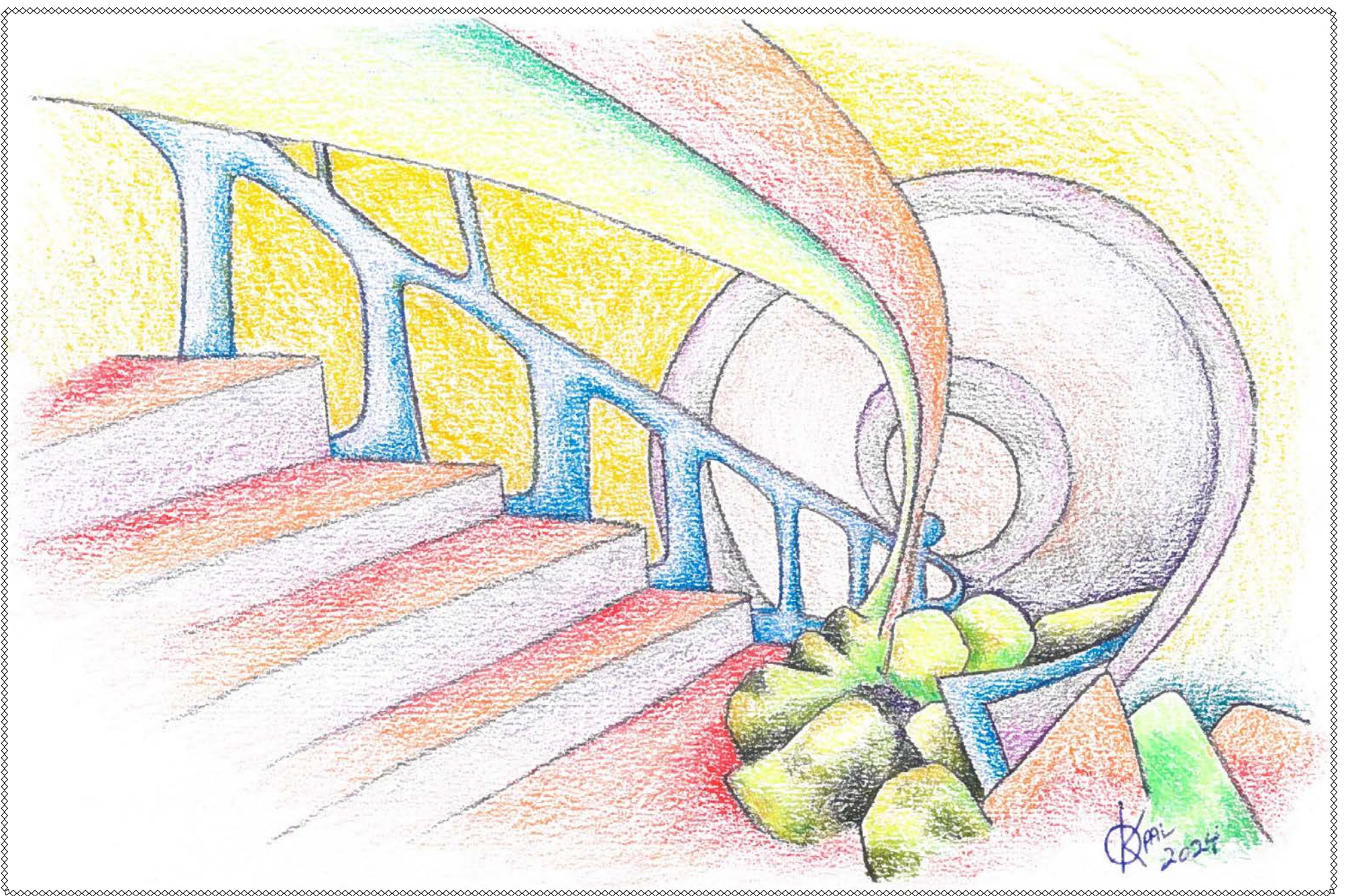


G E L L G O U N T

YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

GROWTH - JUNE 2024 - #104



NO MORE STOLEN SISTERS

By "All Nations" – the women within GVI

Looking through a veil of tears,
Of all the missed and stolen years
The stolen youth, the impressed fears.
The dreams shattered; questions unanswered, missing faces; unknown
places.

Let's not forget all the hidden spaces
Silent screams, no one hears, unjust
Pray for those who are lost and find home, a must.
Why can't our cries be heard?
Doesn't anyone besides us care?
It seems so unfair.

SET THEM FREE

We will be heard and not silenced!
SO END THIS VIOLENCE!!

I am calling out in despair,
Does anyone not care?
Let us unite together
As all nations and cultures

Combined, let go of the mind.
But embrace the peace within
One step at a TIME
FOREVER ON OUR MINDS.
How many really is there? My heart is breaking
Lost but not forgotten
Hear are voices, speak your truth.
But actions speak louder than words.
It is time for love and harmony
We are warriors of change!
Together we stand strong
Bring them home!
Hear our voices!
Stop the hatred, we are SACRED
We must remember, support each other, be the change we want to see for
the future
Restoring peace and culture
We stand tall! We stand together! Warrior women! We will fight forever!
We are still here!

INSIDE THE GROWTH ISSUE

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our latest issue, centered around the theme of growth. We are excited to share with you a collection of insightful articles and moving poetry submissions from inside. Growth, both personal and collective, is a journey that everyone navigates, and this issue highlights stories of resilience, advocacy, and transformation.

We were happy to connect with many of you during our recent visits to federal prisons in Ontario at the health fairs. It is always great to connect with you face-to-face, especially those of you we speak with regularly over the phone. We often come back feeling re-energized to continue our work with you. We really appreciate the positive feedback and are thrilled to see new subscribers and submissions following those visits.

In this issue, Tanya Bogdonovich's piece on Peer Advocacy provides a comprehensive guide on navigating the complexities of complaints and grievances within the prison system. Tanya's work underscores the importance of having a voice and the power of advocacy in fighting for fair treatment and accountability.

We also feature a letter from VB, who discusses the potential impact of Bill C-40, also known as the Miscarriages of Justice Review Commission Act. This bill aims to establish an independent commission to address wrongful convictions, a critical step towards ensuring justice and reducing the systemic flaws in our judicial system. The insights shared by VB highlight the importance of legislative change and the collective effort required to transform these systems.

Additionally, this issue includes an extra page dedicated to poetry. Many readers have expressed how much they appreciate the poetry and art submissions, and we encourage everyone to keep sharing their creative works. These pieces not only provide a meaningful outlet for self-expression, but also foster a sense of connection and understanding among our readers.

It has been an honour to witness the growth and resilience from those of you whom we interact with and from those of you who contribute your important work to Cell Count. The stories and poems you share with us are crucial in helping to connect those of you on the inside and outside the walls, offering hope, strength, and solidarity. As always, we are here to listen, support, and amplify your voices.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. We look forward to receiving more of your stories, articles, and poems. Together, we can continue to foster growth and build a more empathetic world.

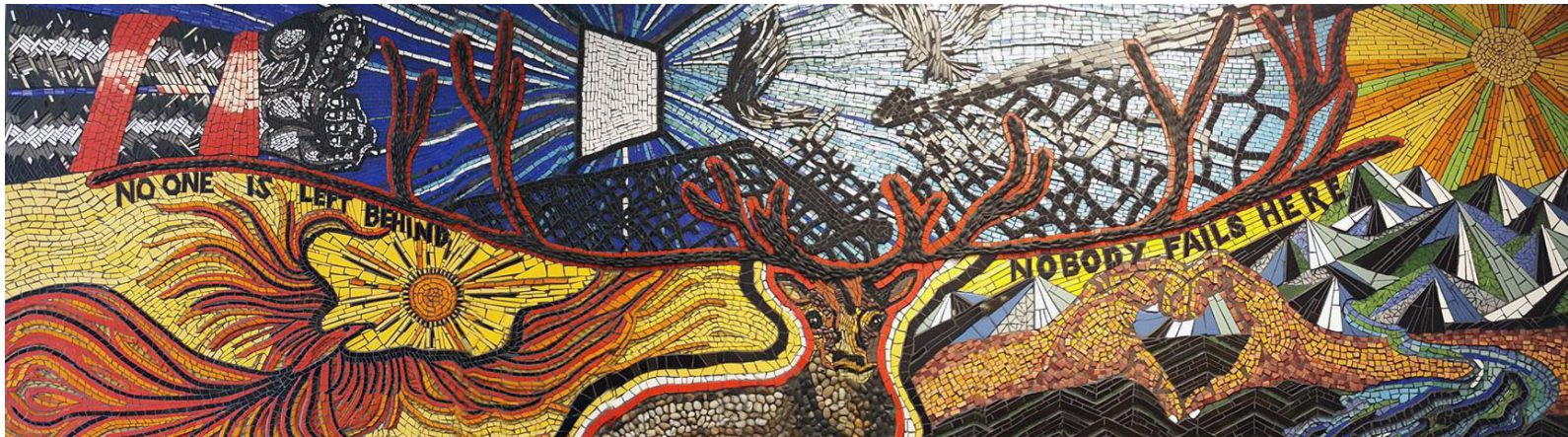
Articles Featured:
Peer Advocacy by Tanya Bogdonovich
Bill C-40 by VB

Special Poetry Section: we are delighted to include an extra page of poetry in this issue. Your poetic submissions have been a source of inspiration and connection for many. Keep those submissions coming, as your words have a profound impact on our readers.

Remember, your words and art matter. Keep sharing your stories and experiences with us. We will continue to do our best to present your work with the respect and creativity that it deserves.

Stay connected and stay strong.

Sincerely,
Sena Hussain
Editor, Cell Count



PASAN

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 counselling, 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

Write or visit us:
526 Richmond St E,
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ELIMINATING HEPATITIS C IN PRISONS: A GUIDE FOR PRISONERS

Hepatitis C is a serious health issue in Canadian prisons, affecting about 25% of prisoners. To tackle this problem, there are several strategies we can use to help eliminate the virus within prison walls.

Understanding Hepatitis C in Prisons
In Canada, there are two types of prisons:

- Federal Prisons: For sentences of two years or more.
- Provincial/Territorial Prisons: For sentences less than two years or for those awaiting trial.

Drug use, especially injecting drugs, is common in prisons and increases the risk of spreading hepatitis C. Sharing needles and unsafe tattooing practices are major causes.

Strategies to Fight Hepatitis C

- 1. Universal Screening:** Screening means testing everyone for hepatitis C unless they choose not to. This helps find and treat more people compared to only testing those who ask for it.
- 2. Linkage to Care:** In federal prisons, longer sentences allow prisoners to start and finish hepatitis C treatment. In provincial prisons, shorter sentences make this harder. Linking prisoners to community-based treatment after release is essential. Studies show many complete their treatment if connected to care upon release.
- 3. Non-Specialist Treatment and Telemedicine:** Non-specialist health-care providers can give hepatitis C treatment. Modern treatments are easier and shorter, making it possible for non-specialists to help. Telemedicine allows inmates to consult specialists without leaving the prison, saving time and resources.
- 4. Harm Reduction Measures:** Harm reduction programs, like needle and syringe exchanges, can reduce the risk of spreading hepatitis C. Opioid substitution therapy (OST) helps reduce the need for injecting drugs. While some federal prisons have pilot programs for safer needle use, more are needed, and they must ensure confidentiality and easy access.
- 5. Community Support:** Organizations like PASAN play a vital role. They help develop programs, support prisoners after release, and reduce stigma around hepatitis C.

What Can You Do?

- **Get Tested:** If offered, take the hepatitis C test. It's better to know and get treated if needed.
- **Seek Treatment:** If you test positive, ask about starting treatment, even if your sentence is short. You can continue treatment after release.
- **Use Harm Reduction Services:** Participate in needle exchange or OST programs if available.
- **Connect with Community Organizations:** These groups can support you during and after your time in prison.
- **Moving Forward:** Healthcare providers, community organizations, and prison staff must work together to tackle hepatitis C. By increasing testing, treatment access, and harm reduction measures, we can make significant progress. Your role in this fight is crucial—take advantage of available resources and support to help eliminate hepatitis C in our prisons.

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WOMEN IN PRISON, HIV AND HEPATITIS C

Canadian HIV Legal Network infosheet, 2012

"I would say about 80 percent of the women in the prison were using drugs. 35 percent would have to do sexual favours for the drugs. And 25 to 50 percent of the women would be injecting drugs. To inject, we would use used needles from the nurse's office, which we stole. Anywhere from 10 to 15 people would share one needle over a month's time.... I also got a tattoo. I know the needle for my tattoo had been used a lot; I don't know where it came from or who had used it. Back then, we were not allowed bleach, so we never used it to clean our needles. We were aware of getting hepatitis C and HIV from sharing needles, but we didn't care. Being in there, we felt our lives sucked so it didn't matter anyway."

— Woman formerly incarcerated in the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario

Women in prison: a Canadian snapshot

Incarcerated women constitute a small minority of the prison population in Canada. Nevertheless, they are among the most marginalized people in Canadian society, not only because they lack power in the prison context, but also because of the economic, social and political realities of their lives. Women in prison, more often than men, suffer from chronic health conditions resulting from poverty, drug use, gender-based violence, adolescent pregnancy, malnutrition, poor access to preventive health care and for Aboriginal and Black women, the effects of colonization, slavery and racism.

Among federally incarcerated women, one third is Aboriginal, 80 percent are survivors of physical and sexual abuse (a percentage that rises to 90 percent for Aboriginal women), a significant number are struggling with substance use, one in five is struggling with mental health problems, and many are single mothers with primary childcare responsibilities.

While more than 80 percent of women in Canada have completed education beyond the ninth grade, the figure for women in prison is closer to 50 percent. Drug use also tends to figure more prominently in the lives and criminal offences of incarcerated women, who often perpetrate income-generating crimes to support their drug use. In particular, a previous history of injection drug use is consistently found more frequently among female than male prisoners in Canada. Consequently, more than half of all charges which bring female accused in contact with police are non-violent, property and drug offences.

Historically, the welfare of women prisoners was secondary to that of the larger male population. While women's correctional needs are profoundly different from men's, the Canadian Human Rights Commission has

noted that the criteria by which federal prisoners are classified are designed according to white, male, middle-class standards, resulting in skewed discriminatory assessments of federally sentenced women and too many women being deemed a high-security risk. This leads to numerous hardships for these women since maximum-security prisoners are isolated in segregated living units and, unlike their minimum- and medium- security counterparts, are not eligible to participate in work-release programs, community-release programs or other supportive programming designed to enhance prisoners' chances of reintegration. Moreover, because there are fewer women's institutions and some exist in isolated locations, women are less likely to have access to community-based support, and are more likely to be located far from their families, communities and other support networks. Geographic dislocation has a particularly isolating impact on Aboriginal women, many of whom come from more remote communities.

Incarcerated women are further neglected with respect to service provision. Because there are relatively small numbers of them in a given institution, it becomes difficult for prison authorities to justify specific services for women. As a result, women in prison struggle to access HIV services that are equivalent to those available to women outside prison, or even to men inside prison.

This is compounded by the troubling reality that, as a whole, women infected with HIV or hepatitis C virus (HCV) already do not receive diagnostic and treatment services as early as do men. The needs of women infected with HIV or HCV also differ from those of men, yet appropriate social and community support is less frequently available and less accessible. Thus, women are often less educated than men about HIV and HCV infection and do not have the necessary support structures. Moreover, disease manifestations attributable to HIV infection can be different in women, leading to under-recognition or delays in diagnosis, when disease may be further advanced.

The inadequacy of health services in prison was evident in a 2003 study of women in federal institutions, the most comprehensive study of the specific needs of federally incarcerated women regarding HIV/HCV prevention, care, treatment and support to date. The majority of women interviewed described an overall dissatisfaction with the quality and accessibility of prison medical services, and women living with HIV and/or HCV identified numerous barriers to accessing adequate medical services. These included difficulty in obtaining blood tests, accessing physicians or specialists, obtaining adequate pain management, and accessing medications to relieve the side-effects of HIV and HCV therapies.

Women also felt that HIV prevention education programs did not meet their needs, and women living with HIV and/or HCV strongly identified a lack of support and counselling services specific to their needs. In a subsequent 2010 study of federally incarcerated women by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), a recurring theme among the women surveyed was their dissatisfaction with the adequacy and accessibility of physical and mental health facilities in prison, and specifically the need for testing for sexually transmitted infections.

Facts and figures: women and the HIV and HCV epidemics behind bars

- Conflict with the law and incarceration are often a result of offences arising from the criminalization of certain drugs, and related to supporting drug use, or to behaviours brought about by drug use. In Canada's federal prisons, over 1 in 4 women have been incarcerated on drug-related charges.

- With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use. In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners. In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively. In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

Women in prison struggle to access HIV services that are equivalent to those available to women outside prison, or even to men inside prison.

- While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent. Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important.

- Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status. Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention to themselves by accessing HIV medications, HIV and HCV testing services, therapies and diets (which may be dispensed at specific times in a public space) and by requesting safer sex materials and bleach from correctional staff. Violations of women's right to privacy and confidentiality have significant repercussions in prison, where

rampant stigma and discrimination exists against people living with HIV.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse.

- For many women, drug use in prison is a means of coping with trauma and alleviating pain and anxiety, including anxiety about losing custody of their children as a result of their criminal record. In a 2007 national survey, 1 in 4 women in federal prisons admitted using drugs in the past six months in prison, and 15 percent of women admitted injecting drugs. Of those women, 41 percent used someone else's used needle, and 29 percent shared a needle with someone who had HIV, HCV or an unknown infection status. Similarly, in both a national study of federally incarcerated women and a provincial study of women in a B.C. prison, 1 in 5 women was engaging in injection drug use behind bars.

- In a 2007 national study, 30 percent of federally incarcerated women reported oral, vaginal or anal sex. In a 2003 study of women in federal prisons, 1 in 4 was having unprotected sex.

- In a 2003 study of women in federal prisons, 1 in 4 women was tattooing. In a 2003 study of provincial prisons in Quebec, 9 percent of women had engaged in tattooing or piercing in prison.

- Women are more likely than men to take part in self-harming behaviour such as slashing and cutting as a coping strategy frequently linked to experiences of sexual abuse in childhood. In a 2003 study of women in federal prisons, 9 percent of the women interviewed had engaged in slashing or cutting of their own skin or other forms of self-injury. In a subsequent 2010 study of women in federal prisons, 36 percent took part in some form of self-harming behaviour during incarceration.

- Chronic pain can be a symptom of both HIV and HCV infection, so access to effective pain management is a common health concern for people living with these diseases. However, women have reported barriers to pain management in prison. Women whose pain management needs are ignored by staff may resort to managing their pain by using illicit drugs via non-sterile injection equipment.

- While CSC and some provincial and territorial prison systems mandate the provision of condoms, dental dams, lubricant, bleach to sterilize injection equipment, and methadone treatment, their availability is inconsistent across the country. Where there is a policy in place directing the provision of a harm reduction measure, women have cited irregular distribution, insufficient quantities and a lack of confidentiality as an impediment to access. For example, women are required to request safer sex measures or bleach from either health care staff or correctional officers, forcing them to self-identify as sexually

active or as an injection drug user, activities that are prohibited behind bars and for which women can be heavily punished, including through the imposition of longer sentences and solitary confinement.

No prison system in Canada permits safer tattooing options, despite significant evidence of high-risk behaviours related to these practices and women's desire to access such measures. The absence of sterile tattooing equipment is particularly problematic in light of the pervasiveness of tattooing behind bars. As the Canadian Human Rights Commission has noted, denying prisoners harm reduction measures that are consistent with accepted community health standards exposes them to increased risk.

Women, prison and law

Canadian and international law and policy requires that prisons be gender-sensitive, particularly with respect to women's health. In federal prisons, for example, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) mandates that "[t]he gender and cultural requirements of individuals and groups shall be respected and reflected in all activities aimed at addressing infectious diseases in the inmate population" (Commissioner's Directive 821, s. 10), while the Corrections and Conditional Release Act requires that CSC provide programs designed particularly to address the needs of women and Aboriginal people in prison (ss. 77 and 80).

Internationally, there is increasing recognition that the needs of women prisoners are not being met and that States must give recognition to incarcerated women's specific needs. For example, the 1993 WHO Guidelines on HIV Infection and AIDS in Prisons state that "special attention should be given to the needs of women prisoners," and specify that "staff should be trained to deal with the psychosocial and medical problems associated with medical infection in women" (Guideline 44). Correspondingly, HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care, Treatment and Support in Prison Settings: A Framework for an Effective National Response (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006) calls for initiatives that "reflect the fact that in many countries women face increased vulnerability to HIV infection, have higher rates of HIV infection in prisons than men, engage in risk behaviours differently than male prisoners, and generally serve shorter sentences than men" (Action 56, p. 24).

As with all prisoners, women do not surrender their rights when they enter prison, and retain all human rights that are not necessarily removed as a consequence of their imprisonment.¹ This includes:

- the right to the "highest attainable standard of health;"²
- the right to life;³
- the right to liberty and security of the person;⁴
- the right to equality and non-discrimination, including with respect to health services;⁵

- the right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual treatment or punishment; and⁶
- access to a standard of health care that is equivalent to that available in the community.⁷

These provisions require, at minimum, that women in prison have access to health care at least to the standard available to women in the community. Given the considerably higher prevalence of HIV and HCV among incarcerated women, this means prisons must make a comprehensive range of harm reduction measures available, including prison-based needle and syringe programs.

Recommendations for policy and law reform

- Develop alternatives to imprisonment. Most women are in prison for non-violent offences and pose no risk to the public. Any comprehensive strategy in response to HIV in prison settings should seek to reduce overcrowding as it can create conditions which can lead to sudden outbreaks of violence, including sexual violence. Consideration should be given to the development and implementation of non-custodial strategies for women, particularly during pregnancy or when they have young children.
- Provide equivalent health services to those available in the community. All prisons should make condoms, dental dams, lubricant, bleach, opiate substitution therapy, adequate pain management medication, and information on safer slashing or cutting available and accessible. In particular, those provinces and territories that do not yet provide these harm reduction measures should develop policies to introduce them in all their prisons.
- Policies should be developed to make sterile injection equipment and safer tattooing options available and genuinely accessible in prison, as they are in the community, in accordance with accepted best practices governing such programs operating in the community.
- Pre- and post-test counselling for HIV and HCV testing should be mandated and provided for all prisoners. Women in prison should only be tested for HIV and HCV with their informed consent, and no one should be tested without receiving pre- and post-test counselling.
- Prisoners' rights to confidentiality and privacy must be respected. The security of women's personal information, such as medical records and health information, must always be respected. Furthermore, women's access to HIV- and HCV-related prevention education, therapies, diets, counselling and support, testing, and prevention and harm reduction measures should be promoted by ensuring the confidentiality of those who partake in such programs or measures.
- Meaningfully involve prisoners living with or vulnerable to HIV/HCV in policy design.

Enabling those most directly affected to draw on their lived experiences will increase the effectiveness and appropriateness of policies and programmes to address HIV and HCV behind bars.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to Keisha Williams, Women's Community Program Coordinator at the Prisoners' HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), for reviewing and providing input on this info sheet.

6

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1 S. 4(e) of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) and Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, Principle 5.

2 Article 12(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Section 86 of the CCRA also mandates CSC to provide every person in prison with "essential health care" that will contribute to his or her rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

3 Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and s. 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter).

4 Article 9 of the ICCPR and s. 7 of the Charter.

5 Article 26 of the ICCPR, CEDAW and s. 15 of the Charter.

6 Article 7 of the ICCPR and s. 12 of the Charter.

7 See, for example, UN Basic Principles for the Treatment

of Prisoners, 1990, Principle 9; WHO, WHO Guidelines on HIV Infection and AIDS in Prisons, 1993; UNODC, WHO and UNAIDS, HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care, Treatment and Support in Prison Settings: A Framework for an Effective National Response, 2006;

UNAIDS, "Statement on HIV/AIDS in Prisons to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at its Fifty-second session, April 1996," in Prison and AIDS: UNAIDS Point of View (Geneva: UNAIDS,

1997), p. 3. Under Canadian law, s. 86(2) of the CCRA stipulates that medical care for prisoners "conform to professionally accepted standards," thereby implying

a right to comparable health care as offered in the community at large.

This information sheet contains general information. It does

not constitute legal advice.

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BOOKS BEHIND BARS

Incarcerated people in Canada are often without access to information. Prison librarians are working to change that

By Leslie Sinclair

"I still remember everything about it," Zakaria Amara says, sketching the library inside Millhaven Institution, a maximum-security prison located in Bath, Ontario. He maps the librarian's glass office inside the door from a controlled-movement hallway. An inspirational sign about reading hangs on the wall (he can't recall what it says exactly). Next, the law books. Behind that, a back wall offering fantasy novels. There's a magazine section in one corner. And in the centre of it all, couches to rest and read on.

"Here was my favourite section for a very long time," Amara taps the pen on a rectangle he's drawn beside the law section. Self-help.

In the summer of 2006, a series of anti-terrorism raids shocked Toronto and the GTA. Police arrested 13 men and four minors, and took an eighteenth person into custody two months later. Together, the group became known as the Toronto 18, accused of planning a series of attacks including a plot to bomb the Toronto Stock Exchange, among other important buildings. Amara, detained at age 20 and considered one of the ringleaders, pled guilty at trial in 2009. He received a life sentence.

Last October, Amara was released on parole following two days of intense interrogation, a month or so apart, by RCMP national security investigators to assess whether he still posed a threat to society. Today, in a quiet corner of the Toronto Reference Library, Amara explains how library access was critical to his transformation and deradicalization in prison. He arrived at Millhaven in 2015, after five-and-a-half years in the special handling unit (SHU)—also known as supermax— at Ste-Anne-des-Plaines Institution in Quebec. Despite its reputation as one of Canada's most violent prisons, Millhaven was "paradise" compared to the SHU.

"I must have read 100 self-help books," he says. At the time, the genre was new to him and introduced him to concepts and ideas that he wasn't aware of. "I had no access to emotions," he explains, "so it opened up understanding emotions, self-esteem, self-worth, and how that tied back to why I became radicalized in the first place."

Being incarcerated doesn't—or shouldn't—mean that you've given up your right to access information. In fact, as the Canadian Federation of Library Associations argues in its Right

to Read position statement, "certain freedoms, such as those of conscience and religion, thought, belief, opinion, and expression have a heightened importance behind bars." Adopted in 2016, the statement joined a list of internationally endorsed foundational documents that support establishing and supporting library services to prisoners. These include the United Nations Nelson Mandela Rules, which state that "Every institution shall have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners shall be encouraged to make full use of it."

Despite the obvious benefits of access to information behind bars, that freedom is routinely limited or not extended to incarcerated people in Canada.

"Hey, librarian," someone is yelling from the next cell over. The librarian, Michelle De Agostini, is taking her printed library catalogue door-to-door at the Edmonton Institution, a maximum-security men's prison in Alberta. "I want some James Patterson!"

Patterson, one of the world's best-selling authors, is just as popular on the "inside" as he is to the masses. But genre fiction is far from the only material that's important to incarcerated people. Folks inside prison have the same information needs as those of us on the outside: instruction on languages, cultural practices, entrepreneurship, mental health, self-help and the law.

Though many of the Edmonton Institution men show a desire to read, movement, association and privileges are highly restricted in maximum security. Browsing the stacks was out of the question. De Agostini tried to have the catalogue installed on standalone computers to make the check-out process easier for them, but upgrading the technology proved not to be a high priority for the IT staff. So instead, De Agostini printed the catalogue and took it cell-to-cell, conducting interviews along the way to determine what materials would interest people. The unwieldy paper version of an Excel spreadsheet she carried around was more than 300 pages long. "It was ridiculous. And it never printed in a way that was very readable. I thought, 'How is anybody supposed to know how to find anything?'"

De Agostini never imagined that she was going to be a prison librarian. But after a talk from the Greater Edmonton Library Association's (GELA) Prison Libraries Project during library school, she started volunteering with them in 2018 and eventually became treasurer. She began by helping lead creative writing

workshops at the Edmonton Remand Centre. In 2019, while still going to the Edmonton Remand Centre monthly, De Agostini began working at the Edmonton Institution, where a new library was being created. She lucked into her full-time paid job there when a manager walked in while she was volunteering and said, "Hey, do you know anybody who wants a job?"

De Agostini, who left prison librarianship in 2021, has since worked as a branch manager at a rural public library in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley and is now the Manager of Access Services at York University. "The library," she wrote in a 2022 paper for Journal of Radical Librarianship, "is a minimum human rights requirement—literally the least prisons could be doing to protect the intellectual freedom of the people they house—and yet adequate library services are still not being provided in Canadian prisons."

While federal prisons in Canada are legally required to have a library in their institutions, provincial legislation is patchy. Most provincial prisons don't have their own library services, instead relying on volunteer librarians to bring in programming. This means there's little continuity in what's on offer, and, at the provincial level, little assurance that it will be anything at all. A "library" in a provincial prison might be a storage locker full of books that are packed up and exchanged every month or so. Or a volunteer group might be allowed to build a library space that they'll maintain monthly.

This means that every day, thousands of incarcerated people could be denied their fundamental right to access to information and library services. The consequences range from lack of ability to escape through reading to increased isolation to difficulty working on their legal cases. Lack of access to books, in other words, can make a hopeless situation feel worse.

In Canada, there are two correctional systems. The federal system, governed by Correctional Service Canada (CSC), houses adults who have been sentenced to two or more years in institutions that use minimum, medium, maximum and special handling security classifications. Meanwhile, the provincial-territorial system, regulated by each province or territory's relevant ministry or department, houses adults sentenced to less than two years and youth aged 12 to 17. The provincial-territorial system also houses people in remand, meaning they haven't been convicted of a crime and are waiting for trial. On an average day, according to Statistics Canada, there are about 12,395 adults in federal custody and

20,430 adults in provincial-territorial custody, with a staggering 71 percent of provincially incarcerated persons being held in remand.

It's well known that Black and Indigenous people are chronically overrepresented within these populations. A 2016 investigation by Maclean's magazine found that Canadian criminologists had quietly begun referring to prisons and jails as the "new residential schools." According to the 2021-2022 "Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator," Indigenous people comprise just five percent of Canada's overall population, yet make up 32 percent of those held in federal institutions. Worse, Indigenous women represent 50 percent of all women in federal custody. Black people, who represent roughly 3.5 percent of the overall Canadian population, are similarly overrepresented in federal custody, comprising 9.2 percent of the total population. The majority of Black people incarcerated are young men between the ages of 18 to 30.

For prison librarians, that means working toward a collection that contains culturally relevant materials, says Kirsten Wurmman, chair and founding member of Manitoba Library Association's Prison Libraries Committee. Of course, people can dictate their cultural needs for themselves, but sometimes new information is required, and that's where librarians come in. "What we can do is say, 'If you really want some picture books that are English and Cree, we can buy some of those.'" She remembers an older woman who'd come to the library looking for books about traditional Indigenous beading. The books inspired her to create her own patterns, which she'd share with other women.

These days, the Manitoba Library Association's Prison Libraries Committee is often asked by provincial prisons to help with their libraries by bringing in books, or even setting up a new library because they've heard about their work with other institutions and there are no funds or provincial policies in place to do that work. "That feels frustrating to me because we're a volunteer group and the need is there," she says.

Lack of funding is one of the biggest challenges of doing this work, says Wurmman. The group receives \$500 in funding annually from the Manitoba Library Association, and anything other than that depends on donations and fundraising.

On the other hand, there are advantages to being a small group with access to some money, explains Allison Sivak, who helped found the GELA's Prison Libraries Project along with Wur-

mann and others back in 2007. "You can move really fast," she says. Because it's a small volunteer group that raises money through its own fundraising efforts, it means that they can avoid layers of red tape, getting materials into people's hands more quickly.

Whether volunteer or paid, these librarians are passionate about their work inside prisons. But they cannot, by themselves, fill the gaps left by structural inefficiencies. It will take a concerted effort on behalf of each province to create legislation to ensure that each provincial institution has a library, bringing incarcerated people access to the information they deserve.

Opened in 1835, Kingston Penitentiary was Canada's first large prison and housed its first recorded prison library. Early Canadian prison libraries, modelled on those in American prisons, were run by chaplains, held mainly religious texts in their collections and were, not surprisingly, framed as spaces of moral reform. In the late 1880s, the Penitentiary Acts and the Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Penitentiaries of Canada of 1888 stipulated that all federal prisons must have a library containing secular books alongside the religious ones. However, there wouldn't be a standardized federal prison library policy until 2012's National Guide for Institutional Libraries. The guide was strongly influenced by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' 2005 Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners which canvassed librarians in more than 25 countries regarding the status of prison libraries and related legislation in their homelands. Today, mirroring the outside to help inmates prepare for their release is considered a crucial purpose of prison libraries. To that end, Commissioner's Directive 720, CSC's policy instrument on educational programs and services for inmates, in effect as of May 2017, states that not only are prisons responsible for providing library services, but those services ought to be "similar to those offered in the community." That's important, Wurmman says, because incarcerated individuals came from our community, they remain part of it while they are inside, and eventually they return to our wider society.

Though CSC declined an interview, in an email Jordan Crosby, manager of issues management and media relations, stated that library services meant to address recreational, cultural, spiritual and educational reference needs are provided at all federal institutions. Those services may be provided by a dedicated librarian, another

staff member or by contract. Some materials are prohibited: particularly anything alluding to weapons construction or sexually explicit works involving violence or children. But books can also be limited on an individual basis. For example, if it “contributes to an unhealthy living environment [or] presents a risk to the safety and security of the institution.” Another reason that materials might be individually limited is if they are inconsistent with an inmate’s correctional plan, a program tailored to each person based on an evaluation they receive when they arrive at an institution. The evaluation is meant to determine the underlying reasons that led to their sentence while the correctional plan, updated throughout the person’s sentence, is intended to prepare them to return to the community.

“Reading and access to educational resources is important and we make every effort to ensure access to inmates,” Crosby writes, noting that book carts, reading requests, access to legal materials and the Digital Reference Library—which is updated quarterly—are available to people. The Digital Reference Library is accessed through monitored and restricted computers which may be located on the unit but also in spots like the school and work program areas or the library. It is also available by CD-ROM, and where necessary, in paper form. However, De Agostini says, “whether or not people get access—reasonable access—to that library is debatable, but they’re legally required to have it.”

Defining what library services are or ought to be is contentious because every library worker and incarcerated person has a different idea of what’s needed. CSC’s own National Guide for Institutional Libraries says that library services should match the public library as best as they can. So for De Agostini, reasonable access means being able to enter the space, browse the stacks and other media, search a catalogue on library computers, be able to attend regular library programming, speak to a qualified library worker and have access to printing and web services, with no banning or censorship of library materials (within reason). She’d like to see maker spaces. Most importantly, perhaps, reasonable access means the library is robustly funded with well-developed collections that meet patrons’ needs and has established inter-library loan services to fill in the gaps.

For Amara, what constitutes reasonable access is much simpler. “Security always trumps everything in those places so that’s the card that’s played” when it comes to accessing the

library, he says. At a minimum, he says, the library must be open five days per week when there are no security issues, ideally for both the morning and afternoon movement shifts. A lockdown period usually follows a security incident. It’s a time when all privileges are suspended, though inmates still receive their prescriptions. In the event of a lockdown, Amara thinks the book trolley should come out as soon as possible. In fact, he suggests, since prisoners can’t go to the library every day—at Millhaven, they must request a pass and are allowed to visit only once or twice per week—the trolley should go around daily. “Books are like medication,” he says, “and should be treated as such.”

On Wednesdays, the Kitchener Public Library bus rolls into Grand Valley Institution for Women loaded with books destined for the library in the main building. Inside their residential-style units, the women wait for inmate count to be finished, gearing up for a wild race to the library when they’re released.

“As soon as that bell went off after lunch, after the count was complete, people would just be running as fast as they could to the building to try to get as many books as they could,” says Emily O’Brien, who served 10 months out of a four-year sentence for drug smuggling in the federal multilevel security facility in Kitchener, Ontario. The library at Grand Valley was small, O’Brien explains, but its partnership with the Kitchener Public Library meant that people could request books that the prison library didn’t have.

“Reading [in prison] was never an escape for me. It was more like something that made me feel worthy,” O’Brien says. Not only did she devour 82 books during her time there, but she also started Comeback Snacks, a successful gourmet popcorn company that now employs

other formerly incarcerated people—all without access to the internet. “Reading gave me hope because when you can educate yourself through books, that inspires you to build things,” she says.

With a limited library, and no internet, O’Brien had to get creative to expand her reading list. She mostly read nonfiction, so when she really liked a book, she’d check out the source list and place orders for the author’s source books. And sometimes, she says, “I would call my mom on the phone and get her to look up business books that were coming out.”

Books and relationships with prison librarians can also help incarcerated people to feel more like themselves in a situation where there aren’t many chances to show one’s individuality. Sivak recalls an incarcerated woman saying, “We’re treated as a population.” For prisoners, having normal interactions with people who treat them with respect or having packages addressed to them is really important because they are dehumanized on a daily basis.

“I often talk about giving a humanizing experience,” Wurmman says. “They’re not just inmates. They’re not just offenders. They are incarcerated, but it doesn’t mean that they’ve given up their rights.”

Sivak sees library services not just as a way to learn, but as a way to build connections between people. She notes the benefits of outsiders coming in to spend time, whether for a reading, writing or other creative program, as programming inside prison is often designed to change people. However, “in art making or writing, you see people’s strengths and the pride they have in the work they make, and that’s very cool,” she says.

“Volunteering in prison is not an easy process,” explains O’Brien, who participated in a

monthly book club at Grand Valley facilitated by Book Clubs for Inmates, a charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs in federal prisons across Canada. Volunteers have to go through many security clearances to be able to go inside. “For someone to really commit to doing that because they believe in second chances or because they believe in people even though they’ve done something wrong—it was another thing that provided help.” Not only did the book club inspire the women to form new friendships amongst themselves, O’Brien says, but it allowed them to meet people they could connect with after prison.

Volunteers have “the scent of freedom,” Amara says. In the SHU he wasn’t allowed access to volunteers, but at Millhaven, where there was a book club and a poetry club, being around free people gave him hope. “They’re not guards and they aren’t part of the system. You aren’t afraid of them. And they’re just there to help you.”

In her paper, De Agostini charges that “prison libraries have largely been considered a privilege exchanged for good behaviour rather than a well-planned service and a human right.” A “combination of moralism, budget shortfalls and a punitive philosophy...has allowed Canadian prisons to become sites of perpetual punishment and trauma for the people that inhabit them,” she writes. That leaves the prison librarian with an impossible task: delivering a service that matches the public library while contending with the security constraints of prison. De Agostini says she still wonders if she could have fought harder or done more to provide a better library service.

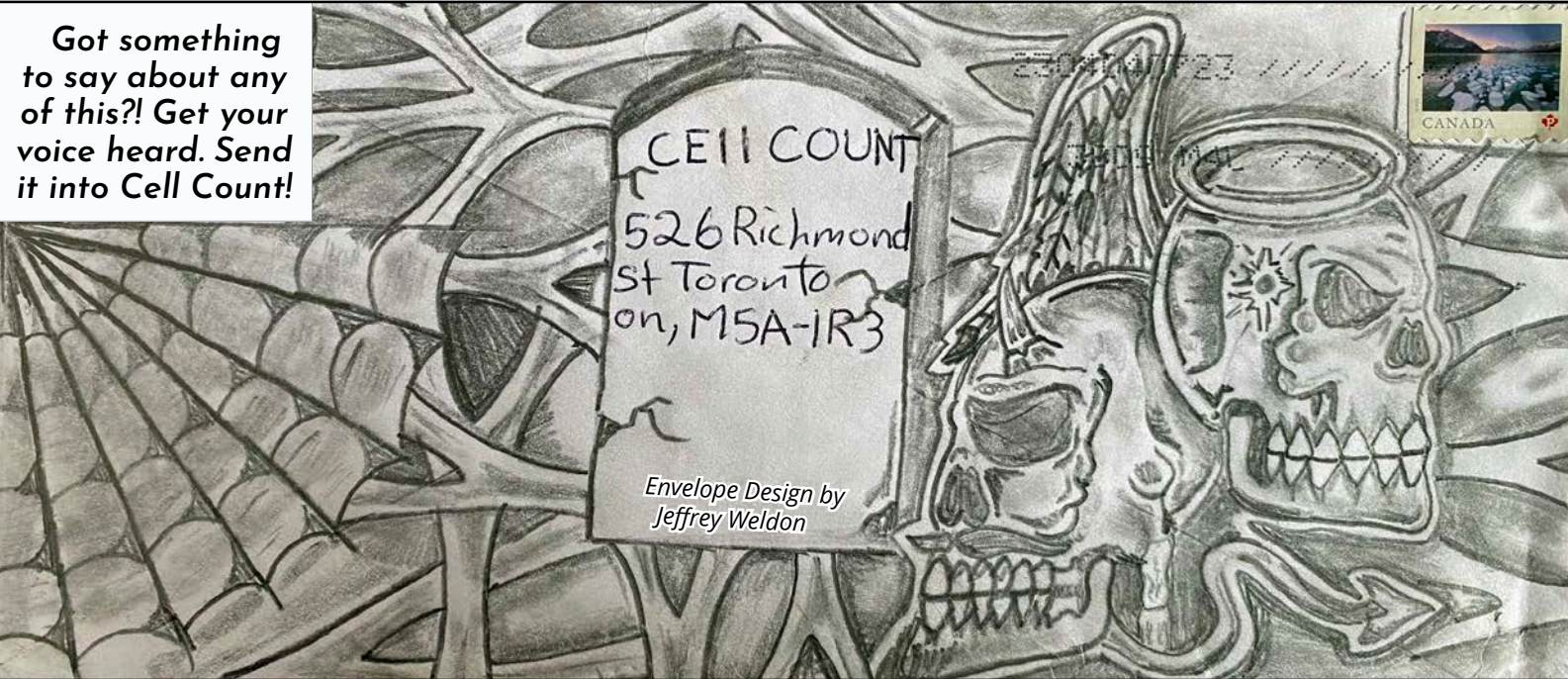
By the time Amara was transferred to the SHU, he’d been incarcerated for three years and was beginning to lay the foundations of separating himself

from his extremist mindset. During his first year there, he took a psychology course and a critical thinking course through Athabasca University, which offers flexible distance learning. The trouble was, and continues to be, that CSC offers little to no deradicalization programming. Even though he had the willingness to change, it was difficult to tackle the emotional roots of his ideology on his own. He didn’t have a therapist; all he had was books.

In the SHU, he couldn’t go to the library, but there were old, out of date catalogues at a bookstand where he could make written book requests. He came across Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, which led him to one of the most important books he ever read: In the First Circle, also by the Russian author. He loved it so much, he ended up buying it from the SHU. “When I got my parole,” he says, voice filled with emotion, “I gave it as a gift to my parole officer.”

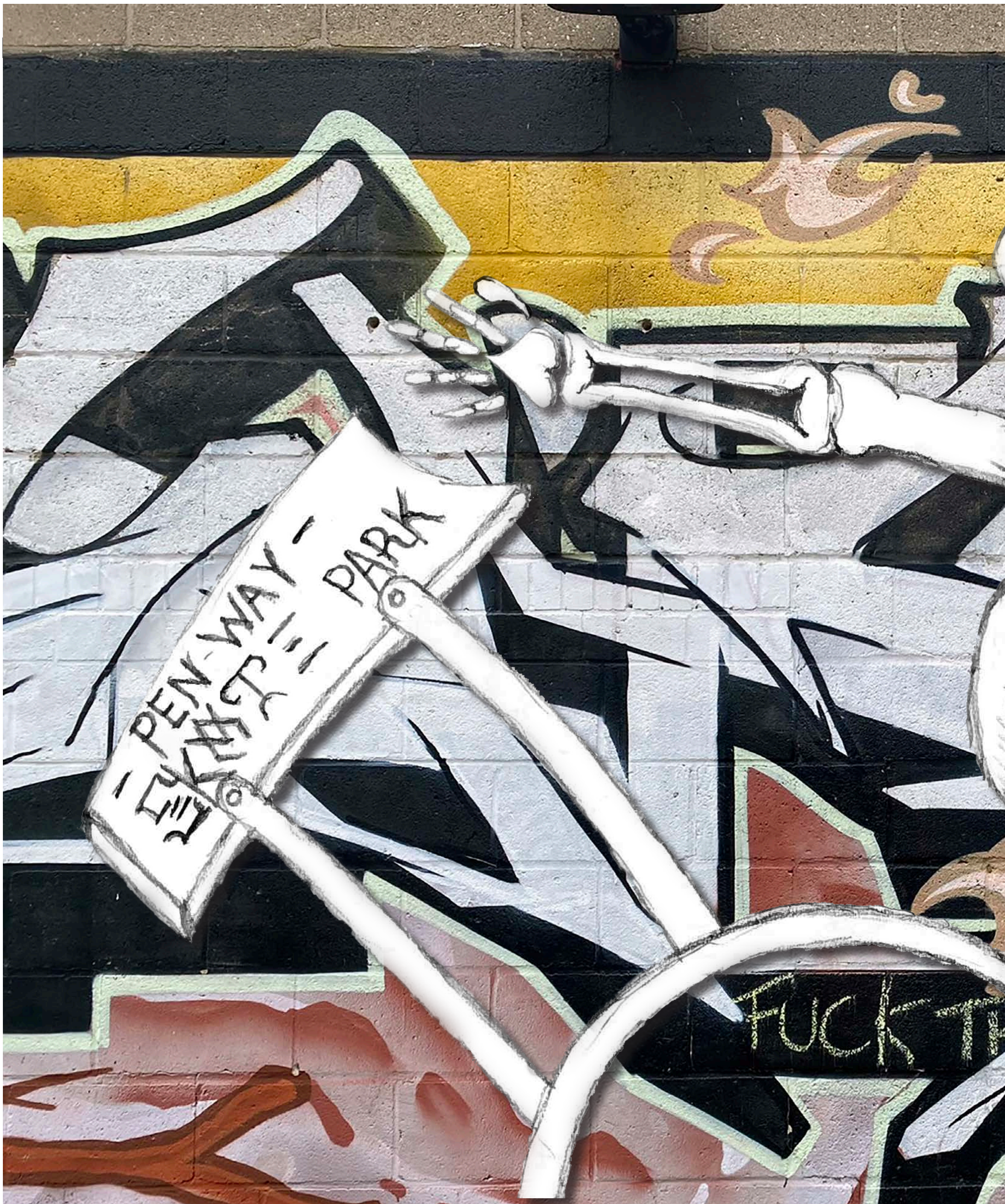
“Any extremist or dogmatic person hides a secret doubt,” Amara says. “That’s why fanatics overcompensate.” The reason the book touched him so deeply was the dialogue between the characters, he explains—the main character was a communist officer who became disillusioned. Had it been about Islamic extremists, Amara says he wouldn’t have read it—too close to home. But because it was about a different type of ideology, he could discern the parallels to his own situation and the conversations between the characters “cracked away” at his beliefs.

“My message is, look at whatever limited access and problematic access I had, look what it’s done for me and imagine what it can do if we make it better,” says Amara. “What I got out of it changed my life.”





Crinklaw '2024







PEER ADVOCACY

by Tanya Bogdonovich

Hi! It has come to my attention through the wonderful members of PASAN during their visits to Grand Valley that the men's sector does not have employment positions known as "Peer Advocates" as we do in the women's sector. I currently am a Peer Advocate. I am paid through my institution but am employed through CAEFS (Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society) which I believe is more or less the female "version" of John Howards Society. My employment includes assistance with writing complaints and grievances, both individual and group, attending court as an advocate to assist in arguing to have cases dismissed based on Commissioner's Directives that were not adhered to or lack of informal resolutions attempted. I also am accessible to Secure Unit members of the population as well as to those members of the population who are placed in the Secure Intervention Unit. The institution has ensured that twice a week in the evenings I have access to a computer for office hours so I can meet with people privately to maintain confidentiality. Sometimes the hardest part of complaints and grievances is the fulsomeness of the complaint. In order to best share this in its simplest form, I decided to use one of my "easier" complaints and remove any identifying factors to maintain confidentiality in order to show the most effective format for complaints/grievances.

****First example of complaint/grievance****

Summary: [Brief description of the situation and try to find appropriate and relative Commissioner Directives/CCRA/CCRR as you can that pertain to your situation]

I am filing this grievance because of the extremely disrespectful, rude, uncaring, and unprofessional behaviour that I was met with upon an attempt to ensure, and apologize, that any of my personal behaviours did not make an officer feel disrespected in any fashion. This is not aligned with CD 001 Mission, Values and Ethics Framework of the Correctional Service of Canada 2018-04-23 and CD 060 Code of Discipline 2019-07-22.

Background: [Give as much specific details as you can. Use facts and not feeling/emotions]

On date Officer ***** came to the living unit I was residing in at the time (LU #) to escort me to LU #**. Originally, I was unsure if I was moving as not all members of the living units were moving. I was informed that I was not moving "fast enough" while being escorted out of the living unit. While being escorted out the above officer treated me with hostility and disrespect, which was triggering not only to myself

but also to a housemate of mine. I was informed by this officer that I could not keep an additional locker and I asked if I could just empty it and return it later to save time. This was agreed upon. She then said I needed to empty it out right then and there. At that point it became apparent how many things were being kept in the footlocker and she said I could return it to the ***** after moving. I returned it to the ***** when I was finished moving. The following day I was able to locate Officer ***** to let her know it was not my intention to be rude and I did not want her to feel disrespected or like I did not respect her and I confided in her regarding my struggles with mental health. After this conversation I felt even more disrespected by Officer ***** when she responded "everyone has mental health issues, it just sounds like excuses" she then also stated that she went out of her way to ensure that I did not get my "way" because it is not her job to "babysit".

Summary:

I am filing this complaint in response to incorrect information in my paperwork that I have tried previously to have removed.

Background:

A request form was submitted to **** of **** Institution on *date*, which is attached to this complaint. The response to the request which was replied on *date* stated that **** Parole Officer would complete a file correction so that her file reflected the proper information from **** Court of Appeal For Ontario paperwork which states "...Ontario Court of Justice allowed **** sentence appeal in part, by setting aside the term of probation." The paperwork is still reflective that **** was sentenced to pay a fine of \$**** and *** years' probation.

Impact:

I submitted numerous requests and received no responses and my paperwork still does not reflect proper documentation. This will lead to future miscommunications and I would like my paperwork to be corrected as quickly as possible in order to reduce stress.

Law and Policy:

It is not that there is direct law or policy that is being disregarded in this complaint it is simply that there has been other attempts to resolve this issue that have been unsuccessful.

Remedy:

To have my Correctional Plan be amended to properly reflect the Court of Appeal of Ontario paperwork that I did not have to serve ** years of probation and only had to pay a fine of \$****. I would like these changes to be

made within the next two weeks so I can be assured that they have been completed appropriately.

I know that many people feel that by filing complaints and grievances that they will be targeted, and I will not lie and say that this never happens because sometimes it does. However, if people who work in institutions are allowed to behave in any manner that they so choose and feel that even abhorrent behaviour is above reproach then that becomes in and of itself inexcusable. Commissioner's Directives, CCRA's and CCRR's were created as laws to govern those working within institutions. While we are incarcerated for breaking laws that exist in society, that does not mean that those who work in carceral settings are free to run lawless, and part of our **responsibility as members of carceral communities is to ensure that those laws are upheld for the safety of those living in our current communities. **Do not be afraid** to have a voice!**

Impact: [This is where you write how you feel, and or the emotional impact on what happened to you]

The emotional impact was intense because not only was I open and honest about my mental health struggles which is difficult in a setting where trust is built, which is not the situation in this case, I was met with an uncaring attitude. If I had been in a different place than I am now, or if this had happened to someone else who was in a worse place than I am, this officer's laissez faire attitude could have led to self-harm or worse. I understand that some members of the staff feel that women who live here are "less than" and we are all entitled to opinions, but that is all that they should be-opinions. They should not come out in how you treat individuals when you are at your place of employment, where you are expected to behave in a professional manner.

Law & Policy: [list out and cut and paste in all relevant

Policies/Commissioner's Directives/CCRA/CCR]

CD 001 Mission, Values, and Ethics Framework of the Correctional Service of Canada 2018-04-23

Respect: *Respectful behaviours honour the rationality and dignity of persons - their ability to choose their own path, within lawful order, to a meaningful life. A good test of respectful behaviour is treating others, as we would like to be treated.*

Professionalism: *Professionalism is a commitment to abide by high ethical standards of behaviour as well as relevant group standards, and to develop and apply specialized knowledge for the public good. Professionalism is anchored in a commitment to integrity - a commitment to uphold our values in even the most difficult circumstances.*

CD 060 Code of Discipline 2019-07-22

Conduct and Appearance 6. Behaviour, both on and



BILL C-40

Letter from VB

Hi Sena and staff of Cell Count, Yesterday I was introduced to your newsletter through a Health fair conducted in our gym. Reading your articles found them very interesting and useful, hoping some of the guys use this as a tool to help with their time and reintegrate back into our communities successfully.

The one article that relates to me and drove me to this letter was titled "Open Letter - From A Lonely Innocent Prisoner". In it, he expresses the challenges he has faced during his incarceration and the will he has to prove his innocence already serving 19 years. Only in 2018 was he able to find legal representation to fight for his rights and make an application for a ministerial review, now waiting for decision to move his case forward.

Not sure if you are aware of Bill C-40, which takes over the ministerial review process (easy to look up) and broadens the application parameters. If Bill C-40 had been in place, would have taken less than three months to find his claim legitimate and if so, release him pending appellant decision. Saving tax payers a fortune while providing the innocent freedom they deserve. This is a lot more than just saving money. The inmate population would decrease, reducing stress from the institutional staff while defining the inmates that need assistance during and after incarceration.

I am waiting for this Bill to pass legislation, have been waiting since last September actually. The Law firm representing me has now focused on a ministerial review application hopeful to be submitted in counsel at the time presented during trial nor during appeal) that proves my innocence. Have also given this story to Mr. John Hill who no longer practices law, now engaging in journalism and coaching, he plans to use my story in his next book, so some promise ahead. Can share with you the struggles of the many men I have encountered here and how some of them genuinely argue injustice in some form or another. Am sure over the years your staff has experienced many of these stories where many were found innocent. Say ½ are true, that would be enough to fill our courts for years to prove innocence, now compound those numbers nationally, we are truly experiencing an epidemic in our 'correctional' (that's a joke by the way) institutions.

We have to fight back! Get the word out that our votes have meaning and give our politicians the guidance needed for successful "transformation", which will reduce recidivism, crime and costs throughout our judicial system, make us a better Canada. One step is Bill C-40. Believe the liberal government is missing an opportunity to deflate this tough-on-crime approach the Conservatives are riding on. This Bill has been delayed due to the

ministerial changes, now sitting in legislation for its final reading and then to be sent to Senate to become law (note from Cell Count editor: we have an update on this following this letter). This Bill will create a committee that replaces ministerial reviews and allows for a broader application of the injustice someone charged with an offence experiences. The Liberals could then use statistics and examples from this committee's experiences to show the present injustice within our judicial system today. How these statistics will increase with the tough-on-crime approach and the effect this will have on innocent Canadians. Imagine the injustice Umar Zameer would have experienced during this Conservative group, no bail, the justice system allowing false testimony, as God's word during trial for a lifetime conviction. Is this who we are as Canadians?

Your help or assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated. In the meantime, however, your pamphlet could be spreading the power of our votes through awareness. The reason we should vote, how to vote and for who. It is on the verge of disgrace that we as Canadians have to choose, a leader, who would cause less pain to our country and citizens, than choose the best group to better our country.

This mindset again can change through votes and awareness. Canadians need to know the reality of our justice system, without becoming a victim of it through experience. Making everyone accountable for their actions (especially politicians), identifying the harm caused and finding the healing that needs to take place for all to move forward. If we as citizens become the example, all other forms will have no choice but to follow or move aside.

For now however, I am passionate about the "transformation" of our judicial system and would like to partake where I can to help. Please keep me in mind through your discussions and plans, we have a small army of people here, just need direction and guidance, we already have a cause. Please include me in your, mailing lists, interested in keeping up with your newsletters, thank you.

EDITOR'S NOTE: BILL-C-40

Bill C-40, known as the Miscarriages of Justice Review Commission Act or David and Joyce Milgaard's Law, seeks to establish an independent commission dedicated to reviewing potential wrongful convictions in Canada. Named after David Milgaard, who was wrongfully imprisoned for 23 years, and his mother Joyce, who tirelessly fought for his exoneration, the bill aims to provide a more accessible and efficient avenue for addressing judicial errors. If passed, Bill C-40 would enhance the justice system's ability to identify and rectify wrongful convictions, thereby increasing public confidence in the legal process and ensuring greater protection of individuals'

rights against miscarriages of justice.

As of June 21st, 2024, Bill C-40 has passed the House of Commons and is currently at Senate, where it's undergone it's first reading. A second and third reading most likely will not resume until the summer break of the House of Commons is over, in September 2024.

At the House of Commons, Bill C-40 was overwhelmingly favoured by the Liberal party, NDP, Bloc Quebecois, Greens and Independents. It was overwhelmingly opposed by members of the Conservative party.

The following information is from the British Columbia Courthouse Library Society website:

How a bill becomes a law in Canada

To create a new law, also called an act or a statute, the government first introduces a bill which must pass through various stages in both the House of Commons and the Senate in order to become law.

What is a bill?

A bill is a proposed law that is introduced in either the House of Commons or the Senate. Most bills are introduced in the House of Commons. Bills can amend or repeal existing law or can contain completely new law.

There are two kinds of bills: public and private. Public bills relate to public policy and may be sponsored by a Minister (Government bill) or by a private Member (Members' bill). Private bills benefit a particular individual or group.

What stages must a bill pass in order to become law?

In the first house:

The first House can be either the House of Commons or the Senate and is always the House in which the bill was introduced. If the first House is the House of Commons then the second House is the Senate and vice versa. A bill must pass through all the following stages, regardless of the House in which it was introduced, in order to become law.

1st reading:

This is a formality whereby the bill is introduced to the House. The bill is then printed in its 1st reading form, often with explanatory notes.

2nd reading:

The main principle and purpose of the bill is debated. If passed, the bill is then referred to a committee for further study. In some instances, a bill may be referred to committee prior to receiving second reading. Bills are not re-printed at 2nd reading.

Committee:

Committee members study the bill clause by clause. The committee may make amendments.

Report stage:

The committee presents its report, which may recommend that the bill be accepted in its 1st reading state, or with amendments, or that it not be proceeded with further. During report stage debate, members can propose further amendments to the bill.

3rd reading:

The House reviews the bill in its final form and then orders the printing of the 3rd reading bill. The 3rd reading copy includes any amendments made to the bill thus far.

In the second house:

Once a bill has passed the 3rd reading stage in the first House, the bill goes to the second House where it must pass through the same stages. The Senate may amend, delay or refuse to pass bills, although traditionally the Senate passes most bills. Any amendments made by the second House however, must be agreed to by the first House or the bill does not become law.

Royal Assent

Royal Assent completes the enactment process. Bills may be given Royal Assent in two ways: by the Governor General or her deputy in a formal ceremony that takes place in the Senate before an assembly of both houses, or by written declaration. "Where royal assent is signified by written declaration, the Act is deemed to be assented to on the day on which the two Houses of Parliament have been notified of the declaration" (Royal Assent Act, S.C. 2002, c.15, s.5). When a bill receives Royal Assent it is given a chapter number for the Statutes of Canada.

When does an act come into force?

An act comes into force on the date of Royal Assent, unless the Act itself states that it comes into force on some other day. Different sections of an act can come into force on different days. An exact date may be specified or a "commencement" section may state that the Act, or certain sections of the Act, will come into force "by order of the Governor in Council". This means an order in council is required to fix the date that the Act or sections of the Act come into force. These orders in council are often referred to as proclamations. The House of Commons and Senate do not have to be sitting in order for an order in council to

be issued to proclaim an act or sections of an act into force.

What happens if a bill is not passed?

Not all bills become law. A bill "dies on the order paper" if it does not pass through all of the stages described above during a session of Parliament. A bill that has died on the order paper can, however, be reintroduced as a new bill, with a new bill number, in the next session of Parliament.

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TANYA CONT'D FROM P 11

off duty, shall reflect positively on the Correctional Service of Canada and on the Public Service generally. All staff are expected to present themselves in a manner that promotes a professional image, both in their words and in their actions. Employee's dress and appearance while on duty must similarly convey professionalism, and must be consistent with employee health and safety.

Remedies: [This is where you would write out what resolution you would like to have. Keep in mind that these Remedies should be simple and possible]

I would like her supervisor to have a discussion with her in respect to mental illness and how to better help individuals who are struggling while in a carceral setting. Perhaps a revision of sensitivity training for coping with those who have mental health issues. Keeping in mind that this issue caused another member within the household to state "I am not a fu**king dog, don't treat me like an animal!". There is no reason why behaviour from the staff should make any member of the population feel this way.

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IN CORRECTIONS



SIMPLE AS 1.2.3.

1. We Give You A Local Landline Number
(We redirect this to your cellphone or home number, no need to download apps etc)

2. You Give The Prisoner The Landline Number
(They request it to be added to thier prison pin phone # list. It may take a couple of days for the prison to authorize)

3. Get Unlimited Prison Calls To Your Cellphone or Homeline!
(prisoner only pays a local landline price of just \$0.57/hr. stop paying expensive inmate telephone system prison phone call costs! (Save over 60%)

ANTHONY VASSELL

A True Story

When I was cold and callous,
With a heart filled with hate
and malice I took everything for granted,
And was always looking for every
and any advantage With no
regard for any damage caused
by me,
Not caring about anyone or any-
thing, and doing so intentionally
Being selfish in every way, and
almost rotten to the core,
Because when i did open up and
give people an inch, they tried
so hard to take a mile or more
Taking what kindness I showed,
for a weakness,
Underestimating my restraint,
mistaking it for meekness The
trust I gave was betrayed on
more than one account, Filling
my mind with constant insecuri-
ties and endless doubt
Their words pierced my ears like
spears, and struck me deep in
the heart like arrows, My mind
flooded with vindictive thoughts,
planning wickedness for every
tomorrow I slowly realized that
my life was being shrouded by
clouds of darkness,
Because the resentment that
has festered towards others had
caused a coldness A coldness of
heart, a coldness of soul,
A coldness that freeze the whole
entire world
But filled with grief and misery,
my spirit spoke to me,
Begging, what was left of myself
not to fall into the traps set be-
fore me to destroy me Although i
felt as helpless and vulnerable as
a bird grounded in the open with
a broken wing, I heard the crystal
clear voice of an angel singing
It reverberated, like an echo
in this Valley of the Shadow of
Death, I felt the angel wings wrap
around me like a warm blanket
And I felt God's love lift me out
of that bottomless pit, Filling me
with a new life, a new light, and
new breath
Filling my lungs with the freshest
air, my body with His holiness,
My heart with His love, my mind
with His greatness
My spirit with His presence, and
my soul with His essence, Open-
ing my eyes to His wonders, mir-
acles, elegance and excellence
As the angel continued to shield
me from the the negative ele-
ments of my environment,
The coldness left my body and all
my scars faded, along with all my
rage, hate, and resentment.

Clipped Wings

Wings clipped, the halo has fallen
from my Guardian Angel's head,
He is no longer able to carry me
up to Heaven
My Guardian Angel, once a
mystery of God, beautiful and
magical,
Once a symbol of greatness and
good, is now filled and overflow-

ing with evil Transformed to a
demon, forever forbidden to
enter The Kingdom of Heaven,
I was once destined for God,
but now I'm being pulled in the
other direction towards Satan
The once protective hands of an
all-powerful angel,
Have become the sharp talons
tearing into my soul Sinking its
claws deeper and deeper secur-
ing its grip, As it drags me down
into the darkest of pits
My soul panics as the clouds
darken and the sky above me
fades away, The ground swallows
me up like quicksand and my
soul starts to decay
My body begins to rot, becomes
cold, with no pulse, no heartbeat,
no warmth, The pain is so excru-
ciating, there is no word for how
much the suffering hurts Now
I'm completely covered under
the suffocating dirt,
Yet, I'm still pulled deeper into
the earth My spirit and soul
struggle to stay together,
But found themselves being
shredded and dismembered By
a two-edged sword, the sharpest
one ever,
The only one that can cut be-
tween soul and spirit, leaving
them completely severed My
soul, ripped from my body, my
spirit, lost in the darkest abyss,
Suffocating for eternity in the
endless loneliness
The darkness is painfully
blinding, as if my eyes were
glazed with shards of broken
glass, And a shroud of misery,
shame and pain surround me
like a cast
Fighting to open my eyes, but
still unable to see,
When I should be basking in all
of heaven's light and glory I saw
a vision in my mind like no other
kind,
It engulfed me like the warmest
of summer's sunlight
All of a sudden, i felt a crippling
pain from something ripping
right through me,
The light vanished and i felt the
gnashing teeth of the demons
feasting upon my entire entity
I feel my soul, spirit body, and
mind fading into nothingness,
Being tortured and torn apart,
soon there will be nothing left As
an echo of my existence dissi-
pates into the ether of eternity,
I see, that my demise is all be-
cause my once trusted Guardian
Angel deceived and betrayed me.

Conquerors in Christ

For our sins, Jesus Christ paid the
price, Redeeming us by being our
Ultimate Sacrifice
We no longer have to live in the
darkness of evil shadows, Feeling
drained, empty, hollow, and
shallow
We are now conquerors in Christ,
The Lion of Judah,
The Lord is our Refuge, our For-
tress, our Rock, and our Messiah
Death has lost its sting, has been

defeated and no longer has
dominion,
Reducing the devil's whispers to
only powerless empty words and
worthless opinions I asked God
for forgiveness, and He gave it to
me freely,
Now, I wholeheartedly look for-
ward to the day when I see the
place Jesus has prepared for me.

You Are My Everything

Father God, You are my heart,
strength, power, love, and home,
You are The One who keeps me
standing when I have no strength
of my own And whenever I need
Your protection,
You protect us in ways unknown
to all from up above in Your
Heavenly Kingdom Through
prayers and supplications, I can
always come before your Throne,
Because you are amazing be-
yond comprehension, and You
never leave me alone Your ways
and thoughts are far above and
way beyond ours,
So how can we even begin to
perceive the slightest glimpse of
Your wonder Or ever be able to
even imagine Your splendor,
Making it impossible to be able
to explain Your magnificence to
another
But no matter how far the Heav-
ens are above the earth, You are
never far from us, To You, we
open our hearts, and in You we
completely trust.

In And Out of Trouble

Spending half of my life getting
into trouble and the other half
trying to get out of it, Has landed
me in this bottomless pit
I have become a sun with no
light, A moon that is as dark as
the night
My soul blackens, my spirit's
broken,
Living in the past, being weighed
down by all that's happened My
memories are reminders of my
constant regrets,
Haunting me with all the horri-
ble events that I'll never forget
Tormenting me with its endless
snippets, glimpses and flashes,
Then my heart and mind began
to play tricks on me, as I strug-
gled to cope and tried to manage
Between my heart and mind,
an endless battle ceaselessly
continues,
Like a game of chess where both
competitors always lose My
heart wrinkles, and shrinks like a
dried up prune,
My mind, crumbles like an aban-
doned ancient ruin
While my soul and spirit try to
escape from each other in their
frustration and confusion, They
can't seem to agree on anything,
especially on which path to take
to seek retribution My heart is
lonely, feeling unworthy of any-
one's company,
My mind is filled with insecuri-
ties, and believes that no one
is willing, or wants to help me
Depressed and oppression by
misery and shame,

My whole entire being feels bat-
tered by a master of pain, beating
me like a slave Until I'm broken,
beaten within an inch of my life
and ready to die,
And the only thing left that I have
of any value is what's left of that
life But I would gladly give it up as
a sacrifice in an instant,
To right every wrong I've done
and undo the trail of damaged
that I have created.

KAITLYN HUNTER

Losing Time

They say, "Winners never quit and
quitters never win." I'm just sitting
here waiting for my life to begin.
I'm wondering: how come, noth-
ing feels real.
I'm contemplating every single
fucking thing I feel.
It's crazy! Why is life always so
tough?
I think now's the time to say
enough is enough. Cause right
now I am losing: Time, Life and
Mind There has got to be a better
life for me to find!
I find it so hard to say what I'm
feeling out loud, My only wish is
that I will make my mother proud!
Cause I'm a survivor, and this
place does not define me, This
is just a wakeup call I needed to
remind me.
That haters are always hating on
the ones who truly shine, Maybe
if I dimmed down, I wouldn't be
sitting doing time.

Imagine

Verse 1

Imagine, just imagine my surprise,
When I wake up and I think about
your eyes. Chocolate Brown, with
depth beyond compare,
You bring good vibes and your
smile shows you care. When I
wake up I think about your smile,
My body cries out, and I feel it
for a while. Though I hold on,
because I know it won't be long,
Until I see you and I'm back where
I belong.
Chorus
I think I know you, from a time
long ago, I know I need you, I can
feel it in my soul,

The heat surrounds us, from our
heads to our toes, But nobody
knows...
Verse 2
Imagine just imagine how I must
feel, When I wake up and I know
that this is real.
You give me hope, you pick me
up when I am down, Make me
smile, never want to see me
frown.
Loving you, not like I had a
choice.
You give it back to me, I can hear
it in your voice. Yes I know this,
you're the one that's meant for
me, Since I met you, you've set
my whole world free...
Chorus
I think I know you, from a time
long ago, I know I need you, I can
feel it in my soul,
The heat surrounds us, from our
heads to our toes, But nobody
knows...

Christina's Poem

When I look upon her eyes,
I see the night and morning skies
When I look upon her lips,
I see passion, a midnight kiss
When I look upon her smile,
I feel my heart break for a while
When I look upon her thighs,
I hear hungry breathy sighs
When I look upon my girl,
I see my future I see my world
Love Always.

EVAN SCOULER

Plats Get Bats

Thinking I'm Rich...Everything
free... Best Friends a snitch...too
blind to see... Everything I wear...
must have a label... Now cuffs I
bare...In jail watchin' cable...

Pled Lotus

Charm is deceptive... Beauty
does not last...
There are many beautiful and ca-
pable women; That you surpass!
Always and forever; even in
heaven...
Forever our souls, bound to-
gether
Everything in this world is made
from molecules Flesh, bones,
steel and dirt, even the strongest



Of metals, or precious gems (like yourself). A steel

Wall is made of molecules that are all circles and when you draw

Circles, no matter the size, what's left between them? The answer my love

Is empty space. You're my soulmate, our souls are bound together, nothing can come Between that. Our souls will pass through the tiny empty spaces in the hardest of steel Walls and be together always, even when our bodies can not. Because of this I can feel your Warmth on the cold nights and I can feel your Presence on the lonely days when I can not see you or hear your voice.

This poem goes out to my Fiance, Reddd.

ABDUL-JABBAR MAHAMOUD

Bismillah-Rahmani-Raheem

I have met people who have told me

That they have no chance of getting parole. Forever Prisoners. Right here in Canada.

This is cruel and unusual punishment. Every one should have a chance to go home on their parole date. Parole should not be a privilege that can be taken away. Parole should be a right. Every prisoner should have a right to freedom after they've served their time. These indefinite sentences are a violation of human rights. Life sentences and D.O. sentences should be removed. People should serve their time and go home. And these crazy restrictions on parole should be removed. As long as a prisoner does not commit a crime while on parole, they should be left alone. Prisoners should be allowed to travel while on parole. I cannot change this evil with my hand, all I can do is speak out against it. May Allah free every prisoner that is locked up, and return us to our families. Ameen.

G.V.I.W

One Second, One Minute, One Day at a time Live a life of freedom, not a life of crime

If you use your skills, and are willing to fight Next time you get out, you'll be living right Never give up cause it's you who will lose

So make the right choices when it's time for you to choose Grand Valley is not the thing that defines you

So think of this poem as a thing to remind you

Bismillah Rahmani Raheem
Good Deeds erase sins So do Good and Believe

That you can be Better than you once were Time is the curse

If used wisely

In the remembrance of Allah Hearts find rest

Your words are Blessed When you call others to Faith Life is like a Blind Date

You don't know what you will get But if you love Allah

You can love anyone For His sake

And anyone can love you Because He loves you Then Jabreel loves you Then the angels love you Then everyone loves you Even your enemies Respond to Evil with Good And even your enemies

Will become like close friends This is the End of my Poem And the Beginning of my Life You Only Live Twice

So make the first one count Insha'Allah

Subhan'Allah x100

Heartbeat

Baby, just want to tell you I'm Sorry I don't want you to be worried

I'm always a heartbeat away I want to hold you

I miss you and tell you I love you. Laugh at the crazy things you do I'm always a heartbeat away

So don't cry, cause I am always there by your side And I would never leave you behind

Your love grows inside my soul everyday

Baby - only a heartbeat away Only a heartbeat away Always a heartbeat away

Bismillah-Rahmani-Raheem

Every Human has Worth Every Human has Capital To Waste a Life

Is a Crime Unimaginable Millions in Cells Locked Away Their only crime

That they made a mistake If a Man can't change Then what is he?

Were we born animals? Or were we Born Free? Millions of Dollars Put to Waste

Millions of Lives

That could pave the way To a Better World Doctors and Lawyers Scholars and Judges Ambassadors of Love

To Love for your Brother What you Love for yourself

If a Slave could change the world Then I can change myself

Bismillah-Rahmani-Reheem

I wrote this for the Inmates Modern Day Slaves

Discriminated Against

For the Mistakes they've made Every man can change

Locked in a cage

We sit and contemplate Treated like Animals

We can't see our Family and our Friends It's a Privilege

Not a Right

What Happened to Human Rights Working for Pocket

Change

Cut off from the Internet When It's the Internet Age We can't even Pray Without a Script

To get on my diet Was a trip

This needs to change Inmates are Humans Who deserve fair pay Let them pray

When and Where they want to pray And give them access to the Internet So they can learn to change

Change II

Because Every Man Can Change.

You lost your cool and everything changed into drool

The room for impulsiveness mule

Later you reason like a bull

And all your life becomes dull

If you can change,

You may start now, strange

Dry the tears of your past chapters with your linge

And keep shooting on your range

There is inspiration in you, You better aspire

Before it expire

For always there is change in desire

MICKY LACOURSE

I can't stand all these bars Around me, or all the censorship They try to have thought control As I look through the barb wire

The horizon is filled with watch towers Nothing but fences and lights

We look at them, And they look at us

With contempt, and fingers on triggers Numbers of the forgotten

Young and old alike We are able

We are herd like cattles Fed slop like pigs

We have little to no rights

But we are supposed to be citizens We are not even second class citizens Day and night with the turn

Of a key, is the only time We are remotely free Except for the odd letter, Or phone call we are cut off

From society, and our love one's Distrust, disgust, disrespect

Is what they hold over us For we are nothing to them

This is how Crimson everyday Life is on the inside

When in Jail, I never fail

To believe that I'm still free And in my cell I can always tell That my mind belongs to me

The warden shows he thinks he knows That solitude is my only need

So keys will turn, and one will learn The lessons for there deeds

I just smile all this while They keep me in this pen

For in my mind, I'm not confined To think as lonely men

To live, to love, to laugh To myself I will be kind

For I'm still free and will always be The master of my Mind

Simple blest for the best

So you can have your life taste And you can live the rest Under the oath of less

Strong like a storm beast Raged will rise his fist One, two, three, his list Next, disappear like a mist

MR

I can't believe I'm here

My parole hearing is nowhere near

This experience has torn me down

feeling worthless, like I'm stupid, like I'm a clown

At least I've learned how to sew

But I still hate my position from head to toe

As the needle pierces the fabric and connects My tears of missing my family constantly reflects

I still can't believe I'm here

I'm just praying for my freedom to be near

Worried that I'll never forget the pain

Out the sliver of the window all I see is rain

Worried that I'll never forget the blinding lights

Of the guards flash light in the middle of the nights

But forever I will fight to a new beginning With less horror, issues and more winning

A happy ending with a smile

Where I'll be willing to go the extra mile

Free from the shackles, restrictions & bells With family, flowers & swimming pools... NO MORE CELLS.

EG

NOW, I AM

A Bird of unique beauty and talents, with Broken wings. Who

Cannot temporarily soar on my clouds of many dreams.

Down below the sky, in a concrete and steel cage, on the ground where time seems to stand still Evolving while healing with thoughts of better things to come, from brighter future days and vivid images of once again

Flying. Lifting myself high from the stifling

Ground of various disheartening hands of societal invisibilities. Indeed, risking much Higher before my broken wings.

Into warm communal embraces from genuine arms of authentic social inclusion, Justice, equality, and equity, thus getting the fair change to

Keep pace with what can be for a creature

Like this uniquely talented Bird. Therefore, becoming a progressive role model moreover, a mentor for Birds such as myself as well as other birds who dare to dream on their own clouds of dreams.

Then become the birds they are born to be.

With so much diversified beauty and talents from the kingdom of Birds.

MELENA PHEASANT

The Owl Draws Near

Once awake the daylight breaks, I bare the drug induced shakes, As I lay in bed thinking of you and nothing to wear-

Pathetic, lazily, without a care, I walk to the window and I stare, Looking about with all lost notions, all I want is she to be there-

"I see her, I swear?" I say, "Oh it is just the wind. Can't you be there?- Nothing but emptiness to bear"

Oh the days we spent together, living, loving, enjoying the weather, Memories play tricks in my head, to only see a ghost, or maybe a glare? I keep of you, a lock of hair, in grievance I cry out "It's not fair"

Laying, sweating, dirty, pungent, the room in need of some air, Without you, I cannot survive, I can barely breathe, I need some air-

All the emptiness I cannot bear.

To look out at a world so still, I hear a scratching that gives a chill,

Scratch, scratch, a sound so rare, scratch, and scratch, my ears I can tear. What is it? My heart rate up in a flare, should I inspect? Do I dare?

In the attic I can see, it is an owl clearly, perched on a chair, That was so dear to my love, her treasured, most favourite chair-

Emptiness opens, I cannot bear.

This creature mocking me, my love's prize possession, can he not let it be? He continues to scratch and scratch, shredding, mincing, and working his lair, I should throw a rock at the owl not to maim but scare, never to hurt or impair.

User friendly, I must be aware, such and animal can cause injury extraordinaire, No harm can mount to how I feel right now, a melancholy extraordinaire-

Emptiness holds me, a heavy weight to bear.

An omen of death, a sign to fright, I dwindle to my room without a fight. My weariness, spins the room, I havent the energy, to all my despair.

I have nothing left I fear, life has left my soul, all I want is you to be near. This owl is scratching, my mind whirl, leaving nothing nice to compare, I will not think of others dear, to you my love, no one will ever compare-

Empty is the darkness I bear.

Nightmares await my presence, to drown all thoughts of reminiscence. The night lays ahead, tick tock away, with a fire glowing up a lurid scare, The owl now screeching a horrid blare, hunting, snatching a little hare, With this dreadful existence, I will go on languidly through life unaware-

Useless and hopeless I take up space, doing drugs to keep my thoughts unaware-

Nothing but emptiness to bear

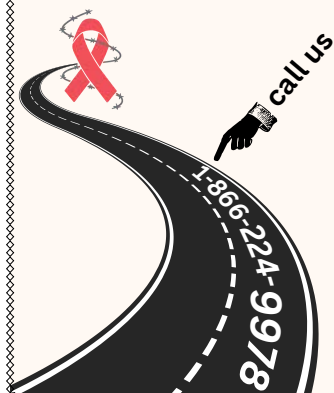
PASAN IN-REACH SCHEDULE

TEDC Tuesdays
TSDC Wednesdays
 Call **Eveline** at
ext 238 to book
 a 1-on-1 or group.

Maplehurst 2x/month
Wednesdays
HWDC every other
Wednesday. Call
Cherisa at ext 233 to
 book a 1-on-1

Hep C
Workshops
CNCC 4th Tues
& Weds of
the month
TSDC 3rd Tues
of the month.
Run by Chance
ext 230

Ontario
Federal Pens
 Look out for
 our posters.
 Workshops run
 by **Anton ext**
236 & Claudia
ext 222



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 peacefully 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 newest 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.

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 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

Circulation: 700+ - Recirculation: ???

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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.

CELL COUNT AT BATH INSTITUTION

We have been informed that all Cell Count subscriptions at Bath Institutions are given to the PEC worker to distribute. So please give them a visit and ask for your envelope by name!

CONTACT NUMBERS

If you are in any Federal/Provincial Institution or Detention Centre call us only with this #: Toll-free 1-866-224-9978

NEXT CELL COUNT DEADLINE

Please get your next submissions in for the Prisoner Justice Day issue ASAP! If your submissions didn't make it into this issue, it will be prioritized for the next. Same with future submissions! So don't hesitate to send it in when it's ready!

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

CELL COUNT PEER LIAISONS

Cell Count is looking for peer liaisons who are currently incarcerated to be a representative for Cell Count inside. You would be responsible for gathering subscribers, letting us know when subscribers have moved, encouraging people to submit their work, helping with evaluations, and answering general questions. Call Sena if you're interested! 1-866-224-9978x234

ATTENTION PRISON FAMILIES!!!!

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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, Charlotte-town, 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 Bentnick 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

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 3T81-877-847-3636, 514-495-0990

COALITION des ORGANISMES-COMMUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de LUTTECONTRE 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, Mon-treal, 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, Missis-sauga, L4Z 3K7
1-866-896-8700, 905-361-0523 (Collect)

PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE NETWORK (PARN)
Accept collect calls
60 Hunter St E 2nd Floor, Peter-borough, ON K9H 1G5, 1-800-361-2895, 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

John Howard Society of Toronto
1-866-265-4434

Black Legal Action
720 Spadina Ave. #221, Toronto, ON M5S 2T9 (416) 597-5831

PRAIRIES

0Y5 306-763-5356

RED RIBBON PLACE (ALL NATIONS HOPE AIDS NET- WORK)
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

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

CAAN
6520 Salish Dr, Vancouver, BC V6N 2C7 (604) 266-7616

NATIONAL

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

BRAIN INJURY ASSOC OF CAN-ADA
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 ORGANIZA-TION
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

SMAAC.org
The Saskatchewan-Manitoba-Al-berta Abolition Coalition is an alliance of groups from across the prairie provinces who collaborate and organize together on issues of prison and police abolition.

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

West Coast Prison Justice Society/ Prisoners' Legal Services
302-7818 6th Street
Burnaby, BC
604-636-0470

OTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS

OUT OF BOUNDS MAGAZINE

PRISON BOOK PROGRAMS

Books To Prisoners OPIRG-Carleton
326 UniCenter
Carleton University
Ottawa, ON. K1S 5B6

(613) 520-2757

Books 2 Prisoners
PO Box 78005, 1755 East Broad-way
Vancou-ver, BC
V5N 5W1
604-682-3269 x3019

Books Be-yond Bars
PO Box 33129
Halifax NS
B3L 4T6
902-446-1788

Open Door Books (ODB)
c/o QPIRG
Concordia
Concordia University
1455 de Maiso-neuve O
Montreal,
Quebec
H3G 1M8
514-848-7585

Who are we?
We are a group of community volunteers who help to support prisoners in having platonic, safe, and meaningful pen pal connections.

Pacific & Prairie Region
Penn2Paper
104-1015 Columbia St.
Box 873
New Westminster, BC
V3M 6V3

Ontario & Atlantic Region
Penn2Paper
455 Danforth Ave
Box 429
Toronto, ON
M4K 1P1

write to us!
A FREE, PLATONIC PEN PAL PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL PRISONERS

send us a note to one of these addresses depending on your location

WE ARE DEDICATED TO social justice, anti-racism, and freedom. We believe in the right to dignity and humanity for all.

TPRP JAIL HOTLINE
(416) 775-9239
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY, • SATURDAY
9-11 AM • 2-4 PM

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

OUT SASKATOON
213 Avenue C S, Saskatoon, SK S7M 1N3
306-665-1224

PRINCE ALBERT METIS WOMEN'S ASSOC.
No collect calls
54 10th St E, Prince Albert, SK, S6V

TPRP JAIL HOTLINE
(416) 775-9239
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY, • SATURDAY
9-11 AM • 2-4 PM

NOW TAKING CALLS FROM:
TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CTR.
VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN
MAPLEHURST CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX

THE JAIL HOTLINE IS FREE FOR PRISONERS SEEKING ADVOCACY, REFERRALS, INFORMATION + SUPPORT!