

# CELL COUNT

YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

PJD '24 - AUGUST 2024 - #105

## PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY 2024

By Tanya Bogdanovich

Today I was in Seg (because let's be real that is still what it is) to help someone as an advocate. I hate that place. Always have. In all my years in MAX as a Lifer it has always haunted me. I was in MAX when Terri Baker died in Seg. I don't care how GVI spins it, that her family took her off of life support, she died at GVI. That is just a lack of accountability.

The SEG unit of GVI is more than the tombs of Ashley Smith and Terri Baker's hopes, dreams, and possibilities, it houses thousands of unaccounted for hauntings. And no amount of smudging can help that unit. You can feel it. It clings to you.

Yet not even 60 yards away, I live in a house. I cook my own food. I wear my own clothes. I listen to a stereo. I sit at a picnic table with my friends if I so choose. I can garden. Yes, there are still a wide variety of systemic problems that exist and things that need to be advocated for, it is not a perfect system but I have luxuries, my NEEDS are being met. I am not being raped, sold, or bartered as the women of P4W before us were.

And I live this way because of the sacrifices, and losses, of the brave warriors of social justice and change who fought, and died, before me in prisons, in both sectors, all across the country.

Prisoners Justice Day is more than fasting and not talking to those involved with CSC. Prisoners Justice Day to me is a memorial service to those who died for how I live today and my way to thank them for their sacrifices.

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## PASAN AT PRISONER JUSTICE DAY 2024: A DAY OF REFLECTION, REMEMBRANCE, AND SOLIDARITY

On a sunny Saturday afternoon, August 10, 2024, PASAN had the privilege of participating in the annual Prisoner Justice Day (PJD) event at Barbara Hall Park. This year's gathering was marked by a strong turnout, bringing together a diverse community united by a commitment to justice, remembrance, and advocacy for prisoners' rights.

PASAN set up a booth at the event, where our staff provided resources to those in attendance. We distributed copies of Cell Count, our publication which features content submitted by prisoners, as well as essential harm reduction materials for both prison and community contexts. Our team was on hand to answer questions, share information about our work, and engage with attendees about the critical issues facing prisoners and ex-prisoners.

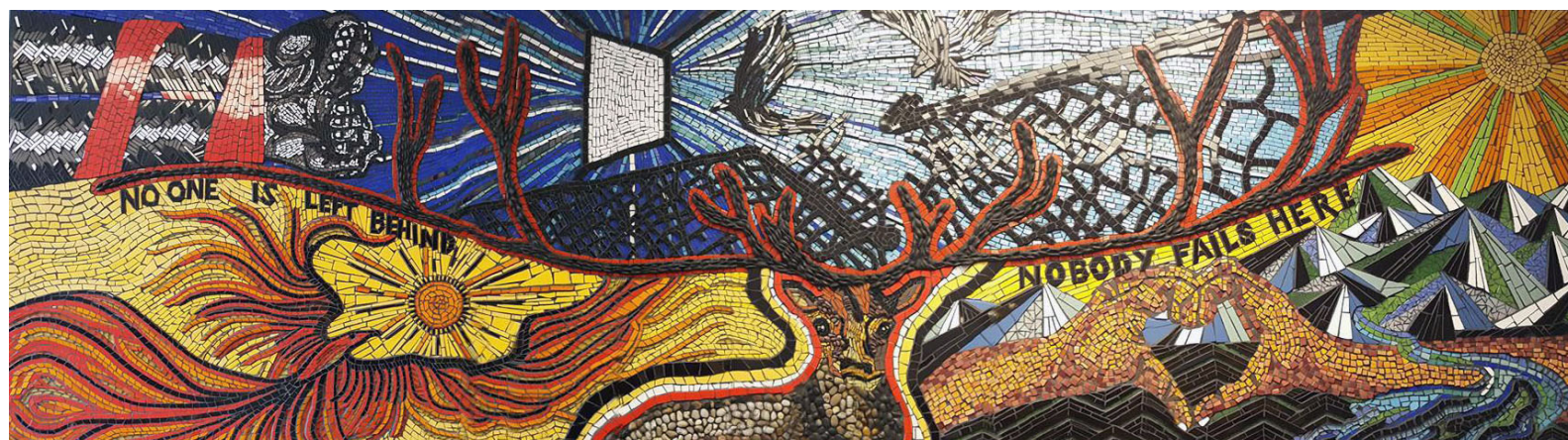
The event, thoughtfully organized by the PJD committee, was a deeply moving experience. It featured powerful speakers who courageously shared their personal stories of incarceration and the impact of systemic injustice. One particularly poignant moment was hearing from a family member who tragically lost a loved one at the hands of the police. Their words highlighted the devastating consequences of violence and discrimination within the Canadian policing, prison and court systems.

A candle-lighting and name-reading ceremony was held to honour the memories of those who have unjustly lost their lives while in custody. This solemn tribute, accompanied by drumming and songs, as we collectively acknowledged the profound loss and pain experienced by so many families and communities.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the PJD organizing committee for their dedication in putting together this event. Their efforts ensured that the voices of those who have been marginalized and silenced were heard loud and clear. We also wish to thank the drummers, the speakers, and everyone who took time out of their day to stand in solidarity with those who are, or who have experienced incarceration.

Prisoner Justice Day 2024 showed the strength and resilience of our community. It was a day to remember those we have lost, to reflect on the ongoing struggles for justice, and to renew our commitment to supporting those who are still fighting for their rights. At PASAN, we continue in our mission to advocate for the health and well-being of prisoners and ex-prisoners, and we are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this important day.

We look forward to continuing our work alongside all of you in the pursuit of a more just and equitable society.



### 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

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**Thank you all!**



## WITH DOUG FORD'S CLOSURE OF SUPERVISED DRUG SITES, I DREAD WHAT IS TO COME

*As a outreach worker for a decade in Toronto, I know Premier Ford's reckless drug policy is a return to an old and deadly model*

by Lorraine Lam, The Breach, August 29, 2024

I'll never forget the first person I found unconscious: lips blue, slumped over. The first person who died despite my trying CPR, because it was too late. The first time I called a mom to tell her that her son was gone, and the wail I heard on the other end of the line.

Over the past decade, as I've worked outreach in the downtown east side of Toronto—one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods, marked by poverty and displacement—these firsts became hundreds. Hundreds of drug poisonings that were not reversed. Hundreds of calls that my colleagues and I made to families, as their sons and daughters lay in morgues. Hundreds—if not more—of preventable deaths.

Across the country, the poisoned drug supply has become a crisis of epidemic proportions. Manufacturers and distributors of drugs, to maximize their profits, are producing fewer drugs but making them far more potent—which is why lethal substances like fentanyl have flooded the streets.

People rarely know what they are buying. Between 2016 and 2020 alone, more than 20,000 people died from opioid toxicity—and things got even worse with the pandemic.

I signed up to be an outreach worker but have become a first responder and funeral director.

A few years ago, there was cause to believe that this would change. Without waiting for government approval, volunteers opened Toronto's first unsanctioned supervised consumption site, the Moss Park Overdose Prevention Site.

These are spaces where people can use drugs under the watchful care of staff or volunteers who are prepared to reverse overdoses when they occur. The first such site in North America opened in Vancouver more than two decades ago. Since the first one opened in Toronto, there are now ten more, which have been approved by the government, and more than three dozen others across the country. There have been 40,000 overdoses recorded at these sites by the federal government, and yet not a single one has been fatal.

Those horrifying statistics that I counted in the hundreds have turned to hopeful numbers in the thousands: thousands of lives saved, thousands of visits for wraparound services—support for individuals using a team approach to address physical,

mental, emotional and social needs. And millions of dollars have been saved in our health-care system's budget, since repeated studies have shown that these sites and safe supply programs result in fewer emergency visits and hospitalizations.

The Ford government has now decided to close many of these sites. Contrary to several of their own Ministry of Health reports that recommend increased funding, Ford is instead doing the opposite, based simply on his "personal opinion." A week ago, the Ontario government announced it would ban supervised consumption sites from operating within 200 metres of a school or daycare. This will force the closure of 10 sites province wide, five of which are in Toronto.

In their place Ford will open service "hubs" that are supposed to connect people with drug treatment and other social services. But these hubs won't offer people who are currently using drugs what they most urgently need: a place to use drugs safely and clean supplies.

The result of this change will be more public drug use, more strain on the healthcare system, and more death.

### Consumption sites are community spaces

I live near a supervised consumption site. I am so glad it is my neighbour.

The site is a resource for the entire community, and is already doing the work that the proposed "hubs" are intended to do.

I have witnessed the haven this space is for so many. Sure, people come to these sites to use substances that they have already obtained elsewhere. They do so under the supervision of healthcare workers who are ready to reverse drug poisonings. The alternative to using these sites is to risk dying alone and unnecessarily.

As we are seeing a shortage of paramedics and ambulance response times are at a crisis point, these sites are doing lifesaving work while freeing up critical resources for emergency medical teams to respond to other urgent calls.

The demonization of supervised consumption sites has gone into overdrive lately. But in addition to being safe and supervised places to consume substances, people come to these sites for other reasons: to use computers to work on housing applications, navigate getting IDs, open bank accounts, get food and water, and access bathrooms.

People call their moms, contact lawyers, and apply for the kind of treatment programs and counseling that Premier Ford advocates for. They get wound care, clean socks, and vaccinations. And they get clean supplies for drug use—another long-proven, evidence-based public health approach that prevents the spread of diseases like Hepatitis C and HIV.

It isn't just such practical needs that are fulfilled in these spaces. At these sites, people celebrate birthdays and pregnancies. They hold healing circles and memorials. When community members get good or bad news, they come here first. These are safe spaces for thousands of people who are cared for physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. Is this not "treatment?"

Supervised consumption sites already are the best version of the addiction recovery hubs that Ford claims he wants to invest in. These sites are already doing the work he says he cares about and more—by ensuring that people live long enough to access these services and that they are cared for.

Sites like these were my friend Jesse's home. His larger-than-life demeanor could be recognized blocks away, matched by his boisterous laugh and friendly banter. He seemed tough on the outside, but that toughness was paired with a soft spirit, unmatched generosity, and tenderness and warmth in one-on-one interactions. I'll never forget one of our last conversations: it was mid-autumn 2020 and temperatures had dropped to the low teens. He was layered up in a fashionable jacket and white sleeveless shirt. But he noticed another friend of ours was underdressed.

"Yo, Ducky! Aren't you cold?" he asked.

Ducky said she had nothing else to wear, so Jesse just took off his jacket and gave it to her. He turned back to me, shoving his hands in the front pockets of his jeans to stay warm, and continued our conversation, shivering. That was like him: to literally give someone the jacket off his back.

Jesse was a regular at Moss Park Overdose Prevention Site. Here he connected with the staff and community. He rested, used drugs safely, accessed the phone, and worked toward getting stable housing. Jesse survived the streets and his goal was to be a youth worker. He talked about it all the time, about wanting to share lessons he had learned with others. He worked hard to get the help he needed in order to qualify for subsidized housing. In November 2020, after years of being on the waitlist for housing, we got the call: Jesse finally had housing.

The celebration was short-lived. My colleagues and I looked everywhere for him that day to relay the good news. But the next morning I got a text: Jesse had died in an alleyway, down the street from Moss Park. Toxic drugs took his life, and no one was around to reverse the effects. If only housing had been more affordable, jobs more available, the social safety net stronger. He never got to sign that lease, become a youth worker, and

chase his dreams.

### Drug use can't be swept under the rug

It's an idea rooted in deep stigma toward poor and racialized people: that only homeless people who use drugs.

The reality is that people are using drugs across class, gender, and race lines. Young people, construction workers, housed people, university students, and more—people from all walks of life. Supervised consumption site closures will lead to preventable deaths in all our communities.

By restricting supervised consumption and shifting the government's focus almost entirely to "recovery," the Ford government is prescribing needless death disguised in the language of treatment.

The government's proposed alternatives are homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hubs, intended to connect people to services that will help them with their addictions. It has also promised "up to 375" supportive housing units—hardly a solution to be proud of given the profound homelessness crisis that this province faces.

What these hubs and beds will not do is allow people who use drugs to do so in an environment where they can be given life-saving treatment, if and when necessary. Nor will they distribute clean drug supplies, an essential public health measure.

Ford's proposal to open these hubs in order to "emphasize recovery, treatment and community safety" does not address the reality that toxic drugs still exist. How does a dead person access treatment and rehabilitation? Abstinence-based programs at rehab centres have many barriers to access and often have months-long waitlists. What does one do while waiting for treatment?

What we really need treatment for is the harm that state abandonment has done. We need treatment for the fact that social assistance and minimum wages are unlivable, and for the housing crisis that Ford's government has done nothing to address. We need treatment for

the stigma faced by drug users and poor people.

Rehabilitation programs and supervised consumption sites do not exist as an either-or binary. The choice between either is false. We need both.

Ford's government says these closures are about the safety of children and protection of schools, but if that were the case, sites could simply be moved. Instead, Health Minister Sylvia Jones has said the government will not fund any replacement sites.

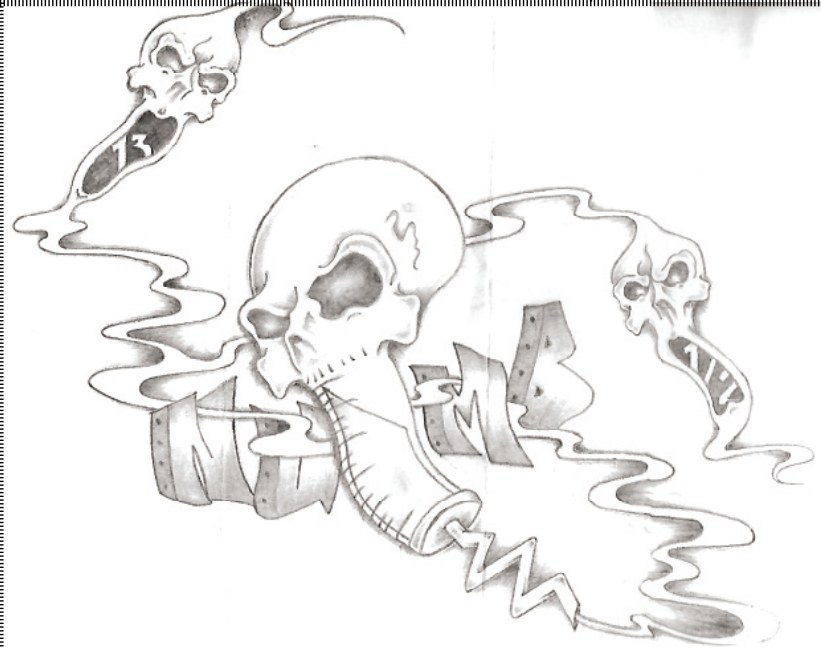
If we are concerned about public drug use and needles on the sidewalks, then we need to scale up services and provide places for people to go instead of shutting them down. Contrary to Jones' assertion that crime rates have increased because of supervised consumption sites, data shows just the opposite: crime rates dropped in areas where these sites were located. This makes a pretty strong case for these sites being a part of increased community safety.

In the same way that removing tents from parks doesn't mean that homelessness disappears, closing supervised consumption sites doesn't mean that drug use ceases. Substance use will still be here, but now people will have nowhere to go.

### Deflecting the root causes of the crisis

The Ford government's decision to restrict supervised consumption sites is a deflection of responsibility, without addressing the decades of cuts to housing, mental health and social services that have exacerbated the poison drug supply crisis. This government has had the past several years to invest in upstream solutions and instead has squandered every opportunity.

We must address the root causes. If we are concerned about drug paraphernalia in public parks, why not create spaces where people can use their substances and dispose of needles? If we are upset at people using drugs on public transit, why not ensure there are alternative spaces? If we are con-





cerned about homeless people in encampments, why not invest in dignified, affordable housing and higher wages?

When a forest fire ravages through a community, would we take away fire fighters?

When a person is drowning, would we tell lifeguards to stand down?

Is good public health policy not about keeping people alive?

In the middle of February 2017, my friend Pierre died in a KFC bathroom stall in Toronto's Queen West neighbourhood.

Before he died, I remember seeing him that morning. He and I hung out in a church basement, keeping out of the cold. He noodled on a guitar. He was laughing. Shelters were full. He said he'd try to find somewhere warm. He gave me back my guitar pick and said "see you tomorrow."

We were 28.

The KFC is not there anymore. While it was, it had become a makeshift respite centre for so many people I knew who had nowhere to go because shelters were full. At times, it was also one of the few available public bathrooms.

I think often about the staff who found Pierre in the bathroom. It was not like in supervised consumption sites, where trained staff and nurses know how to respond to healthcare crises.

This was someone working a minimum-wage job. Someone who was not prepared. The kind of people—workers in fast food chains, transit, and libraries—who will now have to carry the cost of Ford's closures of supervised consumption sites.

The grief is too much. We have buried so many of our friends and loved ones. Thousands more people will die with Ford's proposal to close supervised consumption sites. Decades of prohibition got us here, and we must make room for new policies rooted in evidence and compassion. It doesn't have to be this way.

## OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY: CARING FOR PEOPLE BATTLING ADDICTION

Addiction continues to take an enormous toll on families, friends and communities across Chatham-Kent and far beyond.

By Ellwood Shreve, Chatham Daily News, Aug 30, 2024

Addiction continues to take an enormous toll on families, friends and communities across Chatham-Kent and far beyond.

But Thursday was a day to honour those who have lost the battle with addiction or are still in the midst it. Reach Out Chatham-Kent (R.O.C.K.) and the Chatham-Kent Drug Awareness Council hosted an international overdose awareness day at ROCK locations in Chatham and Wallaceburg to highlight the issues that are driving this crisis.

The theme of "Together we

can," stresses the importance of collaboration in addressing the drug poisoning epidemic.

"Most of the drugs that we find that our friends from the street are using are from an unregulated drug supply," said ROC.K operations co-ordinator Renee Geniole.

ROCK hosted a community event in November 2023 to discuss the impact of the animal tranquilizer xylazine showing up in the illicit drug supply in Chatham-Kent.

When asked if the situation has worsened, Geniole said, "Absolutely and now there is a second version of that animal tranquilizer" in the drug supply.

Noting the animal tranquilizers, referred to as tranq, negate the usefulness of naloxone, which is used to treat opioid overdoses, she said, "It's not for human consumption in any way. It's killing people."

This is the third year ROCK has held an international overdose awareness day event.

Geniole said it is a day of remembrance, grieving and gathering.

"It's a day to honour people we know who do use substances and make them aware that we care and that we want them to stick around," she added.

Marcus VanDusen, 41, and Shawn Mickim, 50, two men who have lived-experience with addiction, are part of the ROCK active peer program who show those battling addiction, particularly those living on the street that someone cares.

"They're more open to connect with us," Mickim said of people battling addiction.

He added it is important just to try to help people and not be judgmental.

"I just like helping, because I know how it is," said VanDusen, who came through a 10-year battle to beat both alcohol and opioid addiction.

"You have to want to beat it," said Mickim, a recovering alcoholic, who decided to quit drinking when he learned his partner was pregnant.

"That's what it took for me," he said. "I was just sick of the life."

VanDusen advises people to "take it day-by-day," and lets them know they can beat addiction and accomplish things if they really want it.

"It's not easy, but I'm a lot happier," VanDusen said.

Jeff Parker, who helped co-found ROCK five years ago, continues to volunteer by regularly delivering lunches to homeless people in Chatham. He also takes the time to talk with people battling addiction and believes they need the opportunity to tell their stories to help them recover.

Parker said addictions often stem from a mental illness or some kind of abuse.

"It carries on and if you don't deal with it, it grows like fungus," he said.

"Fungus likes the dark and

our friends are in the dark right now, because they are confused, they are lost."

When asked if there are any signs of things getting better, Geniole said, "That's a bit of a tough question.

"With the recent ruling by the provincial government closing all the safe consumption sites and the restrictions on harm reduction, that's not a good step from where we sit," she added.

She appreciates the government opening more addiction treatment centres, but fears closing safe consumption sites will make the situation worse.

"These places save lives; harm reduction saves lives," Geniole said. "Until people are ready to take treatment, we have to make sure they're aware that we care enough that we still want them to be alive."

## THE PROBLEM WITH THE PROVINCE'S CRIME STATS AND CLOSING SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SITES

The Ontario government said the crime rate near the Somerset West safe consumption site is 250 per cent higher than the rest of the city. Neither Ottawa Police nor the province could provide any data to back that figure.

By Elizabeth Payne, Ottawa Citizen, Aug 29, 2024

Crime rates in the downtown Ottawa neighbourhood that is home to the supervised consumption site at Somerset West Community Health Centre have long been the highest in the city for a variety of reasons. That has not changed, but those rates have dropped in recent years—including the years since the site opened in 2017.

Violent crime was down by an average of 6.2 per cent in Somerset ward between the years 2017-2018 and 2022-2023, according to crime trend statistics from the Ottawa Police Service. The ward also saw a 4.7 per cent drop in the rate of assaults, a 10.3 per cent drop in the rate of sexual assaults and a 14.5 per cent drop in rates of robbery during the same five years.

Break and enters and possession of stolen goods also dropped significantly during that period. However, other crimes, including drug offences, weapons offences, theft under \$5,000, fraud, and disturbing the peace were higher.

The stats tell a complex picture of a neighbourhood that is the most densely populated, has the highest rates of poverty and the highest number of rooming houses in the city, said Somerset ward Coun. Ariel Troster. Many of its residents, she said, have been rocked by the drug crisis and hard hit by inflation and the cost of groceries, she said.

Troster questions the use of crime stats to justify closing the Somerset West supervised consumption site. Minister of Health Sylvia

Jones pointed to crime rates when she recently announced her government would shut down 10 of 17 supervised consumption sites – including the one at Somerset West CHC – by next March as part of a shift to more treatment and housing to address the toxic drug crisis. Somerset and nine other supervised consumption sites were targeted to be closed because of their proximity to schools or daycares.

Jones said the crime rate near the Somerset West Community Health Centre is 250 per cent higher than the rest of the city.

Ottawa Police were unable to provide the Citizen with any data backing this figure in Somerset Ward, stating it would have to be obtained via an Access to Information Request.

When the Citizen asked the province for more information about that figure, including where the data came from, a spokesperson said the number speaks for itself.

But Coun. Troster disagrees. It is unclear where that figure comes from, she says, and it is difficult to get "granular" information about crime rates in a small portion of the ward. She also says it is misleading for officials to imply that the supervised consumption site plays a key role in those numbers.

"I don't know where that number comes from," she said. "I see no indication of a clean line between supervised consumption sites and crime. The evidence doesn't back that up."

Troster and others fear there will be more overdoses in public spaces throughout the ward and more needles left around after the site is closed than there are now.

"I am very worried about what is going to happen come spring when one indoor (drug consumption) site closes or is banned. These supervised consumption sites are gateways into access into health care, wound care, blood work. It is a very, very supportive community," she said.

"When you push people into the margins they are going to

be in backyards and alleys, in front of schools. It is going to get worse. I don't want to be stepping over bodies in our neighbourhood."

The province is banning the opening of any new sites in the province to replace the 10 it is closing down because of proximity to schools and daycares. But those sites will be given priority to house a new HART hub that will offer drug treatment, housing and other services, excluding harm reduction.

Most advocates welcome the new provincial investment in addiction treatment and supportive housing but say doing so at the cost of closing down supervised consumption sites and harm reduction is short-sighted and will result in more deaths from toxic street drugs.

The province is also increasing security around the existing supervised consumption sites. Two existing Ottawa sites, in the ByWard Market and at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, will remain open.

In addition to prohibiting the safe consumption site, the provincial changes will prohibit Somerset West from operating a needle exchange program. Officials there say the site was opened in 2017, in part, because the area had the second-highest rates for overdose deaths and rates of blood-borne diseases in the city.

Troster, meanwhile, said there has been a rise in non-violent crime in the neighbourhood, including growing numbers of people using drugs in public, including around schools.

During the Pride parade, Troster said she had to ask a woman not to draw her syringe on Bank Street where crowds, including children, were gathering. She said the drug crisis is a very visible public emergency in her ward and elsewhere.

"We need the entire spectrum of care to tackle this crisis. I fail to understand how removing one indoor site is going to decrease public drug use. We need more services all over the city."

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## INTERNET BAN IN CANADIAN PRISONS IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL BECAUSE IT BLOCKS ACCESS TO EDUCATION, NEW LAWSUIT ALLEGES

A Star story found accessing post-secondary courses behind bars is nearly impossible despite education lowering prisoners' likelihood to reoffend.

By Brendan Kennedy, Toronto Star, July 1, 2024

The federal government's refusal to allow prisoners to use the internet effectively blocks access to post-secondary education behind bars, a new lawsuit alleges.

Noting how colleges and universities that once offered paper correspondence programs have shifted almost entirely online, the lawsuit by the John Howard Society and a prisoner serving a life sentence argues that the Correctional Service of Canada's internet ban — and “woefully inadequate” access to computers in general — infringes prisoners' “fundamental right to freedom of expression,” which includes the right to receive information.

It also argues that the internet ban and overall technological deprivation behind bars undermines the correctional service's mandate to prepare prisoners to successfully reintegrate in society.

“In 2024, if we want people to find work, to find housing, to lead stable and positive lives, they need internet access and basic digital skills,” said lawyer Paul Quick, who is representing the John Howard Society and the prisoner. “If we take these things away, we take away opportunities for a law-abiding life.”

The lawsuit, which is not seeking any monetary compensation, asks the court to declare the current policy unconstitutional.

Taking courses dramatically reduces likelihood prisoner will reoffend

Earlier this year, a Star investigation showed how the lack of internet access in Canadian prisons has made it nearly impossible for prisoners to pursue college or university programs behind bars, despite significant evidence that taking post-secondary courses while incarcerated dramatically reduces the likelihood that a prisoner will reoffend.

A CSC spokesperson said they could not address specific allegations in the lawsuit, but the agency is “committed to helping offenders acquire the skills and education needed for successful reintegration, including access to technology.”

Inmates are not allowed access to the internet “for security reasons,” the spokesperson said, adding that CSC is “currently evaluating digital education opportunities.”

Four years ago the agency launched a digital education pilot project that offers some inmates in some institutions access to limited digital education material, including high school courses, workplace certifications and a

handful of college courses.

Canada's federal prison system is ‘a clear outlier’

The lawsuit, which is supported by affidavits from current and former prisoners, as well as information technology and corrections experts, notes how several other countries provide varying degrees of controlled internet access in prison, citing specific examples in Belgium, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

“CSC emerges as a clear outlier,” the lawsuit states, arguing that existing technology is “readily available” to provide restricted internet access for educational, vocational and cultural purposes without jeopardizing security.

The lawsuit also notes how the internet ban is particularly harmful to inmates with disabilities, especially deaf inmates who are unable to access on-demand American Sign Language interpretation services available for free online. Deaf prisoners are unable to even make telephone calls as a result, according to the lawsuit.

“CSC makes no exception for people in this situation,” said Quick, who works for Queen's University's Prison Law Clinic. “Deaf prisoners are left deeply isolated, cut off from their families and communities, and with little way to connect with others in prison or even communicate with staff.”

Canadian prison authorities have been criticized about the lack of technology behind bars for more than a decade. Canada's Correctional Investigator, Ivan Zinger, has repeatedly highlighted the issue in his annual reports. In 2019-20, as part of an investigation into educational programming in federal prisons, Zinger wrote that the technology available to inmates is “so far behind the community standard that it seriously puts into question (CSC's) legal obligation to prepare and assist offenders for release.”

Quick said CSC has had years to address the issue and “just hasn't bothered,” adding that the federal agency is “highly focused on minor risks, but generally blind to opportunities for success.”

The CSC declined to make Commissioner Anne Kelly available for an interview and did not respond to questions about Quick's comments.

Prison harsher today than decades past, lawyer says

The prisoner who filed the lawsuit alongside the John Howard Society is Ghassan Salah, who is serving a life sentence at Bath Institution, near Kingston, for his role in the 2004 deaths of two children in Ottawa. Salah was found to have acted as a lookout for another man who firebombed a home, intending to kill the children's mother, who escaped the home.

Salah has been trying to take university courses in computer science, math or physics since 2017, to no avail, according to the lawsuit. He says in court

filings that no such programs are available by paper correspondence, and all of his requests for access to a computer or internet strictly for educational purposes have been denied by prison officials. The lawsuit also includes affidavits from other prisoners who have faced similar roadblocks.

Canadian prison authorities have been criticized about the lack of technology behind bars for more than a decade. Canada's Correctional Investigator, Ivan Zinger, has repeatedly highlighted the issue in his annual reports. In 2019-20, as part of an investigation into educational programming in federal prisons, Zinger wrote that the technology available to inmates is “so far behind the community standard that it seriously puts into question (CSC's) legal obligation to prepare and assist offenders for release.”

Quick said CSC has had years to address the issue and “just hasn't bothered,” adding that the federal agency is “highly focused on minor risks, but generally blind to opportunities for success.”

The CSC declined to make Commissioner Anne Kelly available for an interview and did not respond to questions about Quick's comments.

Prison harsher today than decades past, lawyer says

The prisoner who filed the lawsuit alongside the John Howard Society is Ghassan Salah, who is serving a life sentence at Bath Institution, near Kingston, for his role in the 2004 deaths of two children in Ottawa. Salah was found to have acted as a lookout for another man who firebombed a home, intending to kill the children's mother, who escaped the home.

Salah has been trying to take university courses in computer science, math or physics since 2017, to no avail, according to the lawsuit. He says in court filings that no such programs are available by paper correspondence, and all of his requests for access to a computer or internet strictly for educational purposes have been denied by prison officials. The lawsuit also includes affidavits from other prisoners who have faced similar roadblocks.

Quick said CSC's internet ban has, in some ways, made a prison sentence harsher today than it was even 20 or 30 years ago, when prisoners were able to — at their own expense — work toward and complete a university degree or college diploma while serving their sentence.

“We don't just imprison people's bodies now, we imprison their minds and waste their lives,” he said. “In doing so, we also make it harder for them to re-enter the community.”

**BLACK OVERREPRESENTATION IN CANADIAN PRISONS: DATA GAPS AND JUDICIAL BIAS HINDER PROGRESS, LAWYER SAYS**

Challenges persist in implementing Bill C-5 to reduce Black incarceration in Canada

By Jean Numa Goudou, New Canadian Media, April 18, 2024

Two years after the passage of Bill C-5, which aimed to reduce the overrepresentation of Black individuals in Canadian prisons, significant challenges remain in its implementation, with a lack of data and “bias” among judges at sentencing still being major obstacles, according to lawyer Fernando Belton, one of the nine members of the Committee created by Ottawa to study the issue.

Canada's Black Justice Strategy was created after the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, in Minnesota, USA. It was brought forward to address racism and systemic discrimination against Black people, a situation that has “led to their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, including as victims of crime as well,” according to the government.

The strategy aims to ensure that Black people receive equal treatment before the law and justice in Canada. And for the past year, the Department of Justice has mandated a group of experts to analyze the subject and report. The document, which is in the final stages of completion with about a hundred recommendations, places the “issue of data at the heart” of the concerns.

Lawyers Suzanne Taffot and Fernando Belton are the two members of the committee from Quebec. Belton's experience with the new Bill C-5, which was adopted more than two years ago and is supposed to lower the incarceration rate of black people in Canadian prisons, is inconclusive. It should be noted that Bill C-5 gives judges discretion in sentencing and eliminates mandatory minimum sentences from the Criminal Code.

Bill C-5 and Judicial Bias

A year ago, Belton, a criminal lawyer, represented a young man accused of illegal possession of a firearm. The accused has four children, two of whom he has sole custody of. He has a stable job and had “completely changed his life” at the time of the trial, according to him.

“A perfect candidate for the suspended sentence provided for by law,” says Belton. But, despite everything, the judge sent him to prison. “It's certain that the legislative change is good. But when it comes to sentencing, the problem remains the system with judges and their biases,” the criminal lawyer said in an interview with New Canadian Media (NCM).

However, the Committee has focused its work on at least five pillars that are social determinants of justice: income, employment, housing, education, and health. These are factors that interact with the justice system and can contribute to overrepresentation, according to him.

The Data Issue

But in its final report, the Committee, according to Belton,

was concerned about the fact that federal, provincial, and even municipal authorities do not collect data on this matter, among a hundred recommendations made to the government.

Even if there are good results in some cases, the lawyer judges, because of this lack of data “there are some that are mixed” as well. In the absence of figures on the representation of Black people in prisons, Belton says he relies on his observations.

“When it comes to sentencing, the general observation or the question we must ask ourselves is: Is the system tougher on Black people?”

NCM invited the criminal lawyer to answer his question. Belton said that unfortunately, “the answer is hard to determine since we don't have precise and detailed data on the situation.”

According to Statistics Canada, in 2021-2022, Black people represented 9.2% of the overall prison population, while they represented about 3.5% of the Canadian population in general. The majority of Black people incarcerated are young men, the largest proportion of them being aged 18 to 30.

According to the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, 54.8% of Black people incarcerated in Canada are in Ontario, 19.2% in Quebec, 13.6% in the Prairies, 7.1% on the West Coast, and 5.3% in the Atlantic region.

The issue of data is at the heart of the Committee's report, which challenges the Minister of Justice's authority to implement the collection of statistics on Black people in the prison system. Belton recalls that if the Armony report on racial profiling in Montreal had such a strong impact, it is because the authors had direct access to police data.

“I think it's worth having this data in order to make informed decisions,” the criminal and penal lawyer said. The report in which he participated will call for the authorities to review certain federal laws, but also those under provincial and municipal jurisdictions. The experts will also call for “amendments” to the Criminal Code.

Systemic Racism

“There is a lot of openness to change, but we are in a reality with everyone's spheres of jurisdiction, which means it will not be easy,” Belton believes.

The Committee wants to bring the element of systemic racism into the administration of justice, and these aspects must be taken into account. Fernando Belton argues that his client, who had not been granted leniency by the judge who sent him to prison despite his efforts to repent, had experienced racism in his life, including systemic racism. This is a different approach to criminal law. “I believe in the notion of a second chance,” he says.

It should be noted that Emmanuel Dubourg, a Quebec Liberal MP of Haitian origin, considers Bill C-5 to be one of the flagship measures taken by Justin Trudeau's government in



favour of Black Canadians. In total, more than \$800 million has been allocated for various programs and investments. He recalls that these initiatives are being implemented within the framework of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, which is a global call to action to address issues in the areas of recognition, justice and development. This period ends in December 2024.

## 69 INMATES DIED IN CANADIAN PRISONS DURING 2023

*This is the highest number of deaths since at least 2020.*  
**By Kim Siever**, Alberta Worker, January 5, 2024  
Last year, I was combed through media releases from the Government of Canada to collect data on inmate deaths announced by Correctional Services Canada in 2022. I was curious to see how many deaths occurred in Canadian prisons during 2023, so I browsed through them all again, and here's what I found. In total, 69 inmates died in custody in 2023.

Of those, 26 died of what CSC called "apparent natural causes", one of which was specifically from an illness. There were also 2 inmates who died after being assaulted. The majority of the deaths, however, didn't have a cause listed. A total of 41 inmates fell under this category. At the bottom of virtually every media release was the following statement:  
As in all cases involving the death of an inmate, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) will review the circumstances. CSC policy requires that the police and the coroner be notified.

Ontario had the highest number of inmate deaths, at a total of 20, followed by Québec at 16, and British Columbia at 14. Alberta had the lowest number of inmate deaths of all provinces that had inmates die in custody, with just 2 deaths.

The deaths occurred at 26 institutions, 9 of which saw only 1 death. Regional Psychiatric Centre, which is located in Saskatoon, was tied with Archambault Institution in Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, Quebec, for the highest number of deaths. Each of them saw 6 inmates die in custody. Stony Mountain Institution in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, had the second highest number of deaths, at 5, with the following institutions all having the third highest number of deaths, 4:

Pacific Institution, Mountain Institution, Millhaven Institution, Federal Training Centre (Laval, QC), Dorchester Penitentiary, and Bath Institution. January, April, September, and December saw the highest number of deaths in a single month, with each of them seeing 8 deaths. The lowest deaths seen in a single month was 3, which occurred in May and October. Nearly all of the inmates who died were in custody because of pretty serious crimes, including

murder, assault, arson, robbery, sexual assault, and kidnapping. Only 4 were in prison on trafficking charges. There were 63 deaths of inmates reported by CSC in 2021, 3 of which were specifically classified as COVID-19 deaths, and 54 were reported in 2022.

## QUEBEC'S PORT-CARTIER MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON EVACUATED AS WILDFIRE BURNS

*1,000 residents evacuated since Friday, entitled to compensation says province*  
**Morgan Lowrie**, CBC News, June 23, 2024  
Wildfires burning near Port-Cartier, Que., forced the evacuation of inmates from the local maximum-security prison, officials with Correctional Service Canada confirmed Sunday as favourable winds bolstered efforts to battle a pair of out-of-control blazes north of the city. The federal agency said the evacuation order was issued Friday and inmates have since been moved to other secure federal correctional facilities.

"To carry out the evacuation, we put measures in place, together with our partners, to maintain the safety and security of our staff, the public, and the offenders in our care and custody," the agency said in a news release Sunday. It says victims who are registered have been notified of the relocation. The Port-Cartier Institution has been associated with a number of notorious criminals, including serial killer Robert Pickton, who died in late May after being assaulted at the prison by another inmate.

## HE DIED IN HAMILTON'S JAIL WITHIN 24 HOURS OF GOING IN. HIS FAMILY WON'T GIVE UP UNTIL THEY GET ANSWERS

*Jamie Dooley, 41, died in the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre on May 28*  
**By Bobby Hristova**, CBC News, June 23, 2024  
Warning: This story contains references to suicide.

Standing on a grassy patch and baking under the summer sun, Tangie Gagnon stood next to her daughter, Melissa Dooley, and wiped away tears as she stared at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre. Gagnon's eldest child, 41-year-old Jamie Dooley, spent his final moments in jail before dying on May 28.

"It takes less than one night to die here, but [Jamie] managed to live on the street for three years without an overdose or even one close call," Melissa told CBC Hamilton, saying his death has been "catastrophic" for her family. It's been almost a month since Dooley died and questions are swirling about how it happened. Andrew Morrison, a spokesperson for Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General, confirmed a prisoner died on May 28. He said an investigation is

underway, but couldn't share any other details.

Dooley is remembered for his generosity, his love for family, and his athleticism and work as a sous chef, among other things. "We're a very close family," Gagnon said.

He grew up in Hamilton, where he was bullied in school and was assaulted in adulthood because he was a trans man, his family said.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Dooley moved to St. John's in hopes of having a fresh start. His family said he would buy bikes, paint them and give them away for free.

During the pandemic, Dooley's family said, he developed paranoia and other mental health issues. His family suspects the isolation may have been hard on Dooley, who always loved having company.

When Dooley returned to Hamilton a year later, his mental health had deteriorated.

He ended up unhoused and sleeping in tents. His family said they tried getting Dooley help for his mental health and he had attempted suicide multiple times, but he was never officially diagnosed and was quickly released from hospitals.

Dooley also stayed at Willow's Place, a shelter for women, transgender and non-binary people.

On May 26, Dooley's family said, police arrested him while he was outside for missing a court date a month earlier.

They said he spent a night in a holding cell before being remanded to the jail and entering segregation.

"We thought Jamie would be safe. Clearly we were wrong," Melissa said.

Segregation, also known as solitary confinement, is when prisoners are physically and socially isolated in a cell for 22 hours or more.

A recent CBC investigation revealed segregation in Ontario jails has been ramping up since 2019, despite the Ontario Human Rights Commission urging the province to phase out segregation in its jails since 2016.

In Hamilton, it has been happening at a far greater rate than the rest of Ontario and has met

the United Nations' threshold for torture, with some segregation periods lasting as long as 21 days. Under its Mandela Rules, the UN considers segregation of over 15 consecutive days a form of torture, calling it "cruel" and "inhuman."

A third of the Hamilton inmates who were segregated had a mental health alert on their file, meaning they disclosed a mental illness, demonstrated behaviour that suggested mental illness or had shown signs of or had said they were thinking about suicide.

There were also 112 people in segregation who had "severe mental illness" and 223 people on suicide watch, which is when the imprisoned person needs "increased supervision" due to a "high risk of suicide or self-harm."

It's unclear if Dooley had a mental health alert on file or why he was put in segregation.

The province lists six reasons for putting people in segregation: They pose security risks.

They pose security risks for medical concerns.

They need protection.

They need protection for medical concerns.

For misconduct.

For refusing to be searched.

The province previously told CBC Hamilton some people also request to enter segregation conditions.

Dooley's family suggested he may have been put in segregation because he was trans. The province didn't answer questions about if Dooley was in segregation and if so, why.

Dooley's family said he refused breakfast at 7 a.m. on May 28 and was found unresponsive at 11 a.m.

Dave Thompson, a superintendent with Hamilton Paramedic Services, told CBC Hamilton that paramedics were called shortly after 11 a.m. for a medical emergency.

Paramedics pronounced Dooley dead at the scene.

Dooley's family wonders if someone would have spotted Dooley unresponsive sooner if he wasn't in segregation.

His family said an autopsy was done and found Dooley's cause of death was "unnatural," and they're waiting for the toxicology report. Sudden deaths from un-

natural causes in jails automatically trigger provincial inquests.

Family members suspect it was an overdose because they say a small bag with crystals was found near Dooley's body in the jail. Where the bag came from is unclear.

Dooley's family said he self-medicated with crystal meth and fought drug addiction that got worse during the pandemic.

'Jamie was loved and we're not going to give up'

The province did not say how many prisoners have died at the jail in recent years, but at least 15 have died there since 2012.

The jail was previously the focus of a massive inquest into the overdose deaths of eight men in the facility and led to a jury making 62 recommendations to prevent future deaths.

About 50 people — including prison rights advocates and families of others who have died in the jail — gathered with Dooley's family on Tuesday evening outside the jail, trying to raise awareness about deaths in custody.

Those at the rally spoke to each other, waving signs and walking around the jail, for about two hours.

At one point, they also all let out a collective scream.

"Years have passed, countless recommendations have been made, yet we still console new family members and fight for change in a system that is broken," said Amy McKechnie, whose brother Ryan died at the jail in 2017. An inquest hasn't yet been conducted.

"To those who may have negative or disrespectful comments, who say, 'Don't do the crime if you can't do the time,' ... our loved ones were human beings who deserved basic humanity and human rights."

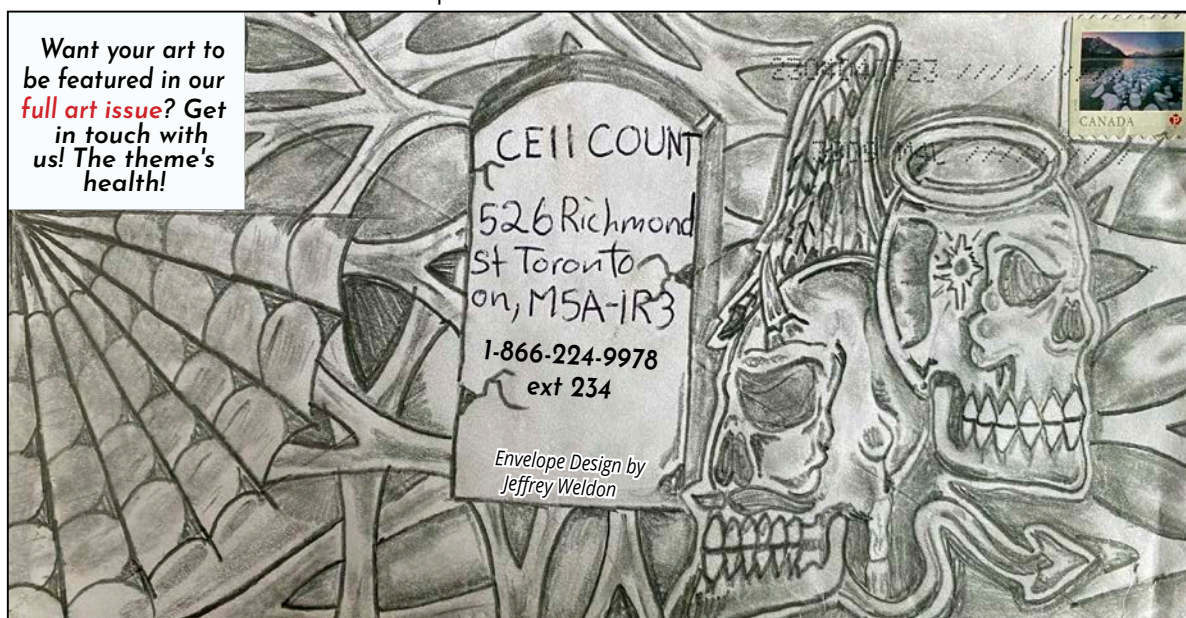
While they couldn't be seen from the outside, prisoners inside the detention centre could be heard banging on the windows.

Dooley's family said they won't stop their search for answers.

"Jamie was loved and we're not going to give up," Melissa said.

"We're going to make sure accountability happens. If it has to take a decade, we'll still be standing here."

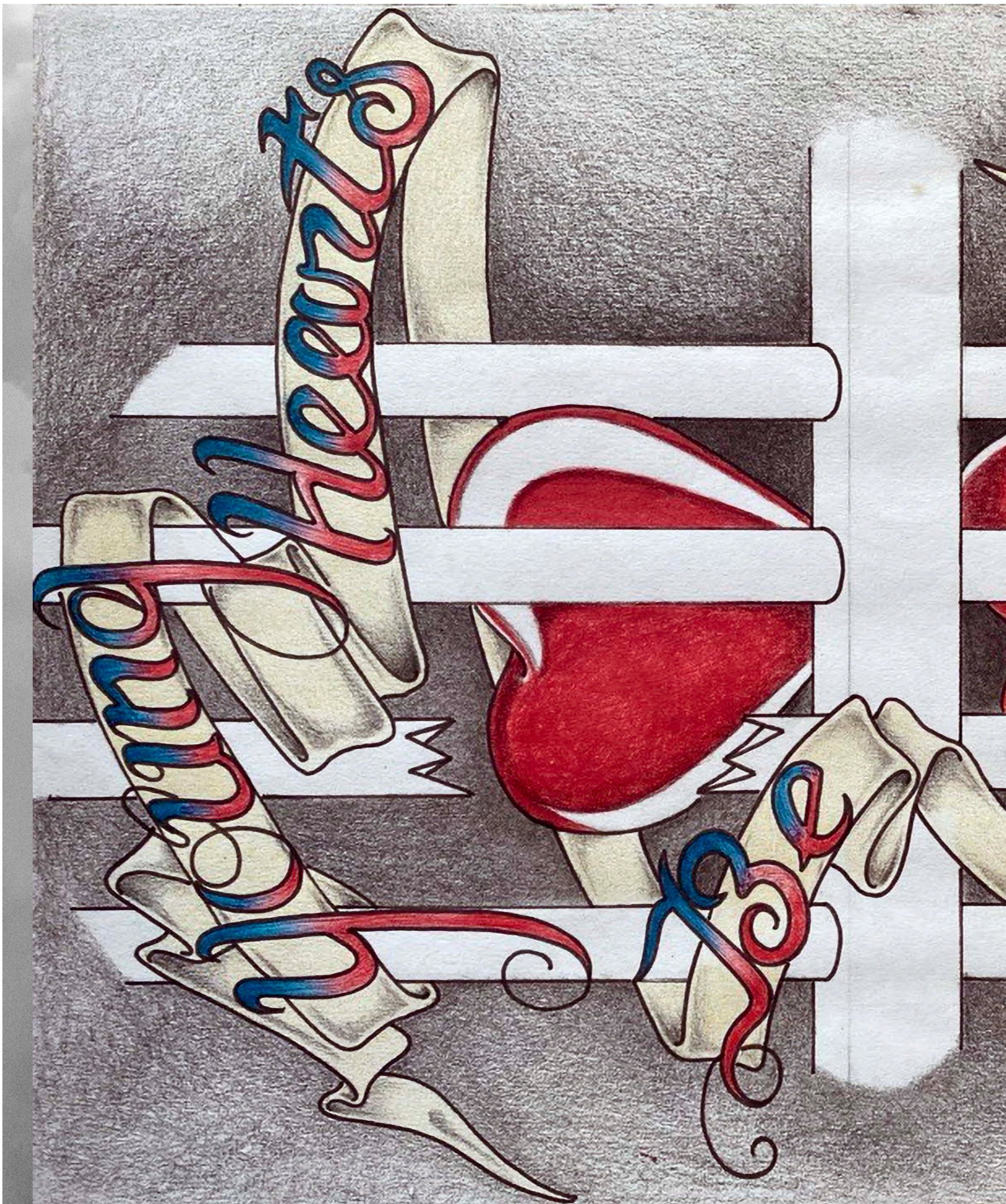
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## ROOSTER ON A TRAIN

By Zakaria Amara

Subway train – 9:50 P.M.  
Imprisonment, in one form or another, is inevitable in life.  
It was Thursday night, and I was commuting back from work. Not to sound ungrateful, but Joseph Campbell was onto something when he called the struggle to make a living in the modern age a “life-extinguishing affair.” I was extinguished, so I lifelessly stepped onto the train, and looked for the nearest seat, seeking to collapse, beneath the weight, of my unrealized dreams. I looked to my left and that’s when I saw him.  
I don’t believe in chance encounters.  
Seated in the blue disability seats along with a few old-timers was a familiar face. There he was, my former cellmate, Giuseppe, the one-eyed rooster.  
We locked eyes. He gave a look of recognition, a slight smile, followed by the words he always used to greet me with:  
“Hey, Sonny!”  
I swear, if Al Pacino were ever reincarnated as a rooster, he’d sound exactly like that!  
Momentarily cheered by this unexpected encounter, I greeted him back and sat in the empty seat next to him. Some passengers shot us a few curious glances. I guess they’ve never witnessed a talking rooster before. And as usual, sunflower seed shells littered the ground around him. He still had that sleaze ball look, but it was somewhat diminished by old age.  
“How are you?” I asked with a mixture of joy and empathy.  
His blind eye was facing me.  
“...They chew you up and spit you out” an involuntary cough interjected, “the wife took everything and she still wants more. Trying to squeeze honey out of a bag of shit!”  
More shells landed near my feet.  
“That’s rough. I’m sorry to hear that,” I said with genuine empathy.  
After Giuseppe was arrested for the pyramid scheme, he was declared a persona non grata in financial circles. Given his old age and failing health, it was difficult to put a positive spin on this situation.  
“Where do you live now?” I asked.  
“In a halfway house. Roommates snore like hippopotamus-es. It’s a goddamn snoring orchestra the whole night,” another cough, “Sonny, I’m broken,” a long pause, “I got nothing left in me.” He said dejectedly with his one eye looking down.  
I’ve never heard him so defeated. His Italian stoicism had all but vanished.  
I learned years ago to avoid offering advice to a broken soul. People in pain are not seeking advice, they simply want someone to share their burdens with, if only for a brief moment. So, of course, I ignored my own wisdom and launched into advice-giving mode.  
“Remember that Camel Milk business idea we came up with in prison?”  
“What about it?” he asked as he spat out another shell and looked ahead expressionless.  
He was still

“With inflation and the rising cost of milk, Camel Milk could be an affordable substitute,” I said trying my best to conceal my lack of confidence.  
“Hmm...” he was thinking about it, “it ain’t happening. Where do you plan on raising the camels? Saskatchewan?”  
He had a point.  
“Listen, sonny, there comes a point in life when you just gotta hang up your gloves. Capisce?”  
I stared at the floor for a moment and the silence lasted long enough to serve as a full stop to our conversation.  
“So... what are you going to do now? Just roll over and die?” I asked with righteous anger in my voice. “Weren’t you the one that taught me that life was a game of inches? That you claw and fight for every inch until they all add up to a victory?”  
No response.  
I got off my seat and stood over him.  
“Wasn’t Rocky your favourite movie?” I asked loudly as the passengers around us went silent and their attention was diverted in our direction.  
I ignored them and kept going.  
“You gotta go the distance no matter how indestructible your opponent is. Life is undefeated! It ain’t about how hard you hit. It’s about how hard you get hit and get back up. So long as you are breathing, anything is possible!”  
He remained expressionless and silent but I could tell my words were making an impact so I kept going.  
“Your hero, Sylvester Stallone, once lived in such a tiny room that he could reach his window and front door without getting off his bed. That’s where he wrote the script for Rocky. At one point, he even painted his window black to avoid distractions. The man was so broke he had to sell his dog! But here’s the kicker: they initially offered him \$125,000 for the script, but he refused because he wanted to play Rocky himself. At that time, he was a complete unknown—actors like Burt Reynolds and Robert Redford were being considered for the role, but he didn’t care. The offer went up to \$250,000, then \$1 million, and he still turned it down. The most incredible part? His wife was pregnant, and he had only \$106 in his account. That’s betting on yourself, man! That’s self-belief! That’s going the distance. You can’t give up! There is no tomorrow! Where the hell is Adrian?!”  
There was a brief silence, then suddenly everyone on the train erupted in applause.  
I felt a bit shy so I acknowledged everyone and sat back down.  
He was still

silent and expressionless.  
A good sign.  
When everyone calmed down and went back to their business, he finally spoke:  
“Lookin’ pretty good sonny. You found a wifey yet?”  
My message hit its mark. He was back to himself.  
“Honestly, I’ve been trying to find one on the subway,” I said half-seriously.  
“You’re an imbecile,” he said as he spat out another shell.  
The ride continued as it always does.  
When my stop finally came, we didn’t exchange numbers or addresses—just a mutual, endearing glance.  
Life can indeed be exhausting, extinguishing even, but there are always stops and encounters along the way that revive our spirits and remind us to keep pushing forward. Besides, who are we without our dreams, and what becomes of us when we give up on them?  
I would rather not find out.

## TOUGH TIMES INC.

Cell Count Team,  
My name is Dustin and I am currently serving out a Life Sentence in Collin’s Bay Med Institution. I came across your paper on the unit and love everything about it. Thank you for taking your time and effort to help people like me and my family.  
With help from my wife, I have created a website called “Tough Times Inc.” It is geared towards helping out families and loved ones of those incarcerated in Canada with helpful resources and information to make going through this tough time a little bit easier. Also we offer a pen box order and delivery service for newcomers or anyone who is eligible to send in a new box. This takes an enormous burden off of family members out there scrambling around, trying to meet deadlines and regulation items. I am going to send a flyer with this letter in hopes that you will post an ad in your paper and help get this website into the hands of those who really need it.  
Our goals and mission are the same: to help incarcerated people and all the innocent family members and loved ones that doing time affects.

## HELPING CANADIANS TO SUPPORT THEIR INCARCERATED LOVED ONES ACROSS CANADA

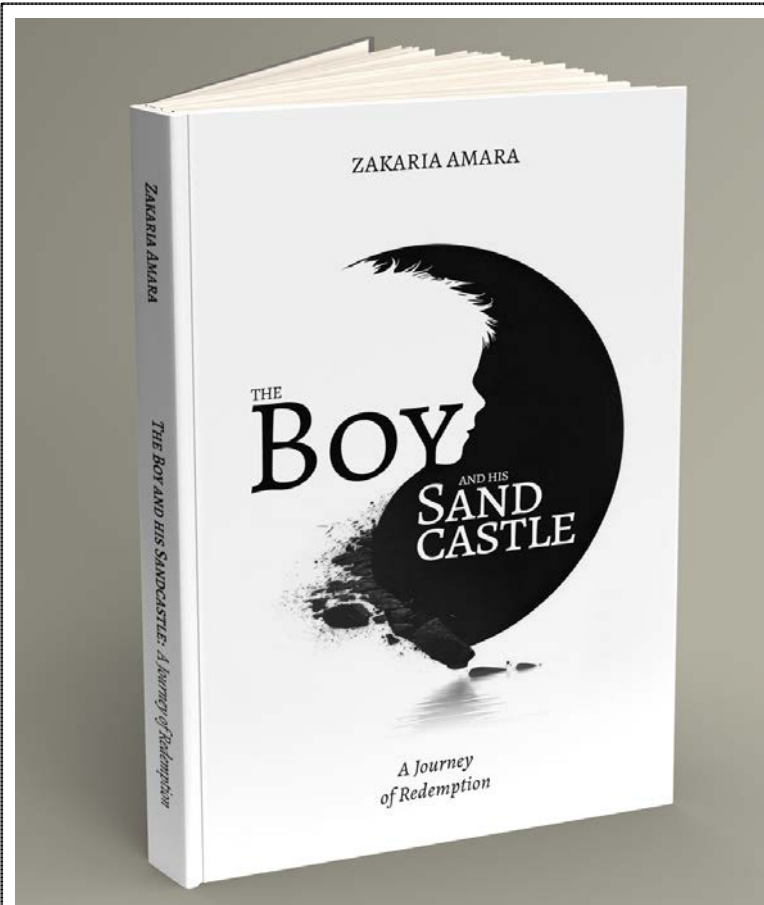
Our goal at Tough Times is to introduce the friends and family members of incarcerated individuals, to as much need-to-know information within the Canadian correctional system as we can.

Our hassle free service will also gather, build, and ship a Pen Pack to your loved ones that are doing hard time anywhere in Canada.

Don’t forget... Tough times don’t last, tough people do!



www.toughtimesinc.ca



For readers of *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Alchemist*, a stunning new memoir about loss, transformation, and redemption.

*The Boy and His Sandcastle* is the inspiring true story of Zakaria Amara, a young man sentenced to life for his role in a foiled terrorist plot. After languishing in a prison cell for over a decade, Zakaria finally discovers the transformative power of words and finds the courage to reshape his destiny.

Written during his years of incarceration, Zakaria employs a distinctive blend of stories, essays, and poems to make sense of his circumstances and survive the harsh realities of prison life. His 17-year journey from captivity to freedom is vividly chronicled through these deeply personal writings, which reflect his struggles, growth, and ultimate redemption.

More than just a cautionary tale, *The Boy and His Sandcastle* is a beacon of hope, demonstrating that even in the darkest circumstances, light can emerge when we open our hearts and embrace the power of transformation. Described by *Cell Count Magazine* as “The Shawshank Redemption meets The Alchemist,” this book offers profound inspiration and a clear roadmap for overcoming life’s deepest struggles.

“The Shawshank Redemption meets The Alchemist; A true story for those experiencing great hardships in their lives. Never before has anyone journeyed to the depth of despair and returned with such an inspiring and clear roadmap. Devastating, triumphant, and absolutely beautiful!” - Cell Count

“Inmates are encouraged to read and access information that is commonly available to the public. Restrictions on reading material may apply where there is reasonable cause to believe that the material would impact the security and safety of the institution. Staff will tell you if there is a library at the institution. If a library is available, inmates typically have weekly access to select some reading materials on the living unit (or another location) or through library parades. Staff will let you know the maximum number of reading materials that you can borrow at one time or have in your cell. If there is no library program available at your institution or if you want a particular book or special reading material, you may put in an Inmate Request Form.” - From *Inmate Information Guide for Adult Correctional Institutions*, Ministry of the Solicitor General, May 10, 2023



## INCOMPETENT INTERFERENCE

By Brian G. Kerr

When it comes to challenging the misconceptions attached to CSC and their incompetence in making the appropriate corrections requested by inmates, complying with job application requirements, answering requests, making pay raises, or conforming to the necessary Community Assessments for possible release, one might as well be wait-listed for a lobotomy. By the time this is actually performed, if ever, you'll be as dumbfounded as you thought you were before it all began. It's hard to say how long it will take before the overseeing correctional committees come to their senses and put an end to the procrastination that Corrections Canada so typically and consistently pursues.

The Correctional Investigator allegedly has reached a point where they realize the time has come to attempt eliminating this sort of nonsense. The only problem is, there aren't enough governmental agencies that truly give a damn, nor will there ever be.

What's needed is an agency authorized to oversee Corrections Canada, backed by public funding. How can anyone expect the government to properly oversee its own constituents? That's like asking the Pope to post a "No Children" sign above the pulpit. It's never going to happen.

Where are the Indigenous overseers? Why doesn't the Citizens Advisory Committee do walkthroughs of the jails? I suspect it's for the same reason Corrections Canada, at least in some institutions, has discontinued social meetings and other community-related activities. Any effort to minimize the amount of social interaction seems to be a predominant concern for the correctional environment and the managers responsible for the operation and upkeep of the penal infrastructure.

All the attention in the world from a left-wing diplomatic group or society means nothing to a deeply hurt minority like the criminally affected.

After watching a documentary on Abu Zubaydah, especially regarding the "Assessment Report" he received (and the fact that no one knows who authored it), I realized that this report, regardless of who wrote it, is similar to the falsified reports we see within Corrections Canada. Most of the alleged facts presented in this mysterious Assessment Report were never proven or corroborated by any higher authority, let alone a court. It was, like the majority of information presented in Canada's correctional reports,

without justifiable confirmation. In the Correctional system, authorities justify their actions by labeling the information "professional opinion." What gets me is how these professionals make assumptions without relevant facts and even provide diagnoses without the proper credentials.

What's more surprising is that they have the audacity to sign their names to these falsified statements and fictitious reports. The truth is, these individuals are not as competent as they would like to believe. On the contrary, they are quite incompetent when it comes to relaying the truth about the subject in question. I suppose they think that the less light shone on inmates, the easier it is to keep them in for as long as possible, provided they can do so within the sentencing guidelines.

There are also other elements that may influence their decisions, whether personal or impersonal. Many employees of Corrections Canada seem to feel that any criticism of the Service is a personal attack on them.

Whether the accusations against an offender are true doesn't matter from their perspective. What matters is whether you deny or admit to the offense, as this information allows them to manipulate the variables that determine your release chances or justify keeping you incarcerated.

Take Inmate Mills, for example, who is currently residing in Archambault Institution in Quebec. He's been in the system for over 30 years, despite receiving a 7-to-life sentence. Because he won't admit guilt for a crime he maintains he didn't commit, he remains in prison long past the time he was sentenced. I fear I may become another statistic in this system.

The problem lies not only within the "Correctional System" but also with the National Parole Board of Canada and the legislative requirements governing its decisions. How many individuals must rot in the depths of a broken and biased system? How many deaths will it take to get the message across that the current approach isn't working?

Yes, there is an alleged grievance system for inmates. However, it's as broken and inefficient as the correctional system itself! CSC holds no real responsibility. Most grievances are denied without sufficient reasoning or considered irrelevant, with no further action required. I've always wondered why CSC doesn't uphold more complaints, especially when they have legitimate merit. In my opinion, upholding more complaints would at least demonstrate that the system retains some integrity, responsibility, and accountability.

By continually denying complaints or claiming no further action is necessary, the system only proves its incompetence. If the system is indeed as incompetent as it seems, it must be completely re-evaluated and upgraded.

Instead, it continues to operate as it always has, costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars for incompetence—whether it's legal fees, unsubstantiated parole hearings, or other costs. The case-management team keeps finding new ways to keep the already oppressed, suppressed, and begging for the chance to show their worth.

If this doesn't constitute Incompetent Interference, I don't know what does!

## PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

**Letter with unknown author  
What was the original meaning and purpose behind "Prisoners Justice Day"?**

Prisoners Justice Day was initially established to raise public awareness about the "unnatural deaths" occurring in prisons, which have been recorded since 1974. In Saskatchewan, the Coroners Service decides whether to hold an inquest into in-custody deaths. In my view, this is part of the overall problem. Unsurprisingly, Ontario likely follows the same procedure.

Last year, 54 inmates died in Canada while in federal custody; 17 of those deaths were allegedly due to "natural" causes. Ontario has the highest number of inmate deaths, which is unsurprising given the severe lack of regular and mental health support behind bars.

**What is "double dooring"?**

Double dooring is the practice of locking inmates between two safety doors, coercing them into fighting. It can also involve placing one inmate in another's cell, where tensions are suspected, forcing them into close and hostile proximity. This is what happened in 2011 at Mountain Institution, when Jeremy Phillips was forced into a cell with Michael Grey, a known murderer who had been unlawfully transferred to the medium-security facility. The next morning, Phillips was found dead and unresponsive, with the official claim being that he inflicted the injuries on himself. It is hard to accept that someone could beat themselves with a cat-scratch post and strangle themselves with a coaxial cable, all while lying in a sleeping position.

These techniques are also used in daily interactions between inmates and officers, who often pit inmates against each other. If something goes missing, it's the inmates' fault.

If an order is not followed, officers make it clear, often loudly and deliberately, who they believe is responsible.

"These are everyday techniques used to intimidate, coerce, and punish alleged 'disobedient' prisoners."

These are not isolated acts of brutality, but well-established practices, such as the intentional neglect to provide prescribed pain medication. This neglect constitutes "torture" under the Criminal Code, as it is the deliberate infliction of pain and suffering through omission. According to the Canadian Code, "torture," as Sgt. James Clark of the Toronto Police Services knows, "means any act or omission by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person." Yes, an inmate is considered a person.

Excessive institutional violence, including torture, is often difficult, if not impossible, to prove, especially when correctional officers rationalize, divert blame, and avoid accountability.

Another atrocity within the Canadian penal system is the "structured intervention unit," which replaced the unconstitutional practice of "segregational confinement" ruled against by

the Supreme Court of Canada. However, this is nothing more than a rebranding of the same obscured form of torture.

Delays in justice are common due to lax attentiveness, with concerns brought to authorities such as the federal court system, institutional grievance procedures, and ombudsman services. There is also a reluctance to disclose pertinent evidence, including video footage, incident reports, medical records, and signed statements. Correctional officers hide behind the Charter of Rights as a form of diversion, which is a well-known practice in Corrections Canada.

The deliberate brutality inflicted by correctional officers during the course of their duties is absurd and must be scrutinized at the highest level. Severe consequences should be rendered to reshape such behavior.

Another absurd practice is the lack of adequate audio accompanying video disclosures, both within Corrections Canada and the Canadian justice system. Oversight from an international body is the least we should demand to address these issues, as it is appalling that inmates' reports of their in-custody experiences are so often dismissed.

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**Convict Lives Matter**



GARY GREENE

An Old Man

I'm old now no longer a young man  
But I have lived each second like I had had a plan  
I never truly had one though I lived life as it came  
I made sure I enjoyed it I never sought out fame  
I tended to important things that mattered most to me  
Things most people miss  
That they don't want to see  
The hardships of the poor, the crippled, the sick and maimed  
And several other plights  
Which here I haven't named  
Life's been good to me—I know that I've been gifted  
Each day here on this Earth  
My heart has been uplifted  
Yeah, I walked a crooked road for many stubborn years  
Then one day I discovered  
I held some foolish fears  
Once I saw the light things got better every day  
I found a whole new meaning  
In the things I wished to say  
I laughed, I loved, I cried—not always tears of sorrow  
Because now I had a reason  
And a great big blue tomorrow  
Growing old isn't easy, seems you're young  
Then it's all gone  
But you surrender to it gracefully  
And then just carry-on  
I'm old now and one day you'll be too  
So make every precious second count  
In everything you do...

SIC CHICK

Everything You Thought (could be wrong)

There is no starting gun/  
finish line  
race to run.

This ain't no competition  
game to get depressed in  
cause you ain't never won.

Don't think you done  
all there is of wasted years;  
That all you ever done is lost  
& failed relationships  
and the bitter tears  
thereof

Nothing is wasted.  
Everything counts; as long  
as you don't keep score.  
Let everything become priceless,  
just not in the currency you think.

Think of it like this:  
Everything you thought

is a construct created  
by human limitations & fears

and therefore, don't exist.

BOBBY K.K.

Broken Promises

Woke up again and,  
I was pissed off  
No cap, it feels like,  
I got ripoff  
A deal is a deal  
I did my part  
So what,  
You're saying I got things wrong?  
Jah knows I don't understand,  
I've been told, You're reliable  
like a Kickstand  
Why you treating me different?  
All wha gwan lock your jaw, you been dissin  
It's true, we've never been close but,  
Now you're adding more distance  
I'm not sitting here  
Asking for favours G,  
Just follow thru  
On the promises made  
It's been 18yrs  
Since the promise you gave  
Right down 2 the day  
Every1 of those days,  
On my knees, I've prayed and,  
With every day I awake  
I curse every1 of your names  
It's been ascertained  
You're all-knowing & Wise but,  
I'm proof, you're a goof and everyone lies  
Just fulfill your promise, I'm done  
So tired of living, please let me die...

The Beholder...

Do you know what  
I saw in your eyes  
On the day  
Your path crossed with mine?  
In the same hour  
I was to decide  
If I was to live or die  
I found you my Soulmate  
How perfectly timed?  
I needed your warmth so,  
You always stayed close  
Your voice was so soothing  
I Love when we spoke  
Of,

Our plans for the future  
While we kicked back & smoked  
Everyday that passed  
You made me believe,  
You've given me hope  
I thought I was lost  
By so many people,  
Away I've been tossed  
But, on the day you walked by  
And, Your eyes locked with mine  
I felt all these butterflies  
Flap around inside,  
Remember the moment: I became yours  
& you became mine?  
M.T mon cheri you saved my life  
You gave me my, why  
From fate can't escape  
Together we'll survive...

NOLAN R. TURCOTTE

Flaws & Disorder

My pain is infinite. My brain's been bleed-  
ing a bit.  
Reality hits like a train. My heart sinks like  
a ship.

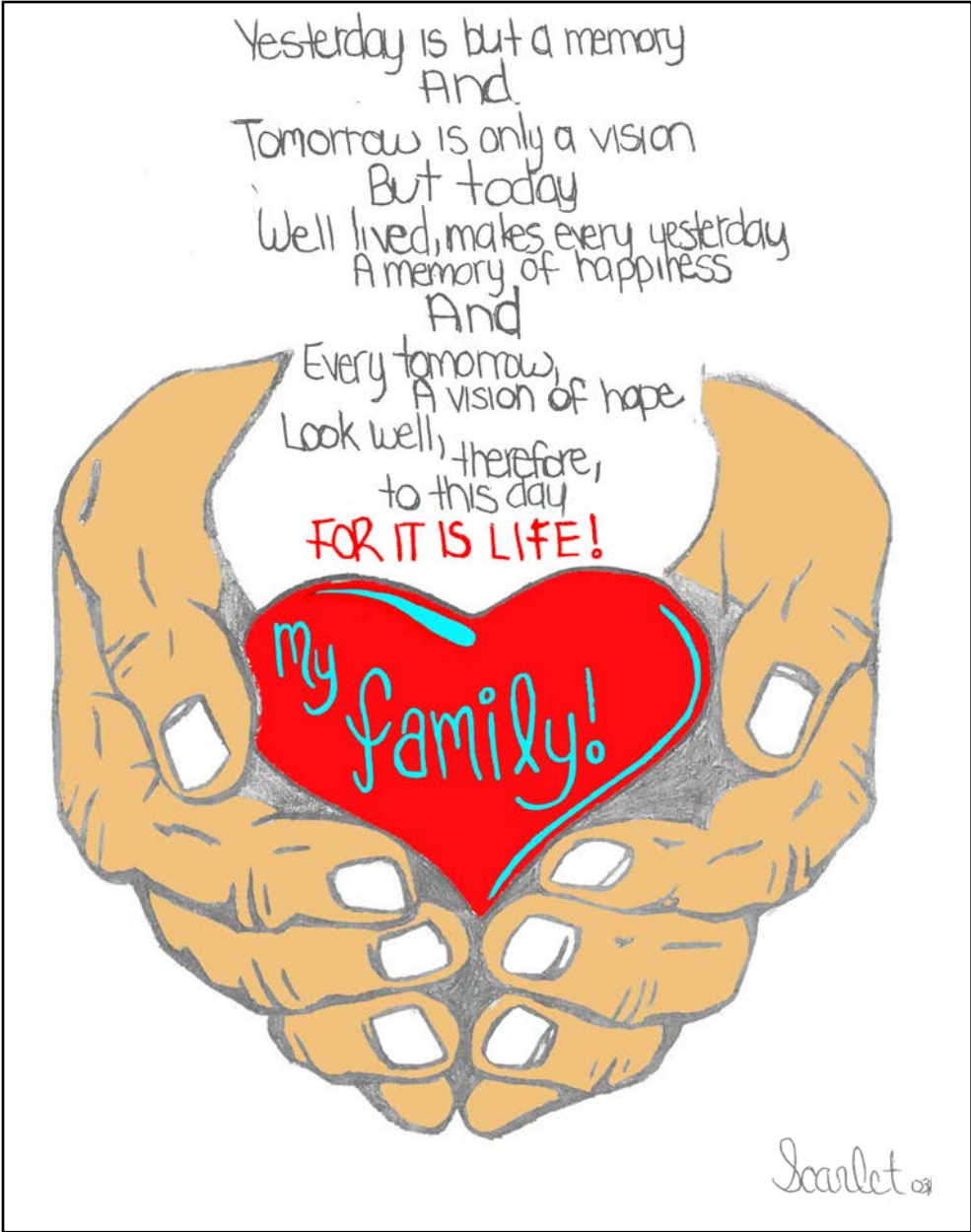
Caught in a web. Tangled up. My mind's  
mangled to shit.  
Strangled by my lack of sanity. The amity's  
stripped.  
Profanity & Spit fly outta my lip.  
—Cuz the oppression is illegal. My frustra-  
tion's legit.  
There's rage beneath the surface. This  
cage has a devious purpose.  
Designed to degrade the weak & the  
worthless.  
I'm burning up like a furnace. The fire in  
my eyes is earnest.  
Dehumanized & Victimized by the Correc-  
tional Service.  
I want some help! I'm haunted. They taunt  
my Mental Health.  
Another Lifer warehoused. Forgotten on  
a shelf.  
Where's the Justice in that?  
Stick your tongue up in my ass crack,  
Crackerjack!  
You're laughing now. But it's a matter of  
fact that I'll get the last laugh.  
—You poked the Bear, so I poked a Pig.  
I won't be stepped on like a broken twig.  
I run through smoke & conquer obstacles  
that are big.

Write us a poem



Send it to:  
Cell Count  
526 Richmond St E  
Toronto, ON  
M5A 1R3





TURCOTTE CONT'D

Paid my dues. No longer moving like Maximum villains.  
Stronger. More mature. Groovin. Relaxin. Chillin.  
From icepicks & razorblades to ballpoint Papermates.  
Striking at every angle with written complaints.  
I'll do whatever it takes to expose those blue snakes.  
—I speak the Truth. Raw & Direct even without the proof.  
Draw a line through the sands of time. Correct us, Goofs!  
Don't subject us to excessive force and acts of torture.  
Where's the humanity in enforcing your Flaws & Disorder?

ABDUL JABBAR

100 Millions

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem  
May Allah grant Cell Count 100 Million. They give a voice to the voiceless.  
Sena is a saint.  
And Claudia leaves me speechless. The work they do is worth Billions. They are a Media Empire.  
I read their newsletter. The poetry is top notch. And the stories inspire Life from inside a cage. We will all be free.  
Insha'Allah.

We should show these heroes some love. Who would love us from behind bars.  
Cell Count is the pulse. Of prison life.  
Cell Count reminds The World. Not to Forget.  
That Humans Dwell. Behind Prison Gates. David versus Goliath.  
They will destroy the prison system. Tomorrow.  
With God's Help.  
Insha'Allah.  
We will get our rights.  
Prisons will change over night.  
And we will be watching Cell Count. In Apartments with phones.  
Insha'Allah.

Closer

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem  
I want to be Closer to Allah.  
Do Good Deeds which He Loves. I want to be Closer to Allah.  
He is my Love.  
I want to be Close to Him. In this life. And the Next.  
I want to be his close friend. Doing what He Loves.  
Everything I Do.  
I Do For Allah.  
He is my motivation. My Hope. And My Fear.  
I Hope He Loves Me. And Doesn't Punish

Me. The World is Nothing.  
I am Nothing.  
The Only Thing that Matters. Is Allah.  
Peace be upon his Messenger. The Best of All Men.  
I Love Him Too.  
May Allah Put me in his Company. And Allow Me to Follow his Example. So That Allah will Love me Too.  
I Love You Allah.  
Keep me Close to You.  
Insha'Allah

Happy Birthday

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem Happy birthday to Abdul Jabbar. Fighting in The Path of Allah Happy Birthday to Abdul Jabbar. He prays his Salah.  
And Believes in Allah.  
And Believes in His Messenger. That will never change.  
Happy Birthday to Abdul Jabbar. The Jihad Star.  
Rhymes and Poetry.  
That call to Allah.  
Rhymes and Poetry.  
That attack the kuffar.  
The tyrants.  
Who put his Brothers in cages. We will Crush the tyrants.  
Beneath our feet. Insha'Allah.  
Happy birthday to Abdul Jabbar. Another year of Blessings.  
Happy birthday to Abdul Jabbar. Another year of Blessings.  
Happy birthday to Abdul Jabbar. Another year closer to the Meeting. With Allah.  
May He be pleased with me. And accept my worship of him. One moment in Salah.  
Is better than the whole world. Happy birthday to Abdul Jabbar. Insha'Allah.

Motivation

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem  
I feel motivated.  
To worship Allah.  
Pray my Salah.  
When I am astray. He turns me Back. Never give up.  
Never abandon the salah.  
My brother gave me good advice. And so did my uncle.  
To pray my salah.  
That is the key to success. Never feel sad. Never be depressed.  
You have a merciful Lord. A Loving Lord.  
So continue to Strive. And do good.  
Be Motivated. Pray your Salah.  
An everlasting reward.  
For your efforts.  
I am motivated today. Despite being in a cage. I am free.  
Because I have my Salah. But more importantly.  
I have Allah. Insha'Allah.

Untitled

There are situations we all may face, That may cause our very souls to shake. As thoughts race they formulate,  
The different paths our minds create, Yet once we've picked the path to use,

Thoughts turn to actions to become our next move, So think before you choose to make,  
Decisions that may seal your fate. For all it takes is but one mistake To turn ripples into tidal waves,  
And the consequences of our mistakes To leave us drowning in it's wake.

OCI RESIDENT E. FULGAR

A Tale of Two Spirit Wolves

I once heard this tale by a Cherokee chief, A spiritual awakening despite my beliefs.  
It's about these two wolves that we all have within  
And who stay with us through life, through thick and thin. The story is a lesson taught by an elder about life,  
And how we have wolves within that constantly fight. He goes on to explain they both have different names,  
And although they are similar, they are far from the same. One wolf is evil and lives on one side,  
It feeds on the emotions of our negative kind. The other resides on the opposite side,  
And thrives on the goodness of our positive vibes. Each time these wolves fight, they fight for control, But not of each other, but that of your soul.  
Every time these wolves fight one must taste defeat, Yet its only one battle in a war that won't cease.  
SEE, we hold power that decides which wolf wins, Through the power of thought and through the error of sin. For the victor is the wolf that beckons our need,  
For the winner is the wolf that we choose to feed.

Untitled

They say hurt people like to hurt people, While troubled people cause trouble.  
Grateful people thank other people, And haters hate on others.  
Loved people love other people, And people become lovers.  
Lovers create babies,  
And babies create mother. Actions cause reactions, And we react to each other. How I am and how you act,  
Directly interferes with one another.

MICHAEL PELLETIER

A Thousand Lives

I've lived and loved and lost love And died a thousand times  
And lived to love again  
So I've learned to live to love to lose the love that lived

HORAINE BENNETT

Colourblind

I became skeptical when I got my spectacles  
Able to see, that all I could be, has been predetermined for me  
Predestined to be less than, the next man that's Anglo-Saxon  
An anathema to Obama's Pacifism  
Within classism is a caste system  
Even with generational wealth  
A truism you will find, even from my own kind  
Is the only thing truly colourblind, is racism itself



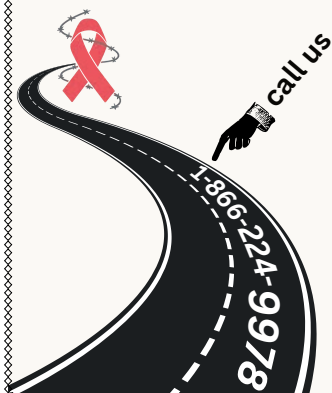
## PASAN IN-REACH SCHEDULE

**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/group

**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 peaceably share and care for the lands and resources around the Great Lakes.

## HIV+ CLIENT SERVICES

In order to be a client & access these services you need to have confirmed HIV+ status and be a prisoner or ex-prisoner (all times Eastern Standard time)

- Phone Hours: Mon – Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday mornings
- Workshops and Programming - Scheduled usually on Mondays or Thursdays, give us a call or check out our website for a complete list of events we have scheduled.
- ID Clinic – cancelled for now
- Release Funds - \$50 (twice a year max)
- TTC Tokens – 2 each for clients who attend workshops
- Harm Reduction Materials – Mon – Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday AM (Safer-Crack-Use-Kits, Safer-Needle-Use-Kits, Piercing Needles, Condoms, etc.) - for everyone.

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

## ABOUT CELL COUNT

PASAN publishes 'Cell Count', a minimum of 4 issues per year. We are based in Toronto on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. It is sent out for FREE to Clients & Prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation @ \$20 per year. We are proud to release our 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.  
 Publisher: PASAN  
 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

Circulation: 700+ - Recirculation: ???

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

Fair Dealing in the Canadian Copyright Act:

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

## A NOTE ABOUT PEN PALS:

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

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

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

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

905.673.5867

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

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

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

## MOVING?

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SHARP ADVICE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**  
Accept collect calls  
150 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, Montreal, H2L 2Y4 1-800-927-2844

ONTARIO

**2-SPIRITED PEOPLE of the 1ST NATIONS**

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

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

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)  
120 Queenston St, St. Catharines, ON L2R 2Z3 905-984-8684 or toll free 1-800-773-9843

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

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

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

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

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

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

**HIV/AIDS REGIONAL SERVICES (HARS)**

Accept collect calls  
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L 1G5 613-545-3698 (Collect)

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

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

**PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE NETWORK (PARN)**  
Accept collect calls  
60 Hunter St E 2nd Floor, Peterborough, 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**OUT SASKATOON**  
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 0Y5 306-763-5356

**RED RIBBON PLACE (ALL NATIONS HOPE AIDS NETWORK)**

2735 5th Ave, Regina, SK, S4T 0L2 1-877-210-7622

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

WEST COAST

**AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND**  
Accepts collect calls. 713  
Johnson St, 3rd Flr, Victoria, V8W 1M8 250-384-2366 or 1-800-665-2437

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

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

**NEW LIFE PRISON MINISTRIES**  
P.O. Box 123  
Arva, ON  
N0M 1C0  
Aftercare support: 1-888-842-6898

PRISONER-SPECIFIC

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

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

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

**SMAAC.**  
org  
The Saskatchewan-Manitoba-Alberta 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**  
6000 William Head Rd, Victoria, BC V9C 0B5

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

**PRISON FREE PRESS**  
POBox 39 Stn P Toronto ON M5S 2S6

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 Broadway  
Vancouver, BC, V5N 5W1  
604-682-3269 x3019

**BOOKS BEYOND BARS**  
PO Box 33129  
Halifax NS, B3L 4T6  
902-446-1788

**OPEN DOOR BOOKS (ODB)**  
c/o QPIRG Concordia  
Concordia University  
1455 de Maisonneuve O  
Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8  
514-848-7585

**Write ON!**  
*Supporting prisoners through correspondence*

**INCARCERATED IN CANADA? NEED INFORMATION?**

**WE CAN:**  
Research general information you need, such as:  
• general legal information  
• info on prison rules and policies  
• info on resources, programs and services  
• and possibly other kinds of information you need.

**WE CANNOT:**  
• Give any kind of professional advice, legal or otherwise.  
• be a pen-pal service (though we could refer you to one)  
• promise to adequately respond to all requests for information.

**WRITE ON!** is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to help and support prisoners in Canada, through correspondence.

**CONTACT US:**  
Write ON!  
Suite # 234  
110 Cumberland Street  
Toronto, On M5R 3V5

**TPRP JAIL HOTLINE**  
(416) 775-9239

**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!

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY, + SATURDAY  
9-11 AM + 2-4 PM