the blazing sun

WE NEED MORE POETRY!

A prompt for all our prison poets: Write a poem that begins with the last thing you can remember someone saying to you today or yesterday. See if you can use that line 2 or 3 times.



Illustration by Brian Kerr

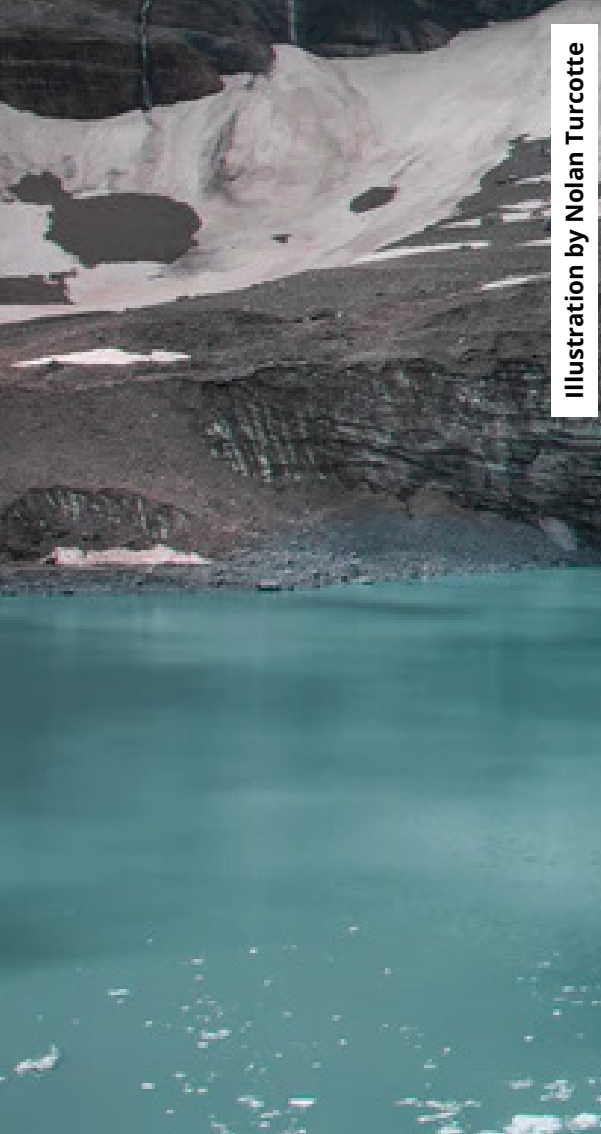
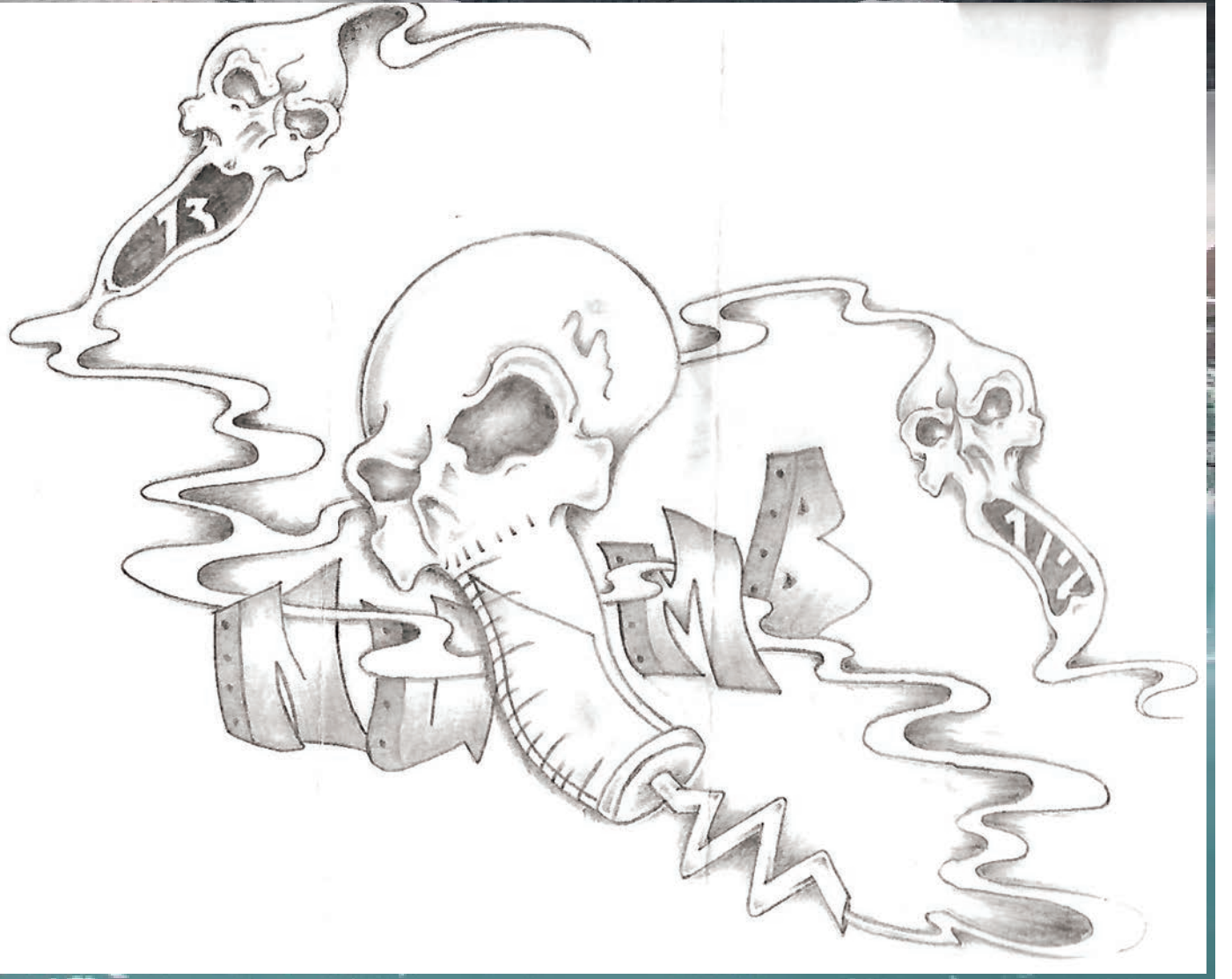
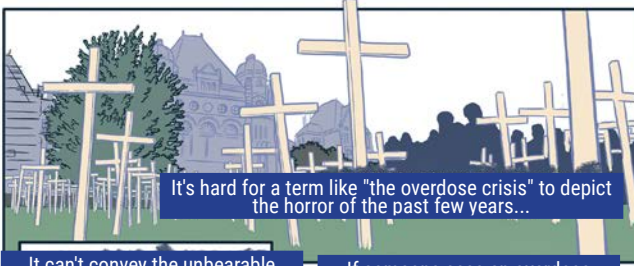


Illustration by Nolan Turcotte





It's hard for a term like "the overdose crisis" to depict the horror of the past few years...

It can't convey the unbearable grief of burying your friend, sibling, spouse, or even your own child

If someone sees an overdose happening, they can give oxygen or naloxone to temporarily counteract the effects.



Some people who are overdosing might need extra medical care, but many witnesses are afraid of calling 911



In just 4 years, there were more than 16,000 reported opioid-related overdose deaths across the country. In 2020, we could see more deaths than ever before.

The Canadian government has been slow to address the crisis, but did pass the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act

This protects people from being charged with personal drug possession if they call 9-1-1 when they witness an overdose.

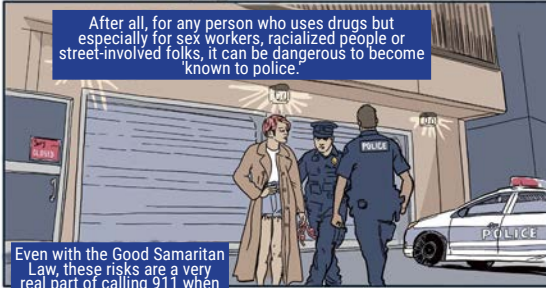
A lot of us fought to get this law in play



It's not their law, it's our

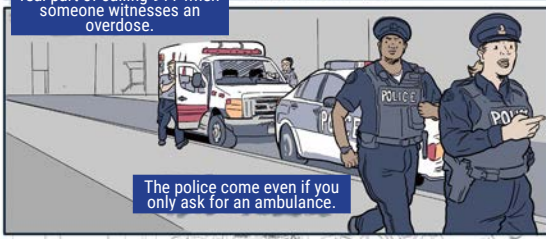


Even if witnesses are protected from possession charges, they still have reason to fear the police



After all, for any person who uses drugs but especially for sex workers, racialized people or street-involved folks, it can be dangerous to become known to police.

Even with the Good Samaritan Law, these risks are a very real part of calling 911 when someone witnesses an overdose.

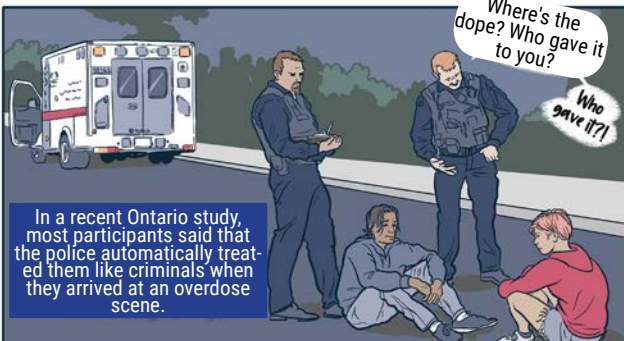


The police come even if you only ask for an ambulance.



Overdoses are a medical emergency.

The police serve no useful purpose at overdose scenes.

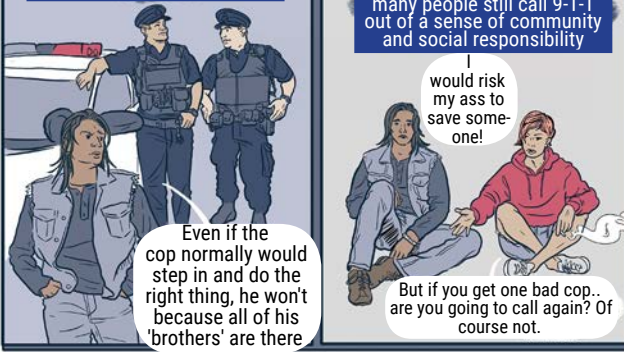


Where's the dope? Who gave it to you?

Who gave it?!

In a recent Ontario study, most participants said that the police automatically treated them like criminals when they arrived at an overdose scene.

Some participants also said that while individual officers might be okay, this changes when more than one officer is on scene



Even if the cop normally would step in and do the right thing, he won't because all of his 'brothers' are there

In spite of the personal risks, many people still call 9-1-1 out of a sense of community and social responsibility

I would risk my ass to save someone!

But if you get one bad cop.. are you going to call again? Of course not.



RESEARCH BY JANET BUTLER-MCPHEE AND SANDRA KA HON CHU OF THE HIV LEGAL NETWORK, AND EMILY VAN DER MEULEN FROM RYERSON UNIVERSITY.

FUNDED BY THE LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO.

SUPPORT FOR THIS COMIC WAS PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF ARTS AT RYERSON.

COMIC BY HUGH GOLDRING AND NICOLE MARIE BURTON



SCAN ME

Outreach & Support Schedule

Currently, we are not offering programming inside of prisons due to COVID-19. We are working with and waiting for word from the various Ontario federal and provincial institutions on when we will be returning inside to do our groups and 1 on 1s. This may change by the time the next issue comes out, so please contact us directly for the most up-to-date information on outreach and support inside at: **1-866-224-9978**

We have also reduced the number of staff in our office to allow for physical distancing as a safety precaution against COVID-19. Our office schedules will be available in our voice-mail greetings. We are still available Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm EST (to reach a staff member or find out their schedule, please dial **1-866-224-9978** followed by the extension):

Amina Mohamed ext 236
Women's Community Program Coordinator
Arpa Azmila ext 235
Harm Reduction Manager

Chaman R Vashishtha ext 222
Finance & Operations Manager
Cherisa Shivcharran ext 233
Provincial Community Development Coordinator
Chris McNab ext 237
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Claudia Medina ext 227
Program Manager
Eveline Allen ext 238
Regional Prison In-Reach Coordinator
Janet Rowe ext 225
Executive Director
Lindsay Jennings ext 231
Provincial HepC Program Coordinator

Nicole Alexander ext 234
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Sena Hussain ext 228
Communications & Resource Dev Coordinator
Stephanie Moulton ext 223
Harm Reduction Outreach Coordinator
Harm Reduction Outreach Workers 243

You can also still reach us by mail at: PASAN, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

We will also be closed for the holidays from Dec 24th - Jan 4th, 2020

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PASAN's office, where we publish Cell Count, is on the historical territory of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the New Credit Indigenous peoples. This territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the lands and resources around the Great Lakes.

HIV+ CLIENT SERVICES

- In order to be a client & access these services you need to have confirmed HIV+ status and be a prisoner or ex-prisoner (all times Eastern Standard time)
- Phone Hours: Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday mornings
 - Workshops and Programming - Scheduled usually on Mondays or Thursdays, give us a call or check out our website for a complete list of events we have scheduled.
 - ID Clinic - cancelled for now
 - Release Funds - \$50 (twice a year max)
 - TTC Tokens - 2 each for clients who attend workshops
 - Harm Reduction Materials - Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday AM (Safer-Crack-Use-Kits, Safer-Needle-Use-Kits, Piercing Needles, Condoms, etc.) - for everyone.

Sometimes we and the phones are very busy so please keep trying!

ABOUT CELL COUNT

PASAN publishes 'Cell Count', a minimum of 4 issues per year. We are based in Toronto on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. It is sent out for FREE to Clients & Prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation @ \$20 per year. We are proud to release our 91st issue to you. We are also grateful for all the wonderful feedback we have been receiving from our readers, and encourage you to keep putting your two cents in. Our goal is to have most of our content written and produced by prisoners and ex-prisoners, so we highly encourage you to get in touch with us if you're interested in being part of the Cell Count team.

Publisher: PASAN
526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3
Circulation: 700+ - Recirculation: ???

All original artwork, poems and writings are the sole/soul property of the artist and author.

Fair Dealing in the Canadian Copyright Act:

Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2: "Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

A NOTE ABOUT PEN PALS:

Here is a list of correspondence services for people inside (alternatives to pen pals, which is, sadly, no longer a part of Cell Count):

Canadian Inmates Connect: Currently, there is a \$35/year subscription. Your ad will be placed on a website, and people with internet access browse through to decide who to connect with. A point of caution: you are asked to say what you have been convicted for, and your full name will be published online. Melissa is the person to contact for more information. Write or call her at: Canadian Inmates Connect Inc. 3085 Kingston Rd, Suite 267, Toronto, Ontario, M1M 1P1 - (647) 344-3404

Black and Pink: Specifically for queer and trans prisoners. They are based in the United States, it does not cost anything to be part of the list, and you don't have to tell them your conviction. Here is how to reach them: Black and Pink National Office, 614 Columbia Rd, Dorchester, MA 02125 617.519.4387

Prison Fellowship Canada: This is a faith-based, Christian organization that connects prisoners with volunteers of either the same gender, or where there is a 15-20 year age difference. The point is for you to have an outlet to express yourself to someone who will listen. If you are of the Christian faith, this may be a great option for you. You can reach them for more info at: Prison Fellowship Canada - National Office, 5945 Airport Road, Suite 144, Mississauga, ON L4V 1R9 905.673.5867

Prisoner Correspondence Project: "...a solidarity project for gay, lesbian, transsexual, transgender, gendervariant, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual and queer prisoners in Canada and the United States, linking them with people who are

part of these same communities outside of prison." - From their website. Write to them here: QPIRG Concordia c/o Concordia University 1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest, Montreal, QC H3G 1M8

If you have had success using a pen pal service (other than ours) and would like to share it with other Cell Count subscribers, please write to us or call. We can list it in a future issue.

MOVING?

We were getting about 75 Cell Counts sent back to us each mail-out labelled, 'Not Here'. Please help us reduce our mailing expenses by letting us know of any address change, ASAP! Thank you for taking care with this.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS, WRITERS (FICTION, NON-FICTION), ILLUSTRATORS, CARTOONISTS, POETS, JOURNALISTS (ASPIRING OR OTHERWISE), AND OTHER CREATIVE TYPES:

We want your submissions! We get lots of letters from our readers telling us how much they love seeing all your work and they're hungry for more. Send us your stuff and get published in Cell Count. When you send us stuff, please make sure you write a line in that gives us permission to publish your work. Also, let us know if you would like your work returned to you or sent on to someone else! Please also type your work or write clearly if you can!

Writers: We get a lot of great work sent in that we are unable to use because of very limited space. Apologies. Please consider the column width & keep articles/poems tight & to the point. Honestly, the first items to go in are the ones that fit nicely and leave space for others - quality and quantity! Also, let us know in writing if it's ok to edit your work for grammar, spelling and so we can fit it in.

Please note: If you do send something to us, please give us a call if you can so we can look out for it in the mail. Also, call us again at least a week after you send it to make sure we got it. If not, if you're sending in a piece of writing, we can transcribe it over the phone for you, so keep a copy of everything you send us!

Women are the fastest-growing prisoner population in Canada, but often their experiences are marginalized in conversations about the prison system. We want to hear your take on prison, life, family, or anything else you're interested in writing about. We can guarantee confidentiality, and can publish your pieces under a pseudonym if you want! Please submit your articles, poetry, art, or letters to the Cell Count editor at 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3.

WHEN SUBSCRIBING TO CELL COUNT

We have been notified by a few different institutions that if you'd like your subscription of Cell Count to make it into your hands, you have to register at the library to receive it first. Please do this before requesting a subscription from us just to make sure! Also, if you are interested in subscribing please contact: Cell Count, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON, M5A 1R3 or call Sena at: 1-866-224-9978 ext 228

NEXT CELL COUNT DEADLINE

We are realizing that setting a deadline date is difficult because sometimes it takes a long time for Cell Count to get to our readers, and then people who would like to submit don't have enough time to write/draw their submissions. We are going to try something new: We will create a new issue once we receive enough submissions to make one. So just write/draw your submission and send it in! If it doesn't make it in the next issue, it will be prioritized for the issue after.

CONTACT NUMBERS

If you are in any Federal/Provincial Insti-

tution or Detention Centre call us only with this #: Toll-free 1-866-224-9978

CSC'S NEW PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PNEP)

We want to hear from you! After refusing for more than 20 years, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) announced last year the introduction of its "prison needle exchange program" or PNEP in federal prisons. This is the result of an ongoing court case by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, PASAN and others. The PNEP began in Summer 2018 at two prisons: Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario and Atlantic Institution in Renous, New Brunswick. Beginning in January 2019, CSC has said it will start phasing in PNEP across the federal prison system. The Legal Network and PASAN are continuing with our legal case to make sure all prisoners who need it can access the PNEP, and we want to hear from you. If you are in a prison with a PNEP, we are interested in learning about your observations and experiences of the PNEP: * Are people using the program? * Do you think the program works? * Are there any problems for those who wish to participate? If you are able to share your thoughts with us, please contact: PASAN (toll free: 1-866-224-9978) or Sandra Chu at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network at 416-595-1666 ext. 232. Both PASAN and the Legal Network accept collect calls from prisoners.

HOW PASAN AND CELL COUNT ARE OPERATING DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 outbreak, PASAN is still open, but in a more limited capacity. Our staff are in the office two days/week, which is when we can read and reply to mail we receive from inside, and answer calls. Currently, we are only allowing staff in our office to help limit the potential spread of the virus, but we are brainstorming ways to slowly start offering services to our clients in office again. We are also waiting for federal and provincial institutions to start allowing outside organizations back inside so we can start delivering groups and one-on-ones with you again.

Cell Count is still running and accepting submissions. We are currently low on submissions and need more sent from you inside to produce Cell Count. If you are interested in submitting but are experiencing issues trying to get your work to us, please give Sena a call at ext 228. Thank you for your patience during this difficult time!

ONTARIO PRISONER EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUND

PASAN staff are no longer completing phone applications for the fund. Families, loved ones or support workers can help you fill out the form at their website: www.tiny.cc/prisonerfund

If you've already applied and have followed up questions, ask the person who filled out the application on your behalf to email: prisonerfund@gmail.com. The money takes about a month to a month and a half to receive. Email transfers are the best way to receive money.

If you don't have anyone with internet access that can help, PASAN can mail an application to you, but we can't help if you have any follow up questions.

CELL COUNT EVALUATIONS

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form we've included with this issue and mail it back to us. We use these evaluations to make sure that Cell Count is useful to you and so our funders know we're on the right track. Call us if you would like to do your evaluation over the phone instead! **1-866-224-9978**

EAST COAST

ALLY CENTRE
Take collect calls
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P
1G6 902-567-1766

AIDS COALITION OF NOVA SCOTIA
Accept collect calls
1675 Bedford Row, Halifax, NS, B3J
1T11-800-566-2437, 902-425-4882

AIDS COMMITTEE OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR
Take collect calls
47 Janeway Place, St. John's, NL, A1A
1R7 1-800-563-1575

AIDS NEW BRUNSWICK
65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB, E3B
1G51-800-561-4009, 506-459-7518

AIDS PEI
Take collect calls
2-375 University Ave, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 4N4 902-566-2437

AIDS SAINT JOHN
Don't accept collect calls
115 Hazen St, NB, E2L 3L3 506-652-2437

BOOKS BEYOND BARS
P.O. Box 33129
Halifax, NS
B3L 4T6

HEALING OUR NATIONS:
1-800 565 4255
3-15 Alderney Dr, Dartmouth, NS, B2Y
2N21-800-565-4255, 902-492-4255

MAINLINE NEEDLE EXCHANGE
Calls from within Nova Scotia are free
Don't accept collect calls
5511 Cornwallis St, Halifax, NS, B3K
1B3 902-423-9991

SHARP ADVICE NEEDLE EXCHANGE
Accept collect calls
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P
6H1 902-539-5556 (Collect)

SIDA/AIDS MONCTON
Accept collect calls as long as they're HIV related
80 Weldon St, Moncton, NB, E1C
5V8 506-859-9616

EAST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SOCIETY
6061 University Ave, PO Box 15000
Halifax, NS, B3H 4R2

QUEBEC

CACTUS
Accept collect calls
1300 rue Sanguinet, Montreal, H2X
3E7 514-847-0067

CENTRE FOR AIDS SERVICES MONTREAL (Women)
Accept collect calls
1750 Rue Saint-Andre, 3rd Flr, Montreal, H2L 3T8 1-877-847-3636, 514-495-0990

COALITION des ORGANISMES COMMUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de LUTTE-CONTRE le SIDA (COCQSIDA)
Accept collect calls
1 est, rue Sherbrooke, Montréal, H2X
3V8 514-844-2477

COMITÉ des PERSONNES ATTEINTES du VIH du QUEBEC (CPAVIH)
1-800-927-2844
2075 rue Plessis bureau 310, Montreal, H2L 2Y4 1-800-927-2844

ONTARIO

2-SPIRITED PEOPLE of the 1ST NATIONS
Accept collect calls
145 Front Street East Suite 105 Toronto, Ontario M5A 1E3 416-944-9300

AFRICANS IN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST AIDS
No collect calls, call PASAN
526 Richmond St E, Toronto, M5A
1R3 416-924-5256

AIDS COMMITTEE of CAMBRIDGE, KITCHENER, WATERLOO & AREA
Accept collect calls
Have a toll-free number
2B-625 King St E, Kitchener, N2G
4V4 519-570-3687 (Collect), 1-877-770-3687

AIDS COMMITTEE OF GUELPH
Accept collect calls, prefer that people use their
89 Dawson Rd, Unit 113, Guelph, N1H
3X2 1-800-282-4505; 519-763-2255 (Collect)

AIDS COMMITTEE of NORTH BAY and AREA
Accept collect calls
201-269 Main St W, North Bay, P1B
2T8 705-497-3560 (Collect)

AIDS COMMITTEE of OTTAWA
700-251 Bank St, Ottawa, K2P 1X3 613-238-5014 (Collect) or Toll Free (ON & QC only) 1-800-461-2182

AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY
574 Memorial Ave, Thunder Bay, P7B 3Z2 1-800-488-5840, 807-345-1516 (Collect)

POSITIVE LIVING NIAGARA
Accept collect calls from registered clients
(Recommend that you get a case manager to get registered with them)
111 Church St, St Catharines, L2R
3C9 905-984-8684 or toll free 1-800-773-9843

ANISHNAWBE HEALTH AIDS PROGRAM
No collect calls
255 Queen St E, Toronto, M5A 1S4 416-360-0486

ASIAN COMMUNITY AIDS SERVICE
When prisoners call, they offer them small bursaries to cover their calling fees
107-33 Isabella St, Toronto, M4Y
2P7 416-963-4300 (Collect)

BLACK COALITION for AIDS PREVENTION
Accept collect calls
20 Victoria St, 4th Flr, Toronto, M5C
2N8 416-977-9955 (Collect)

CANADIAN HIV/AIDS LEGAL NETWORK
Accept collect calls
1240 Bay St #600, Toronto, M5R 2A7 416-595-1666 (Collect)

FIFE HOUSE
Accepts collect calls
490 Sherbourne St, 2nd Flr, Toronto, M4X 1K9
416-205-9888

HIV & AIDS LEGAL CLINIC OF ON. (HALCO)
Accept collect calls
55 University Avenue, Suite 1400 Toronto, ON, M5J 2H7 1-888-705-8889

HIV/AIDS REGIONAL SERVICES (HARS)
Accept collect calls
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L
1G5 613-545-3698 (Collect)

ONTARIO ABORIGINAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY
Accept collect calls
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L
1G5 613-549-7540 (Collect)

PEEL HIV/AIDS NETWORK
Accept collect calls
160 Traders Blvd, Unit 1, Mississauga, L4Z 3K7
1-866-896-8700, 905-361-0523 (Collect)

PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE NETWORK (PARN)
Accept collect calls
302-159 King St, Peterborough, K9J
2R81-800-361-2895, 705-932-9110 (Collect)

STREET HEALTH CENTRE
Accept collect calls
Hepatitis C Treatment Program 235 Wellington St, Kingston, K7K 0B5 613-549-1440 (Collect)

THE AIDS NETWORK (TAN)
Don't accept collect calls
101-140 King St E, Hamilton, L8N
1B2 905-528-0854 toll free 1-866-563-0563

THE WORKS
Accept collect calls
277 Victoria St, Toronto, 416-392-0520 (Collect)

TORONTO PWA FOUNDATION
Accept collect calls from clients

200 Gerrard St E, 2nd Flr, Toronto, M5A
2E6 416-506-1400

Toronto Community Hep C Program
Accept collect calls
955 Queen Street East, Toronto, M4M
3P3
416-461-1925 (Collect only on Tuesday & Friday, 11am-5pm)
Once out, please call 416-417-6135

PRAIRIES

HIV COMMUNITY LINK
Accept collect calls
110-1603 10th Ave SW, Calgary, AB, T3C
0J7 403-508-2500

AIDS SASKATOON
1143 Ave F N, Saskatoon, SK, S7L 1X1306-242-5005 1-800-667-6876

CENTRAL ALBERTA AIDS NETWORK SOCIETY
No collect calls
4611 50th Ave, Red Deer, AB, T4N 3Z9
403-346-8858

HIV EDMONTON
9702 111 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB, T5G 0B1 1-877-388-5742

KIMAMOW ATOSKANOW FOUNDATION
Accept collect calls
RR 1, Site 1, Box 133, Onoway, AB, T0E
1V01-866-971-7233, 780-913-9036

NINE CIRCLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
705 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0X2
1-888-305-8647

PLWA NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN
No collect calls
Box 7123, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 4I1 306-373-7766

OUT SASKATOON
320 21 St W, Saskatoon, SK S7M 4E6
1-800-358-1833

PRINCE ALBERT METIS WOMEN'S ASSOC.
No collect calls
54 10th St E, Prince Albert, SK, S6V
0Y5 306-763-5356

RED RIBBON PLACE (ALL NATIONS HOPE AIDS NETWORK)
2735 5th Ave, Regina, SK, S4T
0L2 1-877-210-7622

STREET CONNECTIONS
No collect calls
705 Broadway Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0X2 204-940-2504
WOMEN: 50 Argyle, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0H6 204-943-6379

WEST COAST

AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND
Accepts collect calls. 713 Johnson St, 3rd Flr, Victoria, V8W 1M8 250-384-

2366 or 1-800-665-2437

PLBC - PRISON OUTREACH PROJECT
1107 Seymour St, Vancouver, V6B
5S8 Toll Free: PROV - 604-525-8646
FED - 1-877-900-2437 (#'s approved by institutions and are NOT Collect Calls)

Positive Living Society of BC
Leita McInnis, Prison Outreach Worker
1101 Seymour St, 4th Floor, Vancouver, BC V6R 0R1 Fed: 1-877-900-2437
Prov: 604-525-8646

LINC
33270 14th Ave, Mission, BC, V2V 4Z7
1-877-424-4242 (BC only)

NATIONAL

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES (Women)
701-151 Slater St.
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5H3
(613) 238-2422

BRAIN INJURY ASSOC OF CANADA
440 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X6 Toll-free: 1-866-977-2492

CATIE
1-800-263-1638
555 Richmond St W #505, Toronto, ON
M5V 3B1

NEW LIFE PRISON MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 123
Arva, ON
NOM 1C0
Aftercare support: 1-888-842-6898

PRISONER-SPECIFIC

TORONTO PRISONERS' RIGHTS PROJECT
(Runs the Prisoner Emergency Support Fund)
PO Box 291 Toronto P Toronto, ON
M5S 2S8

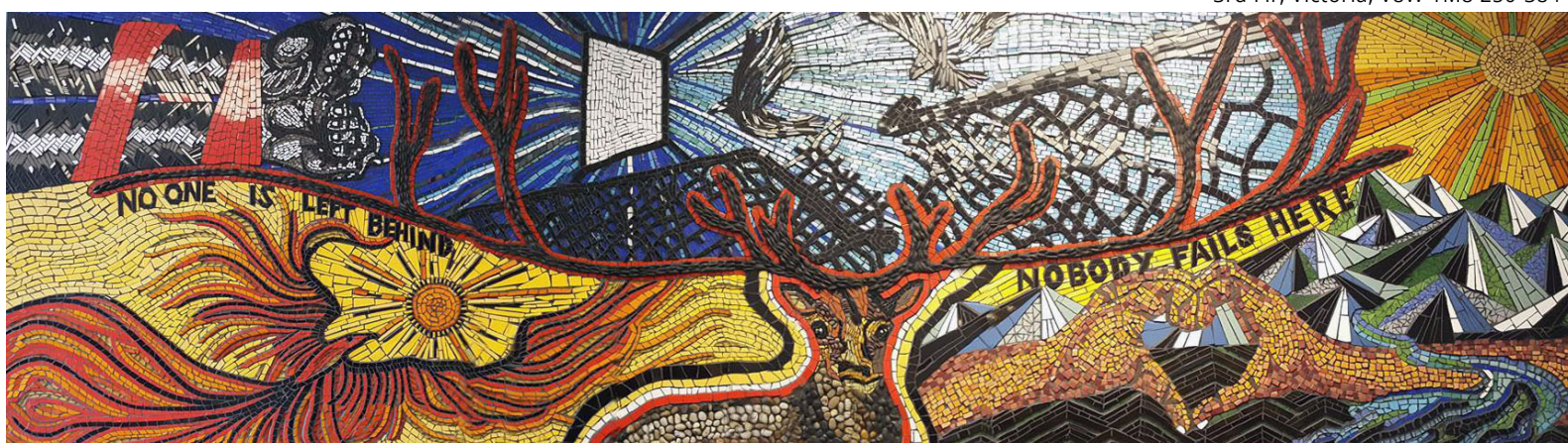
PRISONERS UNITED ORGANIZATION
PO Box 30009, Greenbank North PO,
Ottawa, ON, K2H 1A3

BLACK INMATES & FRIENDS ASSEMBLY
2518 Eglinton Avenue W, Toronto, ON,
M6M 1T1 ph (416) 652-3131

OUT OF BOUNDS MAGAZINE
6000 William Head Rd, Victoria, BC
V9C 0B5

JOURNAL OF PRISONERS ON PRISONS
c/o Justin Piché, PhD, Dept of Criminology
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON,
K1N 6N5

PRISON FREE PRESS
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6



PASAN is a community-based harm reduction/HIV/HCV organization that provides support, education and advocacy to prisoners and ex-prisoners. PASAN formed in 1991 as a grassroots response to the HIV crisis in the Canadian prison system. We strive to provide community development, education and support to prisoners and ex-prisoners in Ontario on HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV), overdose prevention and other harm reduction issues. Today, PASAN is the only community-based organization in Canada exclusively providing HIV and HCV prevention, education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Individual support, informal coun-

selling, case management, pre-release planning, and referrals for those in custody living with HIV and/or HCV

- We assist our clients in accessing adequate medical care and support while incarcerated
- You can reach us via our toll free number at 1-866-224-9978. If you can't get through to us from our toll-free number, we also accept collect calls from prisoners across Canada at 416-920-9567, but we prefer people use our toll-free number
- Provide ongoing support, community development, resources and training for community groups across Ontario.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Conducts HIV/HCV and harm reduction workshops inside many of the provincial and federal adult institutions in Ontario
- Produces a newsletter, Cell Count, which contains article, poetry and art produced by current and ex-prisoners
- Facilitates Prison Life 101, HIV/HCV

prevention and harm reduction/overdose prevention trainings for agencies working with prison populations

- Assist agencies to start prison in-reach and support and act as a referral "hub" for HIV/HCV positive prisoners who are transferred from one region to another, to ensure continuity of support
- Peer health/harm reduction workers where ex-prisoners assist those who are currently incarcerated, about to be released, or already released to get medical and health needs met.

CONTACT INFO

526 Richmond St E,
Toronto, ON M5A 1R3
Call us toll free at:
1-866-224-9978

CURRENT STAFF AT PASAN

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Communications & Resource Dev Coordinator

Stephanie Moulton ext 223
Harm Reduction Outreach Coordinator

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Sena Hussain

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