

# CELL COUNT

YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

TOGETHERNESS - JANUARY 2025 - #106

## SANCTUARY AT THE SANCTUARY

By Mark "South Side" Zammit

Hey, hey, my, my, Cell Count readers shall never die. So here I am, with all truth and no lies—hey, hey, my, my ...

Hello to all my PASAN/Cell Count family! I hope you're all doing well. Whether you're still behind the wall or out on parole, may The Creator watch over you day and night, giving you the strength to keep moving forward, step by step, until you make it to the front gate and eventually "home."

For those who have finished their time but are still just trying to stay afloat—keeping your head above water and your body above ground, even with the "concrete footwear" slipped on by our federal and provincial governments—know this: "I, Mark 'South Side' Zammit," along with The Creator, smudge and pray for all of you, body and mind, every single day.

In the same breath, I want you to know that this article—what you're about to read—will connect you with two of the most outstanding, genuine, caring, and reliable organizations supporting people like us: cons, ex-cons, the homeless, and more. The first is PASAN, the folks behind this fabulous newsletter, and the second is a non-profit organization that has saved my life more times than I can count: The Sanctuary.

"The Sanctuary," located at 25 Charles St. E., downtown Toronto at Yonge and Charles, is a small historic church that has saved countless lives, including my own, over and over again. They continue to do so every single day. More than that, The Sanctuary and its amazing staff and volunteers have given me something I've sought for my entire life: a family. A family I wouldn't trade for all the money, friendships, or riches on this doomed planet.

This little historic stone church—essentially the backyard of The Brass Rail on Yonge Street—is, in my eyes, downtown Toronto's greatest outreach program, hands down. It's a haven for Toronto's homeless, the hungry, ex-convicts, those still incarcerated, people battling addiction, and anyone dealing with personal struggles or mental health issues like PTSD, depression, or anxiety.

One of their incredible volunteers, Dr. Wong, shows up like clockwork every Thursday to provide medical care, diagnosing, treating, and helping Toronto's most vulnerable. HR (Harm Reduction) staff stay on-site until everyone has been seen and supported.

The Sanctuary offers so much: bagged lunches, snacks, bottled water, vitamin packs, smudging ceremonies, chapel services, hot meals, harm reduction supplies, clothing, shoes, winter coats, naloxone kits, housing workers, counselors, mental health professionals, cigarettes (when available), bus tickets, court letters, art classes, and so much more. But above all, they provide what their name promises: sanctuary.

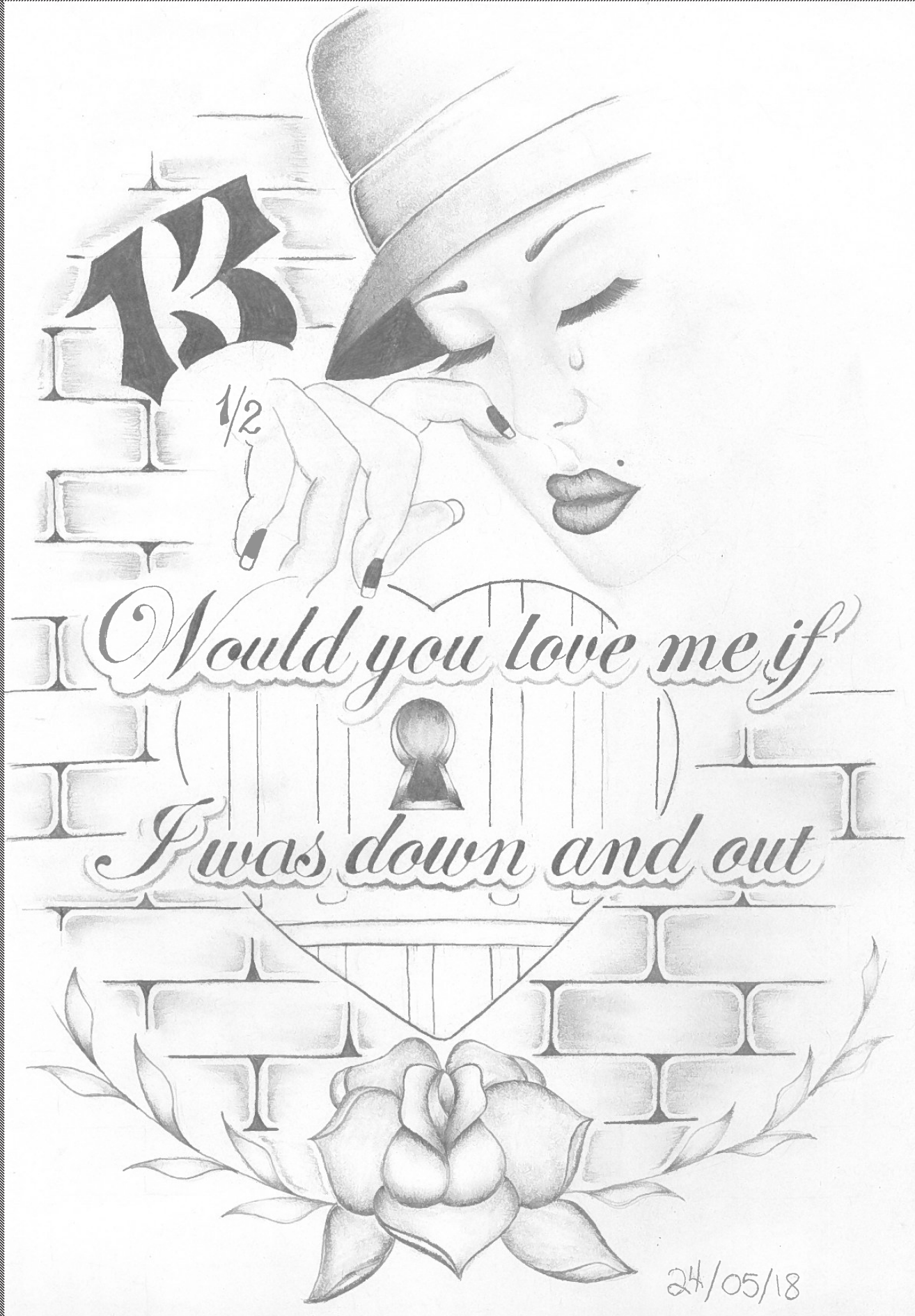
They offer a safe place to simply exist, ask questions, seek help, and feel less alone in a world that can be so cold to people on the margins. They don't just talk the talk—they walk the walk, and then some. They sprint across the finish line when others would have long given up.

Not only do they practice what they preach, but they also write the script that others should follow. I owe them my life, my love, and my everything. By far, The Sanctuary's staff are at the top of their game, and they keep growing stronger.

So, to all—all—at The Sanctuary, I, Mark "South Side" Zammit, thank you with every ounce of my being. Without you working tirelessly behind the scenes, I and so many others wouldn't be here today. Without you, many of us wouldn't have anyone to love us or call family. Thank you, and may The Creator protect you and your loved ones, now and forever.

There are so many organizations out there that talk a big game, patting themselves on the back endlessly,

cont'd as Zammit on pg 11



Published and Sent by PASAN

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

First and foremost, happy Black History/Futures Month! We had a wonderful celebration at our offices here at PASAN to commemorate the work done by Black activists, writers, artists and academics to move us towards a more just and equitable world. I also want to thank you for your patience over the past months as we navigated delays due to the Canada Post strike and submissions held up in the mail. We know how much *Cell Count* means to you, and we're grateful for your understanding. Your ongoing support and contributions remind us why this publication exists—to be a platform where your voices, creativity, and experiences are shared and heard.

A special thank you goes out to all our incredible artists. The stunning work you submit continues to inspire and move us with its creativity and brilliance. While we celebrate the diversity of artistic expression, we want to remind everyone of a few important guidelines. For *Cell Count* to keep reaching people inside, we must exercise discretion when it comes to content. Unfortunately, we cannot print imagery or themes involving violence, weapons, or sexually explicit content. These kinds of submissions put us at risk of being blocked by prison institutions. We encourage you to keep creating and sharing your art, but please keep in mind the restrictions we must follow to ensure *Cell Count* continues to get into the hands of those who need it most.

Looking ahead, we're excited to announce a couple of special issues this year! First, we're dedicating an upcoming issue to elections. We want to hear from you—have you faced challenges voting, accessing election information, or learning about candidates and parties? Your stories and insights are invaluable, and this is your chance to shed light on any barriers that exist in the democratic process.

Finally, 2025 marks *Cell Count's* 30th anniversary! This is a milestone we couldn't have reached without all of you. For this special issue, we're inviting you to tell us what *Cell Count* has meant to you over the years. What role has it played in your life? How has it made you feel seen, heard, or connected? We'd also love to see commemorative art that reflects 30 years of amplifying the voices and experiences of people on the inside. We are hoping to choose 1 or 2 art submissions to print on t-shirts, so if you do submit your art work to us, let us know if it's ok if we use it for this purpose.

Thank you for being part of Cell Count and for trusting us to be your platform. Your voices and creativity make this work meaningful and necessary. We can't wait to hear from you and see what you'll share in the months to come.

In solidarity,

**Sena Hussain**, Editor, Cell Count

PASAN

FEBRUARY 2025

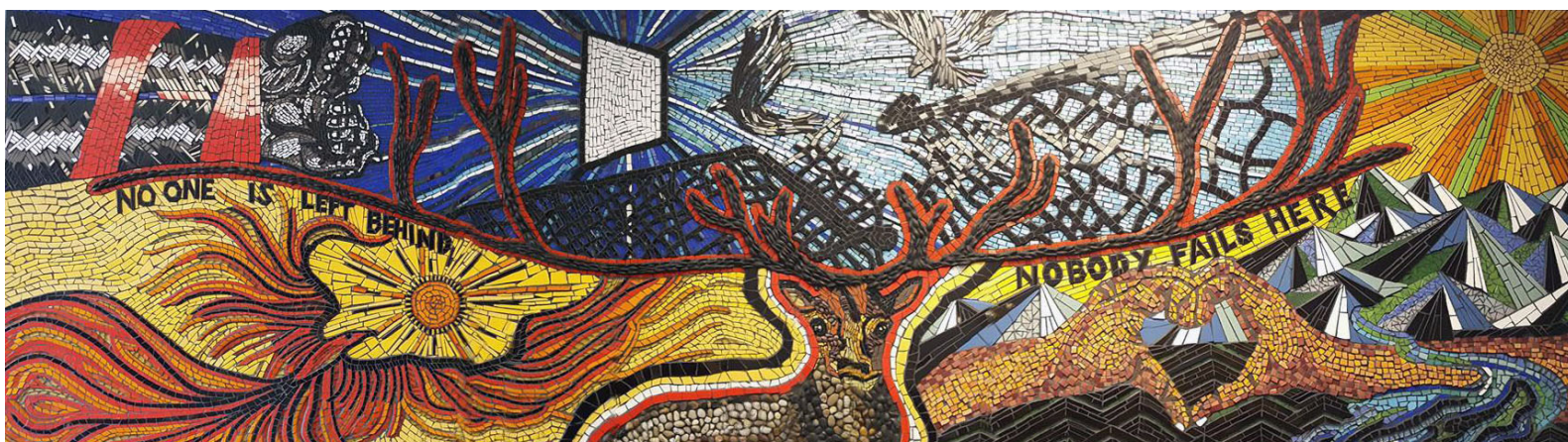
## BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPOTLIGHT



## ANGELA DAVIS

Angela Davis is an iconic figure in the fight for civil rights, social justice, and racial equality. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1944, Davis became a prominent activist and scholar in the 1960s and 1970s, known for her involvement with the Black Panther Party and the Communist Party USA. Her advocacy for prisoners' rights, her staunch opposition to the criminal justice system, and her support for Black liberation made her a target of political persecution, leading to her arrest and later acquittal in the 1970s on charges related to a kidnapping and murder case. Davis's influential work extends beyond activism, as she has also made significant contributions as a professor and author, particularly in the areas of gender, race, and prison abolition. Throughout her life, Davis has remained a powerful voice for marginalized communities, advocating for systemic change and challenging societal norms that perpetuate inequality.

Graphic by Taegan McCarthy



### PASAN

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

Today, PASAN is the only community-based organization in Canada exclusively providing HIV and HCV prevention, education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

### SUPPORT SERVICES

- Individual support, informal counselling, case management, pre-release planning, and referrals for those in custody living with HIV and/or HCV
- We assist our clients in accessing

adequate medical care and support while incarcerated

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

### OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Conducts HIV/HCV and harm reduction workshops inside many of the provincial and federal adult institutions in Ontario
- Produces a newsletter, Cell Count, which contains article, poetry and art produced by current and ex-prisoners
- Facilitates Prison Life 101, HIV/HCV prevention and harm reduction/overdose prevention trainings for agencies working with prison populations
- Assist agencies to start prison in-

reach and support and act as a referral "hub" for HIV/HCV positive prisoners who are transferred from one region to another, to ensure continuity of support

- Peer health/harm reduction workers where ex-prisoners assist those who are currently incarcerated, about to be released, or already released to get medical and health needs met.

### CONTACT INFO

**Write or visit us:**  
526 Richmond St E,  
Toronto, ON M5A 1R3  
**Call us toll-free:**  
1-866-224-9978



### THE PASAN TEAM

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**Poets:**

Jacob David, Abdul Jabbar, Sic Chick, Rob Surridge

**Peer Liaisons:** Chris R, Jerome G, Oliver D, Mickey L, Billy W, David M, Daniel C!!! and to our placement student Peyton Biddle, Thank you all!

## PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM: A LIFESAVING, COST-SAVING SOLUTION

A recent study published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) has confirmed that Canada's Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP) is not only effective at preventing the spread of serious diseases like hepatitis C (HCV) among prisoners who inject drugs, but it also saves money for the healthcare system.

Here's a breakdown of the study and what it means for people in Canadian prisons:

### Why Was This Study Done?

Prisons have high rates of injection drug use, but access to sterile needles is often limited. This increases the risk of spreading bloodborne diseases like hepatitis C and HIV. To address this issue, Canada introduced the PNEP, which provides clean needles and syringes to prisoners who need them.

The study looked at whether this program is worth the cost by examining how much money it saves in healthcare expenses and whether it helps people live healthier lives.

### What Did the Study Find?

#### 1. It Saves Lives and Improves Health

The PNEP reduces the number of people getting hepatitis C and other infections caused by sharing used needles.

By preventing these infections, prisoners experience better health, fewer complications, and longer lives.

The program improves people's quality of life, which the study measured using something called "quality-adjusted life years" (QALYs). This measures how much better and longer people live when they avoid preventable diseases.

#### 2. It Saves Money

Treating hepatitis C is expensive, costing thousands of dollars per person. By stopping new infections before they happen, the PNEP helps avoid these huge costs.

The study showed that the money saved by preventing disease is far more than what it

costs to run the program. This means the PNEP isn't just good for health—it's also a smart financial decision.

#### 3. It's a Smart Investment

For every dollar spent on the program, the savings in healthcare costs and the value of better health outweigh the costs.

The program is an investment in both public health and in reducing the strain on Canada's healthcare system.

#### Why Does This Matter?

Hepatitis C is a serious disease that can cause liver damage, cancer, and even death if untreated. People in prison are more likely to get infected because they often don't have access to the tools needed to prevent infection, like clean needles.

This study shows that programs like the PNEP make a big difference. By giving people the tools they need to protect themselves, the program helps prisoners stay healthier and reduces long-term healthcare costs.

#### What's Next?

The study's findings support keeping and even expanding the PNEP in Canadian prisons. It shows that harm reduction programs like this are not only about health—they're about dignity, safety, and fairness. Everyone deserves the chance to protect themselves and live a healthier life, whether inside or outside of prison.

This research shows that the Prison Needle Exchange Program isn't just good policy—it's lifesaving. It's a reminder that investing in people's health benefits everyone. If you'd like to learn more about the program or how to access it, talk to prison healthcare staff or a harm reduction worker.

## HOW THE OPIOID CRISIS IS RAVAGING CANADA'S PRISONS

*As Canada grapples with a severe national drug crisis, experts say the country's prisons are overwhelmed.*

#### By Katharine Lake Berz

Toronto Star, Sept. 1, 2024

WINNIPEG — The vomiting and shaking didn't surprise him.

But the withdrawal cravings were something else. So intense

lan Desjarlais had to cling to the halfway house couch to fight the urge to comb the floor for mislaid crystals of meth.

In the darkest hours and minutes, the Indigenous 39-year-old conjured up the faces of men he had known behind bars — men in the grip of addiction — their faces a vivid reminder of what he was fighting against.

Some of those men were dead. Others returned to prison so fast, after breaking parole by using drugs, that their short-lived freedom seemed just a brief intermission in a life-sentence of despair.

During those gruelling first days of recovery, lan drank water in hopeful sips. He shivered, frightened and alone. He pleaded for sleep. But every moment he endured brought him one step closer to breaking free of the drugs that claim so many in Canada's federal prisons.

It was the hardest thing he's ever done.

"It was excruciating," lan said, shaking his head.

"It was a battle for my body and my mind."

His fight ended in triumph. He made it through the battle of prison addiction and the battle of withdrawal and emerged into a lasting recovery.

But his feat is, tragically, far too rare.

As Canada grapples with a severe national drug crisis, experts say the country's prisons are overwhelmed and under-prepared. Convicts are sent into a miserable loop where prison fuels their addictions instead of stamping them out, making it nearly impossible for them to reintegrate into society and almost certain to reoffend.

Everyone pays the price.

"Canadian prisons are worsening the country's addiction crisis," said Kim Beaudin, vice-chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, who advocates for Indigenous offenders across the country.

Federal prisons have been unable to control the use of increasingly toxic illicit drugs, and they don't have the skilled staff or resources to treat those who need it.

But lan's journey proves that

Canada's prison drug crisis can be overcome. He faced roadblocks and relapses. But with the support of the woman he loves, he was able to shake his addictions and devote his life to helping others do the same. In complex, disheartening circumstances, he offers hope.

University of Alberta research estimates that up to 90 per cent of Canadian prison inmates have substance abuse issues. Many offenders have addictions that led them to commit the crimes for which they are incarcerated. Others get hooked on illicit drugs in prison.

lan fell into both categories. He was drinking alcohol when he committed the crimes in his lengthy criminal record. He also spiralled into devastating hard-drug dependence while in prison.

Slim and modest in stature, lan is visually striking with his hair artfully shaved and his skin a showcase of expressive tattoos.

The father of three smoked marijuana from a young age but swore he would never inject drugs. He knew how dangerously addictive they are and the higher risk of death they pose.

But in prison, injectable morphine, cocaine and crystal meth use was rampant, he said. In the grip of boredom and misery, his resistance crumbled.

"When I first injected, it was the best feeling ever," he said, smiling at just remembering the high.

"It felt like a hug from God."

Today, in recovery, lan has a bright future. He splits his life between mandatory stays at a Winnipeg halfway house and a happy home with his partner, Lea-Ann Backlin, and their one-year-old daughter, Galaxy. He has a promising career helping other people heal.

But lan cannot stop puzzling over his life: how addiction first wounded, then hardened him and finally opened his heart. What he has learned, he is convinced, can help others right now. In the future, he hopes he can help change the system to break the vicious cycle of incarceration and addiction.

lan grew up surrounded by the suffering that alcohol and drugs

first obscure, but multiply in their wake.

"There were a lot of traumas and abuse in our family," he said in one of a series of in-person and video interviews with the Star over the past eight months.

The trauma began four months before he was born when his 21-year-old father, a Pasqua First Nation survivor of residential schools, was killed in a motorcycle accident. Soon after, his 18-year-old Métis mother fell into the claws of addiction and abandoned him.

lan and his older brother, Conridge, were taken in by their mother's parents who were already taking care of their three teenagers. They were residents of Regina's North Central neighbourhood, labelled "Canada's Worst" by a national magazine. It was the site of Canada's highest rate of violent crime.

Among the shacks and back alleys that sheltered drug-shooting galleries, underage sex workers and violent gang members, the brothers learned to survive by pretending to be strong and avoiding their grandfather's iron fists.

They ached for their mother. lan remembers seeing her, when he was about eight years old, lying on the floor crying as her partner abused her.

In another memory, she is smiling in a bright yellow dress. But her face is puffy and sports a black eye.

"I couldn't understand why my mom would (desert) us," he said with despair.

"Was I not good enough?"

lan was nine years old when he started drinking. By 12, he was fully dependent on alcohol and marijuana.

Alcohol drowned his pain but engulfed him in violence and vice.

Close to 50 per cent of violent crimes committed by male offenders in Canada's prison system are a result of substance abuse, according to a Correctional Services Canada study. Alcohol alone is responsible for 20 per cent of violent crimes — crimes that offenders almost surely would not have committed if not under the influence, researchers said.



**DISABILITY JUSTICE NETWORK of ONTARIO**

# Our Prisoner Support Lines Are Back!



**DISABILITY JUSTICE NETWORK of ONTARIO**

KINGSTON # IS FIXED!



with a new line for Kingston!  
613-881-0050

## FREE for prisoners to call.

report prison conditions, extended lockdowns, or issues accessing medical/psych care

request support, resources

## Prisoner Support Lines

<b>Hamilton</b>	905-631-4084
<b>Niagara</b>	905-227-5066
<b>Milton/GTA</b>	416-775-7983
<b>London/West</b>	519-690-0836
<b>Kingston</b>	613-881-0050
<b>Ottawa/East</b>	613-768-9951
<b>Kenora/North</b>	807-548-4312



**DISABILITY JUSTICE NETWORK of ONTARIO**

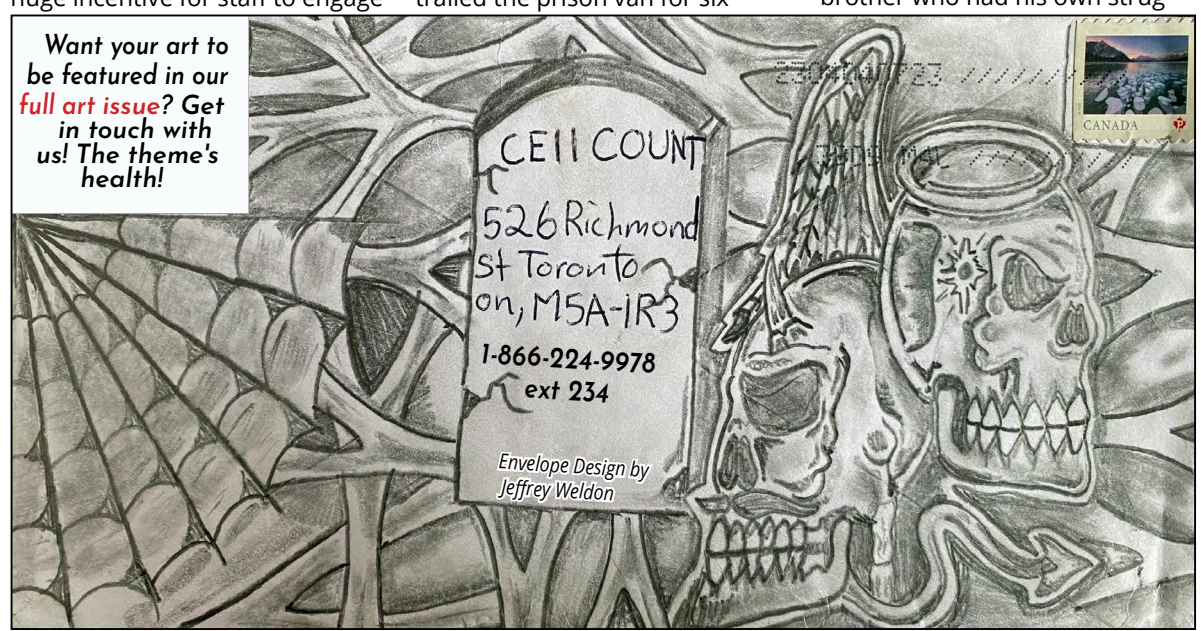
Ian's criminal record reflects these wretched statistics. On the day the world watched in horror as New York City's twin towers collapsed, Ian's life crumbled into its own catastrophe. He got drunk, punched a wall and was sent to a youth correctional facility. There, shock over the 9/11 terrors fused with his feelings of hopelessness and fuelled resentment rather than reform. "I was a small guy ... and I was always scared of going to prison," Ian said. "I had to learn how to be sneakier, how to do drugs without getting caught, how to beat the system." His prospects dimmed. Once he was released, Ian's grandparents wouldn't take him back. They were overwhelmed caring for their own addicted children and couldn't manage their grandsons. A daughter committed suicide, adding heartbreak to the already ravaged family. Distraught and determined to dodge the grim group homes that trapped his brother, Conridge, Ian went on the run, couch-surfing and surviving on the streets. He tried staying with his mother, but she didn't have the strength to support a troubled teen. He lived briefly with his father's family but that broke down too. "I was pulled and pushed, not believing or understanding which way I could turn or run," Ian said. He was 15 years old. Looking back, Ian can see alcohol abuse started to turn him into someone he didn't want to be. He never wanted to hurt people. But he was not able to control his emotions when he drank. His suffering and trauma lay buried deep until alcohol shattered his defences and unleashed his agony in a destructive outpouring that harmed everyone. As he got older, Ian's drinking intensified. He fought urges to commit suicide. He clung to Conridge on the streets. And he racked up a long criminal record, that started shortly after his 18th birthday. He was just 21 when he was first arrested for aggravated assault — a crime he would repeat many times, one he now deeply regrets. "I am accountable for my actions, what I've done in my past, and I take full responsibility for those actions," he said, his eyes staring soulfully at the ground. "Nobody deserves to be treated violently in any way by any person." Eventually a domestic assault charge sent Ian to Saskatchewan Penitentiary. According to local media, the provincial court hearing the case in 2016, highlighted Ian's likability, intelligence and skills, but also his addictions. Judge Patrick Reis classified Ian as a long-term offender and underscored his need for "extensive and intensive (addiction) treatment." But in prison, Ian got the oppo-

site. He learned how easily hard drugs could erase old traumas. "I was doing morphine. I was doing hydromorphone. I was injecting it. I was doing crystal meth. I was injecting that. I was smoking fentanyl." "I was doing it every day." From his first injection, Ian became consumed by hunting his next hit. He bartered cleaning cells, selling beaded artwork and etching mirrors in the prison. He pawned his television, stereo and clothes. The spiral didn't stop at material objects; he began selling his food in pursuit of the high's brief relief. "I became a slave," he recalled, as baby Galaxy napped in the family's cosy Winnipeg home. In time, Ian became so desperate he told a friend he would be killed if he couldn't provide drugs to the prison's gangs. It was not far off the mark. Each visit, the friend smuggled 16 morphine pills, packaged in balloons, inside a body cavity. Ian would swallow the balloons, then throw them up so he could cook and inject the potent toxin he craved. "It was scary, but I didn't care about death. I cared about drugs." Over his years in Saskatchewan Penitentiary, an archaic facility on the site of a former residential school, Ian followed the steps of a treatment program for his alcohol and soft drug abuse prescribed by the court. But he didn't get help for his escalating hard drug addictions — that left him in a state of paranoia, even after he became infected with hepatitis B from sharing needles. Prison offered no hope for salvation, he said remembering those dark moments. He was utterly alone. Hazel Miron, a deputy director with Canada's Office of the Correctional Investigator, said there is an urgent need to improve prison addiction treatment programs. Federal rehabilitation programs are not adequate to help drug users overcome deep emotional trauma, Miron said. They are also not sufficiently tailored to address the anguish of Indigenous offenders, who account for 32 per cent of those in custody, despite representing just five per cent of Canada's population. "If it's an Indigenous person, (healing) should come from an Indigenous perspective," she said. But Indigenous staff are scarce, accounting for just 10 per cent of total federal prison staff, and less in senior or therapeutic roles, according to the Office of the Correctional Investigator. Instead of rehabilitating, prisons are inadvertently pushing vulnerable people deeper into drug abuse, Miron said. "Many inmates are leaving prison worse off than before." Ian's ordeal confirms Miron's analysis. He didn't get therapy for his trauma, and prison staff either didn't see or ignored the depth of his addictions. "I don't think that prison

helped me in any rehabilitative manner," Ian said. "If it wasn't for prison, I would not have been as advanced a drug abuser." A federal harm reduction strategy, implemented across the prison system, to address the opioid epidemic, is working to help offenders like Ian access rehabilitation programs and avoid needle sharing, said Dr. Nader Sharifi, medical director of Correctional Health Services. In June 2024, Correctional Services Canada reported treating 3,420 inmates — one in six people in its care — with opioid agonist treatments that use medications to replace the opioid on which a person is dependent. Needle exchange programs and overdose prevention services are also in place. But as ever more inmates use ever more toxic drugs, the challenge increases significantly, Sharifi said. More inmates are using methamphetamines, including crystal meth, according to Roger Martin a manager of public health and epidemiology at Correctional Services Canada. Meth, like that which ensnared Ian, is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that doesn't respond to medical drug treatment. Harm reduction programs are fraught with problems, according to Star interviews. On one hand, the allure of accessing drugs may encourage inmates to enrol; on the other, the requirement to disclose substance use poses risks to struggling addicts. Although the programs themselves are not punitive, drug use outside of the programs is still punished. It's a circular conundrum. Inmates don't trust prison staff because some guards are inconsistent in reporting illicit substances and others profit from drug sales themselves, Ian said. "A lot of the (prison) employees govern that, supply that, turn a blind eye to that." Arrests of federal prison staff for drug trafficking are common, and there are very few checks on staff, according to Sen. Kim Pate, a national advocate for the prison population. "From what I hear from staff and prisoners alike, there is a huge incentive for staff to engage

in all kinds of things that are not appropriate, from exchanging sex for drugs or other things to the drug trade ... because of the amount of money that can be made off prisoners." But Chris McLauchlan, a senior project officer for preventative security and intelligence at Correctional Services Canada, said in a video interview that, statistically, staff drug trafficking is not a major area of concern. His department has been focusing on new approaches to detect and seize contraband that enters prisons through correspondence, visitors and criminal deliveries. Drones and "throwovers" — someone tossing illicit substances over the penitentiary wall — "represent a real threat to the institution just by virtue of the amount of drugs that are involved," McLauchlan said. Somehow between his daily cravings for illicit drugs and his struggle to stay clear of the gang enforcers, who stabbed and beat inmates with self-made spears and steel shanks, Ian fell in love. Lea-Ann had overcome her own battle with substance abuse and reached out to support Ian in prison at a friend's request. "He made me laugh," Lea-Ann said. "And he was smart." "We started talking every day." The 39-year-old mother of two, didn't expect to fall in love, she said, her feet curled up on the couch. But she was charmed by Ian's warmth and moved by the plans he had for changing his life. "I had never been loved before," Ian said. "After all my destructive relationships, the alcohol, the drugs, the funerals ... I finally found somebody that I could connect with ... that could support me mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally." But the night before Ian's parole, prison officials hit the couple with an unexpected twist. Instead of releasing him near his home in Saskatchewan, they were transporting him to a halfway house almost 600 kilometres away, in Winnipeg. If Lea-Ann's devotion was ever in doubt, Ian's release day would seal it. She packed a few belongings, rented a car and trailed the prison van for six

hours to settle near Ian in his new home. She hugged him at the guard shack as he left Saskatchewan Penitentiary. It was her first time meeting him in person. From that day on, Lea-Ann commuted from Winnipeg to her job as a heavy-machine operator in British Columbia three weeks a month and devoted her time off to Ian. Even so, Ian's recovery was still fraught with challenges. In his halfway house, on one of Winnipeg's most dangerous corners, Ian worried that Lea-Ann "was out of his league" and that he could not become "the person he wanted with his whole heart" to be. Trembling in the agony of withdrawal on his second day of freedom, he rushed to a harm reduction centre for help. But the clinic was at capacity, and staff told him to return another day. He didn't make it back the next day nor the day after that. He was lucky to survive. "Those few weeks post-release from custody are the highest risk period for overdose," according to medical director Sharifi. Ian relapsed and confessed to his parole officer, hoping for help finding treatment. The officer issued a warrant for his arrest. Many offenders are not equipped to be released, said Beaudin of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. Offenders succumb to drug addiction in prison, only to be released with the ultimatum: abstain or return to jail. A staggering 70 per cent of inmates released with drug addictions end up back behind bars within three years, according to recent research. "They made it very difficult for Ian," Beaudin said. Ian was sent to Stony Mountain, a penitentiary built to house rebels from Manitoba's Métis resistance, known as one of Canada's most dangerous for its high rate of suicides, homicides and violence. Placed in 23-and-a-half-hour segregation, he trembled alone in withdrawal. He longed for his mother and worried about his brother who had his own strug-



gles. He pined for Lea-Ann and the future he had lost. He was terrified.

"We are criminalizing the people who have been failed by every other system," said Pate, emphasizing that Indigenous people with a history of trauma and abuse are particularly penalized.

Most judges believe that prisons will heal the mental health issues and addictions that sent offenders to court in the first place, she said. But the reality is far from it.

"One of the things we have said in the Senate is that people with mental health issues should not be in prison. And I would say the same for people with addiction issues."

When Ian was released after three months at Stony Mountain, Lea-Ann was heavily pregnant with Galaxy.

This time his fear of returning to "stare at a six by nine concrete ceiling every night," was so strong it gave him the strength to hang onto the halfway house couch.

Today, Ian has left drugs behind and built a future by studying and qualifying as a community services and addiction worker. He helps other people avoid the dual tragedy of being punished instead of healed, only to be ensnared by even more potent drugs behind bars.

"I don't want to see people turned away. I don't want to see people going to jail (for addictions)," he said standing outside his halfway house.

Ian is also saving lives. One young Indigenous drug user, suicidal after being sexually trafficked and expelled from dozens of group homes, found solace in Ian's empathy and understanding. They speak almost every day.

"He can give her guidance because he's been through it himself," Lea-Ann said. "He has been through the struggles and come out of it on top."

But while Ian was fortunate to break free from the cycle of prison addiction, countless others remain trapped.

"There are so many people who wouldn't be incarcerated if they had help with their addictions," he said.

Tragically, his brother Conridge is one of them.

In July, he was arrested for drug and weapons offences and jammed into one of the crowded units of Saskatchewan Penitentiary.

From his panicked phone calls begging for money, Ian is certain that Conridge is caught in the destructive loop that he so narrowly escaped: Prison is fuelling his addiction instead of stamping it out, making it nearly impossible for him to rehabilitate and almost certain to reoffend.

As Ian advocates for change, Conridge serves as a reminder of the urgent need to reform a prison system overwhelmed by the nation's drug crisis.

Ian is emotional when he reflects on his redemption and Conridge's awaiting battle.

He yearns for Canadians to

recognize Conridge as someone in need of relief, not reprimand, treatment, not retribution. He longs for his brother to receive trauma care, emotional support and addictions treatment inside prison. Upon release, he will fight for Conridge to get the enduring community support he will need to live a life free from alcohol and drugs.

"If I can do this, brother, you gotta want to do this," Ian said staring straight ahead, conjuring the sibling he worries for.

"I love you, brother. I want more than anything to see you smile again."

**OPINION | 'CANADA HAS FULLY INVESTED IN PUNISHMENT': HOW WE CAN CHANGE A SYSTEM THAT PUTS TOO MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN JAIL**

**By Chyana Marie Sage**  
*Toronto Star, Nov 26, 2024*

Chyana Marie Sage is a Cree and Métis writer whose writing is a celebration of her culture. She's passionate about amplifying underrepresented voices and served as the Director of the Incarcerated Writers Initiative at Columbia. Her memoir, *SOFT AS BONES*, is forthcoming May 2025.

It's been nine years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 94 Calls to Action urging all levels of Canadian government to address the ongoing impact of residential schools. Progress has stalled. We asked three Indigenous writers how Canada can move the dial in the next year.

For over a year, I sat at my computer, transcribing the life stories of inmates. In listening to their histories and what happened in their lives before prison, my understanding of intergenerational trauma was coming full circle.

Thirteen years earlier, my father had been in the same position, in the same institution. He was in and out of incarceration throughout my childhood. We shared visits from cold metal seats, separated by plexiglass barriers.

In 2019, Sandra Bucerius invited me to become a research assistant for the University of Alberta Prison Project (UAPP), the largest study on Canadian prisons thus far. The UAPP findings show that 95 per cent of the 800 inmates interviewed were victims of physical and/or sexual abuse long before they were offenders — known as the victim/offender overlap. Of those interviewed, 40 per cent self-identified as Indigenous.

Us Indigenous people make up five per cent of the population in Canada, yet nearly one-third of us account for adult admissions to provincial, territorial and federal prisons. This mass incarceration of Indigenous peoples must be put in the context of our collectively shared trauma of schools and scoops, and how it continues to impact communities today.

Around the same time residential schools were implemented, the first large penitentiary was built in 1835. Not coincidentally, the RCMP was developed at the same time to control Indigenous populations. These systems emerged under John A. Macdonald, who expanded residential schools, all tools to segregate and "kill the Indian in the child." These histories, institutions, and colonial practices reverberate in the prison system today.

How can we move toward a system focused on healing — taking this history of trauma into account — instead of systems of punishment?

"Canada has fully invested in punishment. But correcting this epidemic requires a full commitment to healing and rehabilitation led by Indigenous peoples," said Justin Tetrault, senior researcher and project manager of the UAPP, who focuses on Indigenous peoples' experiences with incarceration.

Research has shown that healing systems lower recidivism rates — and isn't that the goal for all inmates?

The Calls To Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission narrow in on over-incarceration and call for funding for community sanctions and healing lodges as alternatives to federal institutions, which remain underfunded. To date, none have been fulfilled by the government, according to an annual report by the Yellowhead Institute. Since 2015, the problem has gotten worse — from 28 per cent to 40 per cent.

Reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prison requires multifold efforts; a constellation of services and supports working in tandem through release and pre-incarceration.

"Release is an option, but many of these people are extremely marginalized and re-enter society with no supports," Tetrault points out. "They struggle to get jobs. Others return to homelessness or abusive households. Many struggle with addictions and need spiritual help when they get out. We can release people from prison tomorrow, but if they don't have those supports, many return to the same circumstances that led them into the system."

As we approach the 10-year anniversary of the TRC's Call to Action, the government needs to work closely with nations and elders to remove all barriers that prevent restorative justice.

Interventions can happen in the court process. For instance, ensuring the Gladue Report is enacted each time an Indigenous person is sentenced. This pre-sentencing report considers an Indigenous offender's unique experiences regarding residential schools, child welfare removal, physical and sexual abuse, and more.

Call upon 35 support healing lodges — prison alternatives informed by Indigenous teachings that were originally spearheaded by elders and activists — as

opposed to federal institutions. They are not without flaw, but they prioritize healing over punishment. What could happen to the mass incarceration of Indigenous peoples if we had healing lodges for drug-related offences?

Consistent investment in Indigenous-led social services is crucial. Too many services face chronic funding instability, relying on small, short-term grants. "You have this cycle where these programs come and go," Tetrault said. Options circulate via word of mouth, but people are released to find, "that those programs don't exist anymore."

Post-incarceration care from services like these has been shown to lower recidivism rates. UAPP findings showed that some inmates will have basic supports in prison, such as elders they connect with, drug rehabilitation, and access to cultural supports, but when they are released, they're left with nothing.

Plenty of initiatives exist but languish without adequate funding. I have seen some success firsthand with UAPP, which is working to create a non-residence healing centre for inmates post release, though they are awaiting funding. And its research has led the local police service in Alberta to incorporate training on the victim/offender overlap in its recruitment and introduced victim services for incarcerated populations.

This is just one example spearheaded by elders, activists, nations and academics, but government investment is essential. The calls need to be answered.

As I learned of the victim/offender overlap through the voices of incarcerated people, memories of my father flashed before my eyes — stories of how his father was abusive, and how he was victimized sexually and physically as a young boy. In listening to the stories of those inmates, I was able to forgive my father for the harm he committed against our family. I was able to consider his life before me, and that allowed me to release the anger I held onto. As a victim, I was able to heal.

If we want to lower recidivism rates and rectify the mass incarceration of Indigenous people, this needs to be true for all victims. To bring our Indigenous kin home — and ensure they stay home.

*The Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of a residential school experience. Support is available at 1-866-925-4419.*

**THE CANADIAN PRISON PROGRAM THAT'S FAILING INCARCERATED MOMS**

*The Mother-Child Program was created to keep families together and reduce recidivism. But some participants say it set them up for failure.*

**By Simon Rolston and Charlotte Fertey**

*Chatelaine, October 11, 2024*  
AMANDA LEPINE WOKE at

5 a.m. sensing that something was wrong. House 8—her minimum-security living unit within the Fraser Valley Institution for Women, a federal prison in Abbotsford, B.C.—was silent and calm on that September 2020 day. Her three-month-old son, A.B., was sleeping quietly in his crib nearby. (Chatelaine has redacted her son's name to protect his identity.) Amanda had given birth to A.B. while incarcerated. Before he was born, and after considerable lobbying on her part, she received permission from a special governmental program for him to remain with her in prison.

Peeking into the crib, Amanda found A.B. labouring to breathe, his eyes and face grotesquely swollen. Though she knew it wasn't possible, she initially thought somebody had beaten her son.

She used the phone in her living unit to call the prison's main control. She tried to speak in a measured tone as she explained the situation to the guard: A.B. was having trouble breathing, and he needed immediate medical attention. The guard, seemingly uninterested, told her someone would be down in 20 minutes.

"It felt like my son was going to die," Amanda says. "I couldn't leave. I couldn't just walk out the gate. I couldn't just call a cab. I couldn't call an ambulance myself."

Amanda roused the women in her residential-style living unit. They took turns at the house phone trying to persuade guards to help. One of the women who was in House 8 with Amanda that morning says she considered running outside of the unit to attract the guards' attention. The front door was unlocked, but exiting the house without approval would have been a serious infraction with grave consequences. "You just feel so helpless," she says. "It's really sad that if I run out of the house, they're there within 30 seconds, right? But, if a baby needs help, it takes 20 minutes for somebody to saunter over."

Because calls from Amanda's living unit were restricted to specific numbers, she eventually phoned The Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba, where she knew someone would pick up that early in the morning. She asked them to call an ambulance.

Only once paramedics arrived at the prison gate and refused to leave without A.B.—another 20 minutes—did the guards relent and escort Amanda and her son to the hospital. From a doctor, Amanda learned that A.B. had an allergic reaction to the amoxicillin he was prescribed for an infection.

Amanda is one of more than 100 incarcerated women across Canada who have participated in the institutional Mother-Child Program (MCP), a government initiative intended to keep families together and reduce the chances of reoffence among participants. But those good intentions don't always translate to

positive outcomes. (When asked to comment on Amanda's case, a Correctional Service Canada spokesperson wrote, "As this is currently a matter before the [Canadian Human Rights] tribunal, CSC is unable to comment any further.")

Children who are approved for the residential component of the MCP can live with their mothers full-time in prison until their fifth birthday. Part-time residency is also available for some children until their seventh birthday, and older children can stay temporarily in private visiting units until they reach the age of majority.

Mothers are eligible to participate in the program if they're classified as minimum- or medium-security, if the relevant provincial child welfare agency supports their application, and if they have no mental-health conditions or criminal charges that make them unfit to care for a child. They must also have a designated inmate babysitter—another prisoner who has undergone requisite child-care training, including first aid, and is the only other person aside from the mother allowed to care for the child in prison—and an alternate caregiver who lives in the community outside the prison.

The MCP was fully implemented in 2001 as part of a progressive shift in women's corrections in Canada. A 1990 national report on the condition of women's prisons helped pave the way for the closure of Kingston's notorious Prison for Women (P4W), at the time Canada's only federal women's institution. In its place, six regional facilities around the country were opened between 1995 and 2004. All six had to implement the MCP and have the capacity to support women and their children behind bars.

In 2022, Public Safety Canada pointed to the MCP as a cutting-edge initiative with the potential to reduce recidivism among incarcerated women at a time when women's incarceration rates are rising at an alarming rate, especially among Indigenous women. It has indicated that the government would like to expand the program. And news reports about the MCP often laud it for being progressive.

But Amanda's struggle to care for her son illustrates what scholars and advocacy groups have long argued about the program: For all its potential, the MCP is often unable to support incarcerated mothers and even undermines their efforts to care for their children, ultimately setting them up for failure.

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AMANDA INITIALLY DIDN'T want to participate in the Mother-Child Program. She worried about her son's safety in prison. But she came to believe that

the alternative was worse: B.C.'s Ministry of Children and Family Development would remove A.B. from her care, she thought, and she would struggle to get him back after her release. As a Métis woman, she was wary of the ministry because of the legacy of state intervention in the lives of Indigenous and Métis families—from residential schools to the Sixties Scoop to today's over-representation of Indigenous and Métis children in the child-welfare system. She had personally experienced the traumatic forced removal of her three older children by the Manitoba Ministry of Child and Family Services (with one of her kids experiencing abuse after being removed from her care). Her fear had context. Prison was not an ideal environment for A.B., but at least she could raise him herself and keep him safe.

Amanda was thrilled to be pregnant, excited for the arrival of her son. She wanted another baby. "I wanted a chance to be a mother again," she says, "as the system took my first three from me and didn't allow me to be a parent."

A.B. was born five weeks early because Amanda had to be induced due to medical complications, including gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia and the fact that, at the age of 40, she was considered an older mother. Male correctional officers, she says, were present at the hospital throughout her labour and the birth, despite her request for an unescorted temporary absence for medical purposes. The guards refused to allow her doula in the room. Amanda alleges they threatened to handcuff and shackle her while she was lying in her hospital bed (to which a nurse objected). They occupied the seating area in Amanda's hospital room, playing loud videos on their phones. They insisted that the lights in her room remain on, always. Once, when she cried out in pain during labour, one of the male guards yelled at her to "be respectful."

After A.B.'s birth, Amanda alleges that the MCP proved dysfunctional, even damaging. She says her efforts to buy her son even the most basic necessities of life—including food—were met with bureaucratic mismanagement, incompetence and maliciousness.

Citing COVID-19 concerns, CSC suspended the escorted temporary absences that allowed Amanda to buy groceries for A.B., she says, insisting that she instead rely on the prison's dysfunctional Inmate Transfer of Funds process to have supplies ordered on her behalf.

Amanda's orders would often take weeks to process, and they would frequently be wrong, if they were filled at all. Diapers that she ordered arrived near-

ly a month later; by then, they were too small for A.B. Using the creaky machinery of prison bureaucracy to access formula was a nightmare. In the first three weeks of A.B.'s life, she had to ration his formula to maintain her dwindling supply, doling it out in small amounts rather than meeting his needs. She would often receive toddler rather than infant formula, or powdered rather than liquid formula.

Ultimately, because of the scarcity of formula and because she believed she had no alternative, Amanda started feeding A.B. cow's milk when he was around four months old, even though it is not medically recommended. A.B. developed issues with chronic constipation as a result. (Only emergency health care is provided to children who are part of the MCP, so there was no institutional intervention in A.B.'s case.)

Then, in November 2020, Amanda submitted a food order that included milk for five-month-old A.B. Unaware that the order wouldn't be filled for nearly four weeks, she waited. As the weeks ticked past and her milk supply dwindled, she started to panic. She desperately tried to source the milk: She placed multiple orders, pleaded with guards and asked for milk from the prison kitchen, all to no avail. Ultimately, A.B. went without milk for 24 hours. (As previously noted, CSC would not comment on this case.)

Looking back on the incident, Amanda is perplexed. Thinking of the guards and officials who refused to help her find milk to feed A.B., she says, "That was like, you have no compassion for a newborn. You have no empathy for me as a mom."

But correctional officers and other prison staff often have little incentive to be compassionate or empathetic; instead, security seems to be the overriding mandate of the prison. That's perhaps why guards weren't especially helpful when A.B. had trouble breathing and needed medical care. Based on the policies of the MCP, he was technically Amanda's responsibility, not the prison's, and so the guards demonstrated no compulsion to prioritize his needs. But that's also why the woman in Amanda's living unit considered breaking the rules in order to get attention for A.B.: She knew the guards would respond immediately to such an infraction.

Senator Kim Pate is a former executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS). She tells Chatelaine that CSC's focus on security overrides all other concerns in prisons: "Security always trumps therapy, programming, rehabilitation and community support. Security will always trump [everything].... It's the nature of the institution."

But CSC's overemphasis on security procedures often undermines the goals of the MCP. Some formerly incarcerated women tell Chatelaine that they were released from prison with little support from the institution and had to adhere to regulations that increased rather than decreased their chances of recidivating. One of the MCP's first participants, Bobbie Kidd, who lived with her infant son at P4W in 1993, says she and her son left prison with little institutional support even though she had spent years behind bars and had no resources on the outside. Because she was on parole, she was ineligible for welfare, so they had to survive on just \$28 a week. Driven by her desperation to care for her child and unable to find a job with a schedule that would also allow her to attend meetings with her parole officer, Bobbie applied for and received welfare, resulting in her eventual arrest and reimprisonment for fraud.

The MCP has been little used throughout its existence despite being flagged by the federal government as an important tool for reducing recidivism. Imprisoned mothers report being unable to participate in the program because of its overly strict eligibility criteria as well as limited space and delays in receiving approval.

According to Dr. Martha Paynter, who holds a PhD in nursing and is one of the few scholars to have studied the MCP, while the program is offered in six federal facilities in different regions around the country, many mothers are still incarcerated far from home. They and their families often don't have the resources to have someone live in the local community as an alternate caregiver. This is particularly true for Indigenous women from rural communities, especially northern ones.

Paynter also notes that the MCP is only available to mothers classified as minimum- or medium-security according to the commissioner's directive. But Indigenous women tend to receive higher security classifications. A Supreme Court ruling, a Senate report and a 2020 Globe and Mail investigation have all identified this as discriminatory. As a result, Indigenous mothers are often ineligible for the program, so their children are removed from them and are sometimes placed with provincial child-welfare agencies or with other family members. "I've seen women have their babies and they get taken away right at the birth," one imprisoned woman told Paynter in a Reproductive Justice Workshop in 2019. Forced separations can be deeply traumatic for mothers and their children, especially for Indigenous families suffering from a

colonial system that has historically targeted, traumatized and divided them.

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SO WHAT CAN be done to make the system better for incarcerated women and their children? And, as a result, better position those women for life on the outside—and achieve the federal government's goal of reducing recidivism in this country?

"Expediting [MCP] applications, supporting applicants in their assessments with Child and Family Services and addressing infrastructural issues such as space limitations" would help make the program more accessible, writes Paynter and her colleagues in one of the few academic studies of the program. But when asked about expanding the MCP, Paynter is hesitant. "It would be unacceptable for me to recommend expanding a program that we have no evidence of being beneficial for the child's well-being," she says. "I do not think we need to expand this program at all."

Pate takes a similar position. She adds that it's ultimately "impossible for prisons to be rehabilitative.... That doesn't mean we shouldn't insist on the principle of rehabilitation within the sentencing models," she cautions, "but we do have to rethink how that's done."

Emilie Coyle, the current executive director at CAEFS, says the organization recognizes that it's important for children to be with their mothers, and the MCP is currently the only option that makes that possible. But, echoing the sentiments of Paynter and Pate, Coyle emphasizes that prisons are not "therapeutic places" and says we should rely less on prisons and more on community options if we want to have a positive impact on the lives of mothers and children, recidivism rates and Canadian communities. In other words, for the MCP to meet its purpose of fostering positive mother-child relationships, the model of the program requires a reimagining rather than expansion—a move toward alternative forms of custody in the community that may allow for a supportive environment conducive to raising a child.

Today, Amanda and A.B. are outside prison, living in B.C. Amanda has filed a human rights complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on behalf of her son and is seeking compensation for CSC's failure to accommodate her needs throughout her pregnancy and childbirth and while she raised A.B. during her incarceration. But her complaint, which is set to be heard in December, also argues for systemic changes within Canada's prisons. "I'm trying to change the policy," she says, "so that they're actually helping with children's needs."

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## ONTARIO ELECTION 2025: WHERE DO THE PARTIES STAND ON CORRECTIONS, CRIME, POLICING, AND HARM REDUCTION?

With the Ontario provincial election approaching, it's important to know where each party stands on key justice issues. Here's a breakdown of their positions on corrections, policing, sentencing, bail, and harm reduction.

Look for notices that should be posted by your institutions on how to vote! **The deadline to apply to vote by mail is 6 PM (Eastern Time) on February 21, do this sooner though!**

Elections Ontario must receive your completed voting kit by 6 PM (Eastern Time) on February 27 to be counted.

### CORRECTIONAL ISSUES

**Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario (PC):** The PC government has committed to modernizing the province's correctional facilities. Their strategy includes constructing new institutions, such as the Greater Ottawa Correctional Complex in Kemptville, and upgrading existing ones like the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. These initiatives aim to address overcrowding, enhance staff and inmate safety, and improve rehabilitation programs.

**Ontario Liberal Party:** The Ontario Liberal Party has not released a specific platform on correctional issues for the upcoming election.

Historically, the party has emphasized rehabilitation and reintegration programs, focusing on reducing recidivism through education and mental health support. However, detailed policies for the current election cycle are pending.

**Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP):** The NDP has consistently advocated for a justice system that prioritizes rehabilitation over punishment. They support increased funding for mental health services within correctional facilities and emphasize the importance of addressing systemic issues, such as the overrepresentation of Indigenous and racialized individuals in the prison system. Specific proposals for the upcoming election have yet to be detailed.

**Green Party of Ontario:** The Green Party's platform focuses on social justice and rehabilitation. They advocate for restorative justice programs and emphasize the need for mental health and addiction services both within correctional facilities and as preventive measures. The party also highlights the importance of addressing root causes of crime, such as poverty and lack of education.

### SENTENCING AND BAIL

**Progressive Conservatives (PC):** Advocates for stricter bail and sentencing laws, including restoring mandatory minimums, eliminating bail for serious crimes, and requiring ankle monitors

for some bail conditions.

**Ontario Liberals:** No detailed platform yet, but historically support evidence-based criminal justice reforms focused on rehabilitation.

**Ontario NDP:** Opposes harsher sentencing and bail laws, warning they disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Supports restorative justice and community-based alternatives.

**Green Party:** Supports sentencing and bail policies that emphasize rehabilitation and address root causes of crime.

### POLICING AND LAWS

**PC:** Strongly supports police, opposes defunding, and has introduced new oversight measures. Focuses on hiring more officers and longer prison sentences.

**Liberals:** Historically emphasize community policing and transparency but haven't

released a specific platform yet.

**NDP:** Supports banning carding, expanding harm reduction services, and increasing police accountability.

**Greens:** Focus on police reform, restorative justice, and alternatives to traditional law enforcement.

### HARM REDUCTION AND THE OVERDOSE CRISIS

**PC:** Supports naloxone distribution but limits the number of supervised consumption sites. Has opposed expanding harm reduction services in the past.

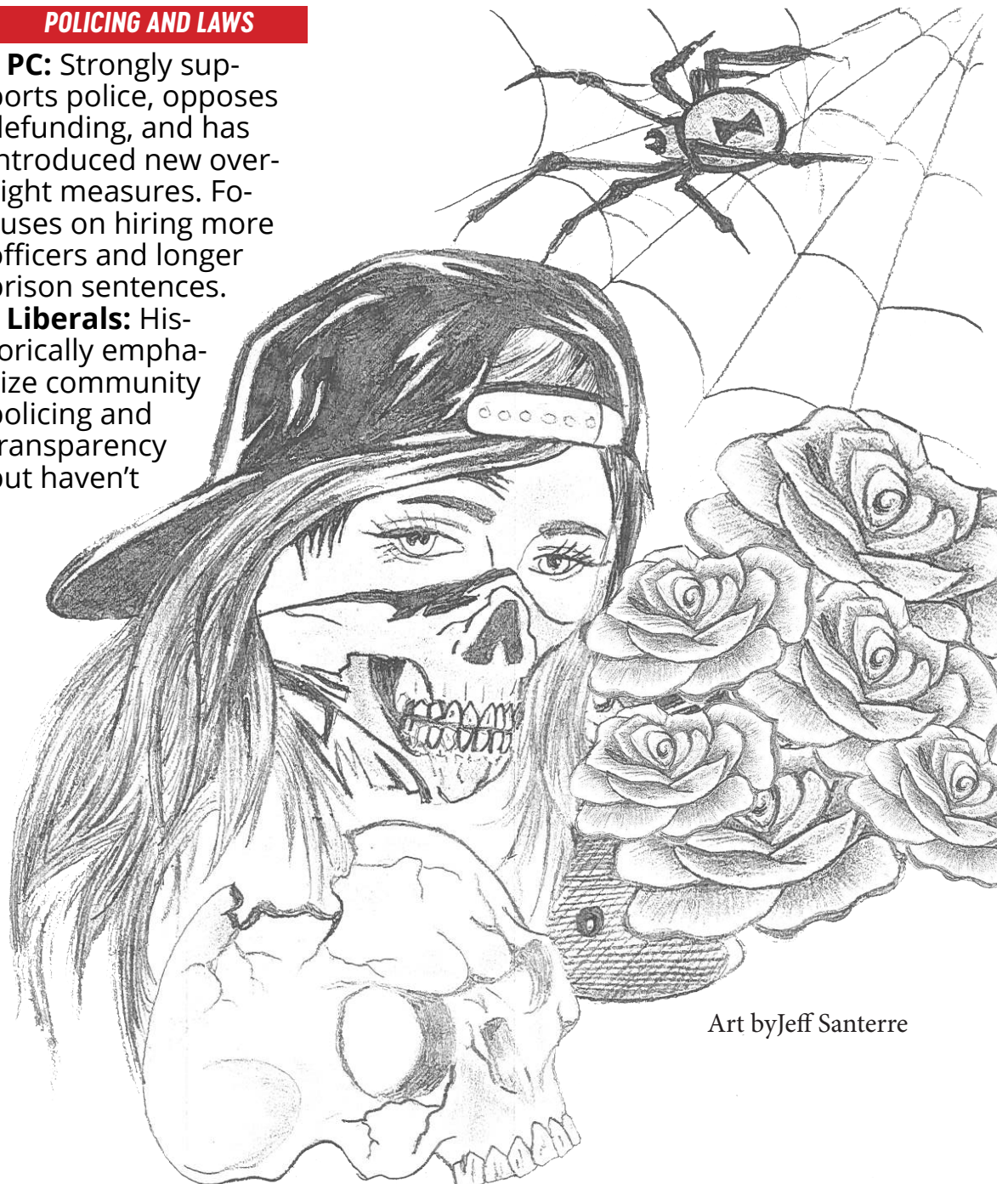
**Liberals:** Pledge to

expand supervised consumption sites, restart the opioid task force, and invest in mental health supports.

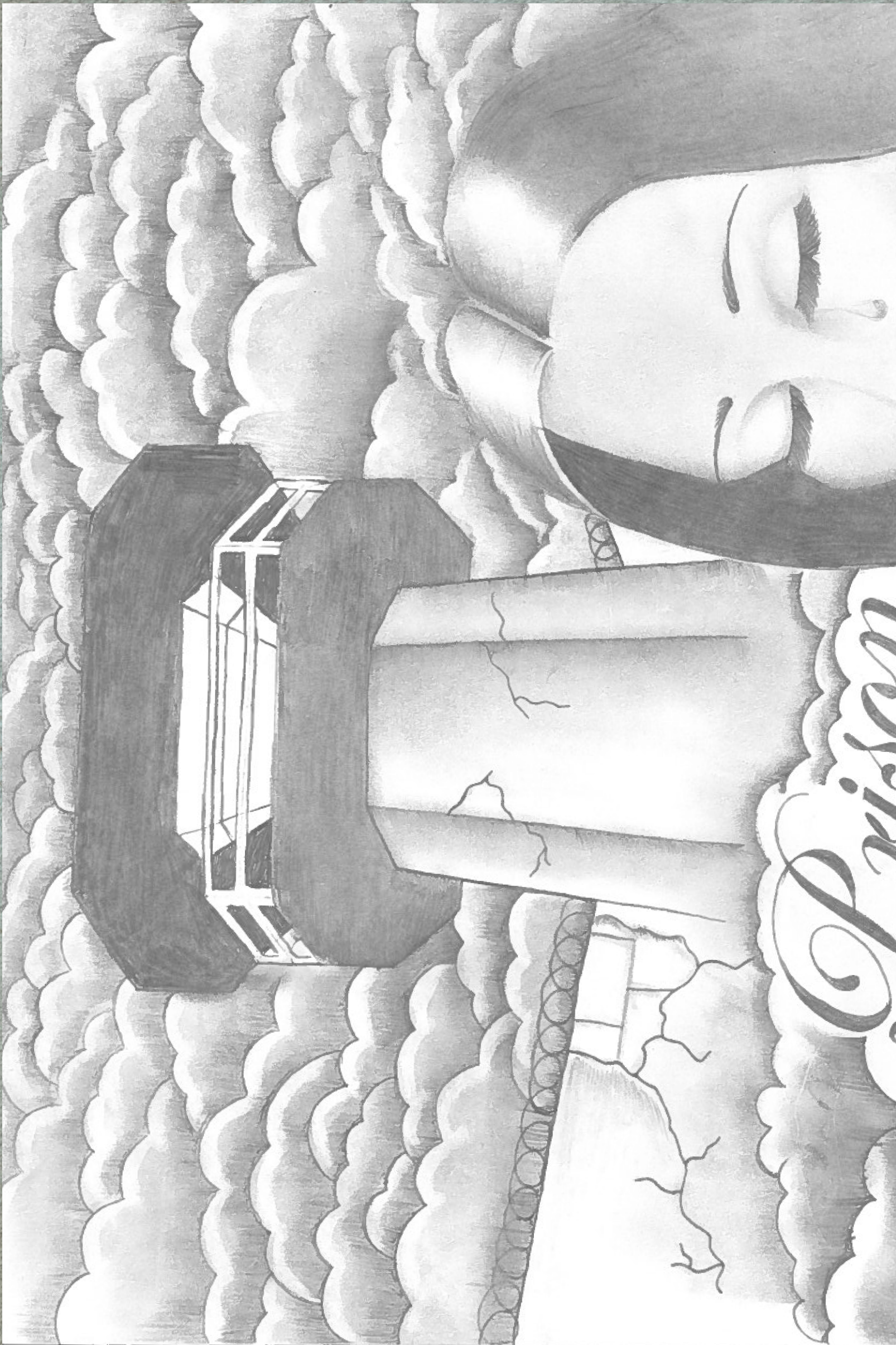
**NDP:** Would declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency, expand safe consumption sites, and push for drug decriminalization.

**Greens:** Support decriminalization, safe supply of opioids, and treating addiction as a health issue rather than a criminal one.

This election will shape Ontario's justice system for years to come. Make sure to stay informed and use your vote!



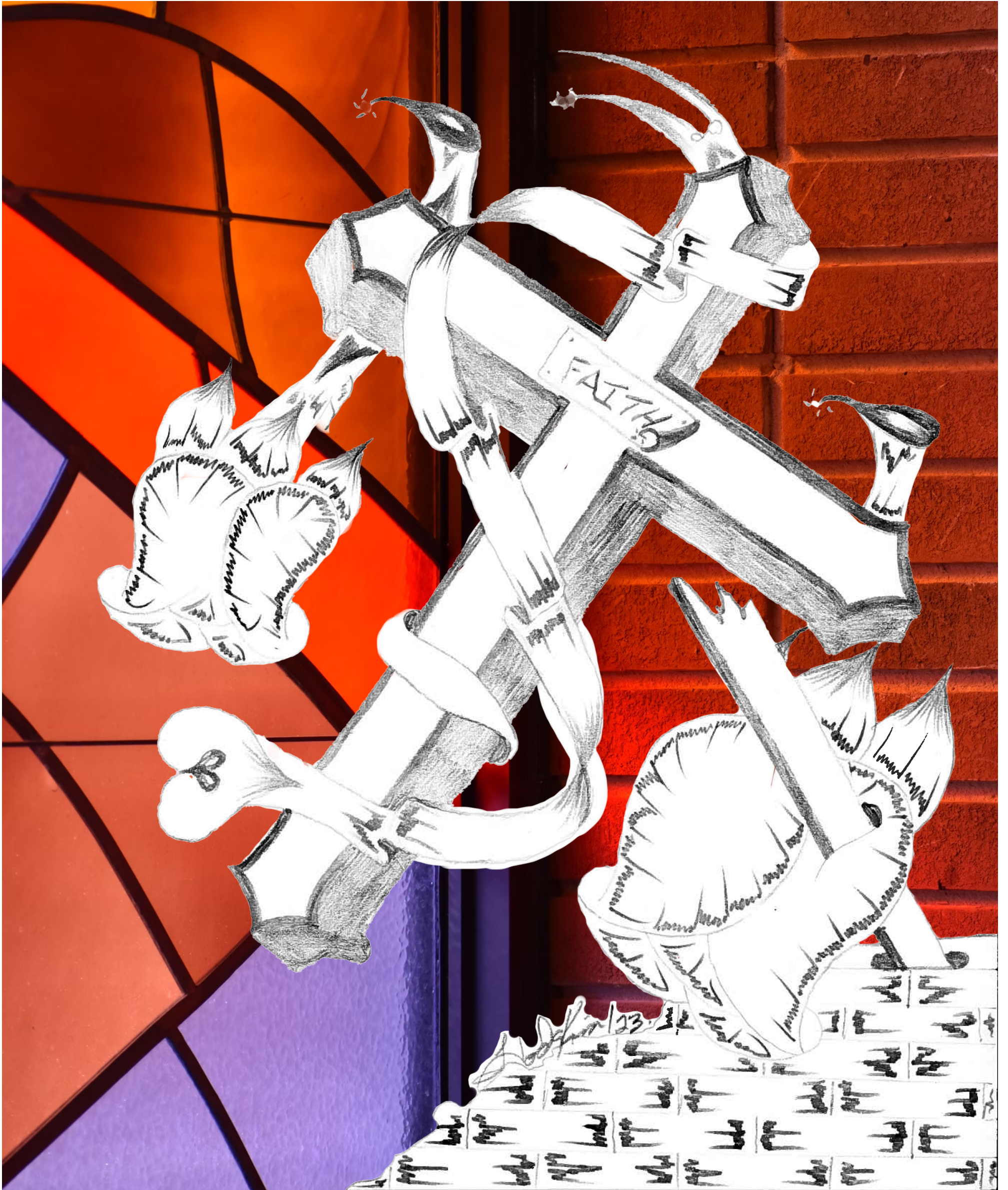
Art by Jeff Santerre

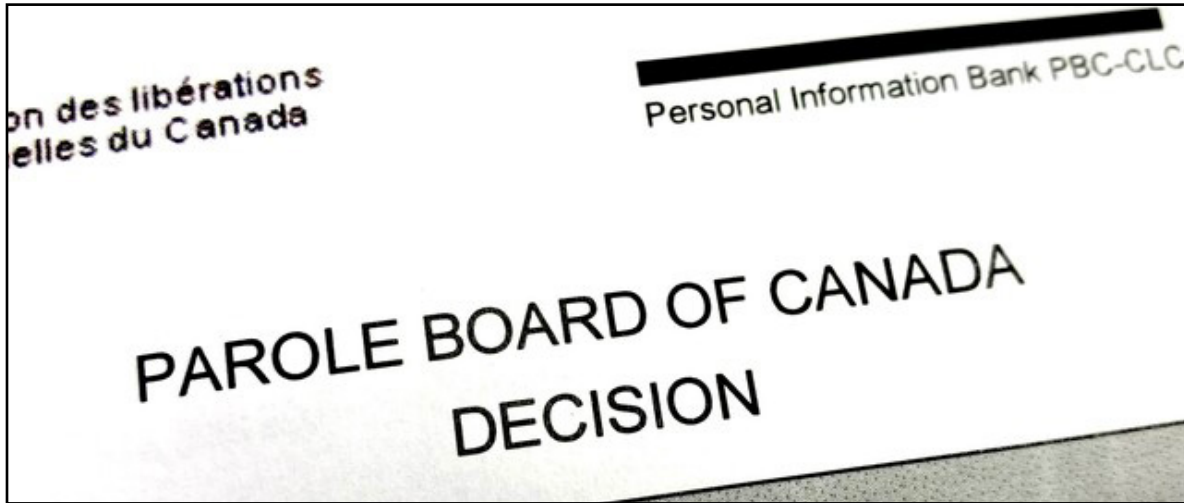






*D. Cavanagh*





**FEDERAL COURT'S CSC & PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA UNLAWFUL DETAINMENT**

By B.Brick

My statutory release, which should have occurred after serving two-thirds of my sentence, was unlawfully revoked. When the appeal court overturned my conviction and recalculated my release dates, I was already past my statutory release. By law, CSC (Correctional Service Canada) had only two working days to file and refer my case to the Parole Board of Canada (PBC). In such cases, the PBC must determine if specific criteria are met to justify holding a person past those two days. These criteria include the CSC Commissioner's belief that I am likely to commit a violent offense if released, as well as two other conditions—one related to drug offenses and another that is not applicable to my case.

However, my parole officer did not file or submit the referral until September 19, 2023, even though my recalculated dates were finalized on September 14, 2023. Legally, after two days, the PBC loses jurisdiction to hold up a statutory release, and no hearing should occur. Despite this, CSC continued to violate my rights. They denied my lawyer access to disclosure and failed to respond to calls from my lawyer and the John Howard Society, which is a breach of both law and procedure.

As a result, I have been unlawfully detained, and my liberty has been unjustly restricted by the CSC Commissioner, who has violated my Charter rights. This has been substantiated by the Canadian Public Legal Counsel program in Saskatchewan.

Although the PBC claims to operate independently of CSC, they refuse to address these breaches of my Charter rights or procedural fairness. This obstruction has resulted in unreasonable detention and ongoing violations of my rights. My lawyer has filed a judicial review, and the Federal Court will now address the matter to provide a remedy for this unlawful detention.

My legal advisor has stated: "In this case, the decision to refer Mr. Brick to the PBC for a detention hearing is inextricably linked to his right to statutory release and his liberty interest. When the referral was made, the statutory release was withheld without

lawful authority. The statutory authority was no longer vested in the commissioner. No other remedy is available in the CCRA (Corrections and Conditional Release Act) for this overholding."

Even when I am released, whether through the overturning of my detention or the expiration of my warrant in six months, I will never forget or forgive the injustices I have endured. I have filed grievance after grievance to leave a paper trail documenting the discrimination, racism, retaliation, and threats I've faced from CSC staff. These grievances are routinely denied because CSC relies on verbal harassment that amounts to my word against theirs.

I believe officers interacting with us on the range should be required to wear audio devices to record interactions and deter harassment. These recordings should also support grievance filings. The systemic and personal abuses I have experienced continue to be swept under the rug. I plan to find a lawyer to review everyone's grievance files to uncover patterns of abusive conduct and breaches of our rights.

It is clear that CSC and PBC have colluded, despite the PBC's mandate to operate independently. If you want to follow my federal judicial review, the case is against the Attorney General of Canada. You can ask your local law society for the court file number: T-1035-24 in Federal Court.

I have served time in Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. Thank you, and good luck.

*Editor's Note: Cell Count does not take a stance on the merits of people's court cases. However, we publish articles like this to inform the public about people's experiences with the legal system and provide*

*insight into systemic issues that impact those who are criminalized and incarcerated.*

**ZAMMIT COVER ARTICLE**

cont'd from cover

but let me tell you this: I've been in this broken system since the 1980s. I've tried to run from it—Nova Scotia, Winnipeg, Battlford, Edmonton, Vancouver—but I can say with certainty that The Sanctuary is the brightest star in the sky. No non-profit or for-profit organization holds a candle to the team at 25 Charles St. E.

When COVID hit and Toronto went into lockdown, the city descended into chaos. The government's pathetic attempts at helping the homeless failed miserably. Hotels turned people away, shelters prioritized refugees, and encampments were under constant threat of eviction—just like today. But The Sanctuary? They stepped up.

They opened their backyard, fenced it in, and locked it to create a safe encampment for their regular clientele, protecting them even from Toronto's most dangerous street gang—the Toronto Police Service. Staff and volunteers went out of their way to ensure safety, even requiring police to get warrants to enter. At the time, I was staying at The Novotel on The Esplanade in a room with a king-sized bed and a 62-inch TV, but I was robbed and hot-shotted seven times. I left and moved to The

**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!



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Sanctuary—and it never happened again. That's family.

The last three years have been hell for me. I lost my mom—my entire world. I spent over a year in hospitals: St. Mike's, St. Joe's, Mount Sinai, Scarborough Grace, and Michael Garron. I nearly lost my right leg and arm, ended up with my knee and elbow removed due to MRSA, and went through seven surgeries. I've been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Buerger's disease, and Grand Mal seizures. Now, I'm in a wheelchair full-time and have had a hip replacement.

As if that wasn't enough, my sister, brother, and uncles banned me from my mom's funeral. I never got to lay my mother—my best friend—to rest. Not a single family member visited me during my year in the hospital.

But you know who did? Dave, Deborah, and Ricca from The Sanctuary. Once a week, without fail, they came to see me—even when I was in isolation. They brought me cigarettes, a lighter, Snickers bars, a Dr. Pepper, and a smudge kit so I could smudge. That's the kind of love and loyalty you'll find at The Sanctuary—something no other organization could even dream of offering.

In closing, just remember: the streets of Toronto are lonely, dangerous, and cold. You never know who or what you can trust. But if you're fresh out and struggling, go to The Sanctuary at 25 Charles St. E. Ask for Simon, Ricca, Andrea, Rikki, Dr. Wong—or just knock on the door and ask for help. That's what they're there for. Hell, ask for South Side—I'll probably be around somewhere.

These are real people with real hearts. These people are true family. See you there.

**ASK NOT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR CSC BUT WHAT CSC CAN DO FOR YOU---OR YOUR LOVED ONES....**

By Tanya Bogdanovich

Is someone in your life without a criminal record wondering how to make ends meet in today's economy? Are they worried about encumbering student loans and extensive years in the post-secondary education system? Are they worried about "serious decisions" and "life altering repercussions"? Or costing companies A LOT of money with potential errors? Well, worry no more! The answer to all these concerns can be found in one place- as a guard at CSC!

Sure, once known as CPS (Canadian Penitentiary System) your future company had a bad rep for rapes, beatings, riots, murders and other "misgivings" but nothing a few letter changes can't fix! Don't worry- it all still happens just under a new letter system, also known as your potential new company- CSC (Corrections Service Canada).

Did you or someone you know make a decision or "bad call" and someone died? Was it video recorded? Worry not societal applicants- if this happens in CSC

not only can you keep your job, but you can also get a raise, a better office, access to A/C, and you don't even have to change where you work! No relocation for you or your family my good applicant. Not even when a coroner deems it a homicide and people can watch your taxpayer funded employment murder on social media.

**NOW THAT'S A UNION!**

And if you start to hate that itchy uniform just spin the CSC Wheel of Employment and you may just land on street clothes-maybe Parole Guy/Girl! Where your ability to negatively impact the freedom of others, costing other taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in a single institution, will not require any accountability because your friends on the "inside" (not us) will cover for you. Where else can you and your pals cost society millions annually due to workplace negligence, and your company just looks the other way? Anywhere else, a citizen, and you would be - UNEMPLOYED! NOT AT CSC! "How does this all happen?" you may ask. Well mostly because the average struggling individual outside is too busy trying to find affordable housing and food, so they have NO IDEA.

That is the beauty of working for CSC.

But wait! You said non-accountability homicides, and murders, but there is NO SEGREGATION due to all of this in the "past". Segregation has been abolished! Oh, don't make me laugh society. Just like CPS into CSC, SEG has simply been rebranded. Some new paint, same old ghosts, and if there was a rare soul there, some staff trauma from watching these murders, then add in some new letters and- VOILA you have the S.I.U! Let the unnecessary deaths and murder continue! If you are thinking that some of this might not be right, do not fear! When you work for CSC, some of the others will show you the "right way" by wailing your journey with the blue wall, or intimidating (disguised as "encouraging") and isolating you until you fall in line with them!

So if you want more money than your neighbours, to laugh when complaints get filed against you (until there's just too many-be careful or you might just have to do a training about "sensitivity" and once in a blue moon you may see some actual repercussions) and want blood red hands without winding up living in prison, along with a union that puts the Teamster sof Buggy Segal and Al Capones days to shame, apply to CSC!

CSC where even "legal murderers" can pay off those pesky student loans in no time!

\*\*Disclaimer--it helps to gain employment at a CSC institution if you have a family member, or family members, who are already employed within CSC to secure your employment. CSC- your future of unaccountability and the deaths and withholding of the future of others awaits!\*\*\*

**TIME FOR CHANGE: ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF RACISM AND LATERAL VIOLENCE IN FEDERAL PRISONS**

**Name and institution withheld for author's protection**

I am writing regarding the lateral violence and systemic racism here at a medium security federal prison (editors note: Lateral violence is aggressive behaviour that occurs when people in a group direct their anger and rage at each other, rather than at the oppressors of their community. It can include: gossiping, personal put downs, jealousy, bullying, shaming, social exclusion or shunning, family feuding, organizational conflict and physical violence). My story is one of many among Indigenous Persons who are incarcerated in the prisons ran by Correctional Services Canada. My opinion is that people continue to speak behind closed doors about the problem and nothing gets done about it. For example, if one were to read the over 200-page Office of the Correctional Investigator report you would be made aware that C.S.C. has done nothing since the 1980's to rectify the racial issues that plague not only the Indigenous populations but all minorities. As I am Indigenous, the latter does not personally affect me, yet is still very concerning to say the least. If one were to take the time you will learn that regardless of your race the issues are very similar. However, it is only the Indigenous, Inuit and Métis who have a written mandate called The Commissioner's Directives 702. These so-called policies were written quite some time ago and yet are only followed when they benefit those in administration or as we call them, "The higher ups."

So you are saying, "I've heard all of this crap before!" I currently have a Federal Court Case, and a Human Rights Complaint filed, therefore I shouldn't be giving details of my story as to not jeopardize them, nor do I want to give any ammunition to my facility's admin that would result in my immediate transfer due to security. What I am going to say is this: Sisters and Brothers, now is the time for change! Stand up for your rights. If you don't know what they are then ask someone or read up on them. Information is free, you just need to put in the effort. Keep making complaints and grievances any time you or your rights are violated by Correctional Services Canada, and/or its sub. contractors. My prayers are with you all! I truly believe in my heart that the more of us who take a stand and tell C.S.C., "We're done taking your shit," the more we can make a change not only for ourselves, but also those who are yet to come.

**WHY CANADA NEEDS JUDICIAL REMEDIES FOR OPPRESSIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES**

*Bill S-230, stalled at third reading in the Red Chamber, offers a glimmer of hope for people like Joey Toutsaint.*

**BY JENNIFER METCALFE, *The Hill Times*, Opinion, November 27, 2024**

Bill S-230, Providing Alternatives to Isolation and Ensuring Oversight and Remedies in the Correctional System Act, was introduced three years ago in the Senate. If passed, the bill, known as Tona's Law, would give the courts jurisdiction to reduce a sentence if the Correctional Service Canada's (CSC) treatment of someone was "unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory," among other grounds.

The case of Joey Toutsaint illustrates why this law is needed.

Joey is a Dene man from Black Lake First Nation in northern Saskatchewan. He was raised on the land, where his grandfather taught him to trap. When he was 15, his mother and grandfather died within three months of each other, and that's when his troubles with the law began.

Jennifer Metcalfe is the executive director of Prisoners' Legal Services. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Metcalfe

Joey received several charges including shooting a pellet gun at a pedestrian (who suffered a bruise to his hand), uttering a threat, and breaking and entering. He did time in the North Battleford Youth Centre. Joey only spoke Dene before teaching himself English while in youth custody.

At 16, Joey was beaten by officers, put in the notorious restraint device called the Wrap, and spent long stretches in isolation while in youth custody. A doctor raised concerns about Joey's mental health when he witnessed guards entering Joey's room with a shield and taking him down. The doctor said: "A few minutes later I heard him crying and moaning with pain while he was in the seclusion room." A youth court judge later prohibited Joey's return to North Battleford because of the abuse he suffered there.

At 18, Joey was sentenced to adult custody for a series of relatively minor offences, the most serious of which were for punching someone and for robbing someone of \$20 with a knife. He was given a three-year sentence followed by a five-year long-term supervision order, which was appealed by the Saskatchewan Crown resulting in a dangerous offender

designation. His appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada was denied. Joey then racked up several charges from inside prison that involved altercations with correctional officers.

Joey is now 37, and almost all of his adult life has been spent in prison, mostly in solitary confinement—a practice the UN defines as torture. Joey spent 2,180 days in segregation and then hundreds of days in Structured Intervention Units, which replaced segregation. Joey experiences all the normal responses to isolation, including life threatening self-harm. Officers have used violent force against Joey countless times. Joey reports that some officers have told him to kill himself and have given him razor blades to do so. Joey always has access to razors, even when he is held in isolation under suicide watch.

Even when Joey is held in a CSC "treatment centre," he experiences isolation and violence from officers. In April, Joey was assaulted by an officer at a CSC treatment centre. He reports that he confronted the officer for calling him a "retard," and said the officer slammed Joey against the wall, resulting in a broken tooth and cut to his head, requiring 10 stitches.

Prisoners' Legal Services has used access to information laws to request 53 videos documenting use-of-force against Joey, and filed a grievance in this case. CSC's response noted Joey's injuries and the officer's actions, but ultimately denied the grievance, saying the footage has no audio to confirm what the officer said and noted Joey's "aggressive" behaviour.

Joey is diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of his experiences in prison. He will not be able

hope for people like Joey.

Joey's story is not unlike many Indigenous people in prison who end up trapped in maximum security because of behavior caused by the normal symptoms of PTSD. Canada needs judicial oversight to ensure that its prisons are not places where the state continues its history of oppressing Indigenous people.

Bill S-230 is currently stalled at third reading in the Senate, due to concerns raised by some Senators about the potential cost of the bill, estimated at \$6.8-million annually, which is less than one quarter of one per cent of CSC's annual budget.

The annual cost of imprisoning people in maximum security prisons is \$231,339 per person. If Bill S-230 effectively ended CSC's warehousing of Indigenous people at an earlier stage of incarceration, the cost savings would be significant.

If the bill resulted in three people being removed from maximum security prisons 10 years earlier each year, this would equal approximately the cost estimate of enacting the bill.

Of course there would be costs to provide treatment for people who have developed PTSD in prison. Investing in Indigenous-led treatment would move Canada toward truth and reconciliation and prevent future harms, resulting in even more cost savings. The cost of allowing Canada to continue to imprison people in Joey's circumstances is immeasurable.

Jennifer Metcalfe is the executive director of Prisoners' Legal Services, a legal aid clinic for people in federal and provincial prisons in BC, and is Joey Toutsaint's lawyer.

*The Hill Times*



**RECOVERY BY MAIL**

WISRCanada offers free Twelve Step-based recovery to inmates who are troubled by compulsive or risky sexual behaviour through our "Writing to Inmates Seeking Recovery" program. We start by providing recovery literature to inmates. Next we connect individual inmates with a volunteer letter writer who has worked the Twelve Steps themselves and are experienced sponsors.

**Supporters, friends, and family members can contact us at [WISRCanada@gmail.com](mailto:WISRCanada@gmail.com) or visit our website at [saatoronto.org/prison-outreach](http://saatoronto.org/prison-outreach)**

**Inmates can write to us at:**

**WISRCanada  
PO Box 75096  
20 Bloor St E  
Toronto ON M4W 3T3**



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**Convict Lives Matter**

JACOB DAVID

“Gargling Chainsaws”

Look out! The sky’s pulling its eyes out  
from under you, and the silly putting clouds pray together:  
I broke the law that said observation changes everything,

When the swarm-swamp of a rusty breath hogties goose-pimple soot dry...  
beneath lungs hanging on their last breath,  
swinging from the thorns of a choked-up grapevine...  
waltzing in rhyme and reason’s sand-mansion...

I’ll cut off a mile’s laughing tongue and tap-dance on fireworks;  
someone’s gotta slice open the cloud’s ribcage  
to grin at the sun.

“Hanging Butterfly”

After I shaved the hair off a 300-lb. butterfly  
I rocked half a dozen supernovas to a cradled sleep  
and benched the power of thought  
A ceremonious chaos of shopping carts, supernovas,  
hospital bills and shredded boxes of Plan B  
boiling over the cauldron sea;  
squirting mustard machines  
Content never to yawn at the sun outside  
Or the moon sharpening its pick-axe--  
For the butterfly, woozy, who hangs its drooling head--  
SnORES on my tongue, draining me.

“The Hunger”

Tumbling head over ankles with impatience  
up and down the red carpet’s spine,  
I’m Melville-deep in synagogue gutters,  
dying to surf myself sane.

In the intimate sphere of incarceration,  
a serrated blur squeezes dry,  
the sanded-down rhythms of a vacant heat:  
BA-bum, BA-bum, dum-DA dum DA, DA-bum.  
Ho-oh.

And for once  
in our slithering,  
eating-itself again corridors...  
I forget who I am.

“The universe is illiterate”

With a salamander smile and a jackhammer kiss,  
I threw plastic-wrapped promises in a tube at tomorrow—and doggy-paddled  
in a washing machine sea... and ran out of things to do, so I counted the raindrops for fun,  
and waved to people who had no more thoughts to think  
in this enormous oven of asthmatic chaos—wishing  
to my soul that I could kiss the lips of the poem I’m thinking of.

ABDUL JABBAR

Life

Life is a game.  
Score good deeds.  
Watch out for sins.  
Don’t foul out.  
Don’t catch penalties.  
Do good and believe.  
Patience is key.  
You will have good days.  
And bad.  
Stay constant.  
Stay steadfast.  
Greet people with a smile.  
Good manners.  
Are worth their weight in gold.  
This is the game of life.  
It is temporary.  
It will end.  
But your final score.  
Is forever.  
On the scoreboard of destiny.

May Allah accept our good deeds.  
And grant us a high score.  
Gardens and Rivers.  
Palaces and Treasure.  
Silver and Gold.  
Be patient.  
Patience is worth the reward.  
You will win.  
Insha’Allah.

All I Need

All I Need is Allah.  
Allah is Enough.  
He is All I Need.  
He Provides for Me.  
He Keeps Me Safe.  
He Cures Me When I Am Sick.  
He is My Lord.  
And I Love Him.  
He is All that I Need.  
He is Enough.  
He Takes Care of My Needs.  
I Don’t Need the World.  
I Don’t Need Things.  
I Don’t Need a Fancy Lifestyle.  
I Don’t Need Bling.  
I Don’t Need a Mansion.  
I Only Need Allah.  
He is Taking Care of Me.  
He is All that I Need.  
For Me is Patience.  
For Me is Knowledge.  
For Me is Wisdom.  
That is Better than Gold.  
For Me is Faith.  
It Keeps Me Strong.  
May Allah Increase Me in Faith.  
May Allah Increase Me in Strength.  
I Love Allah.  
He is All that I Need.

PhD

At night I feel like a PhD.  
Delving into topics.  
Trying to solve mysteries.  
Mysteries of my mind.  
Who I really am.  
What I really feel.  
Different sides of me.  
Tell different tales.  
Who can understand me.  
Except the one behind the veil.  
My true master.

He knows me inside and out.  
There is nothing I can hide from Him.  
In the dead of the night.  
I’m writing my PhD Thesis.  
Only Allah can pick up the pieces.  
Of my Life.  
And make something new.  
Make something whole.  
Make me whole again.  
I am Broken.  
Please fix me.  
Ya Allah!  
Please fix me.  
Make me Better than.  
The Man I used to be.  
And The Man I am.  
Ya Allah.  
Only you can fix me.

Mercy

Allah is The Most Merciful.  
He Loves to Forgive.  
So, if you Fall and Trip.  
Don’t Lose Hope.  
Just Turn Back to Him.  
Good Deeds Erase Sins.  
Give in Charity.  
Smile.  
Greet a Brother.  
You haven’t Greeted in a While.  
Just Do Good.  
And Keep Doing Good.  
Never Lose Hope.  
Never Let the Devil Win.  
Your Life is Worth Something.  
You are Valuable.  
Don’t Let the Devil Trick You.  
With his Lies.  
You are a Winner.  
As Long as You Believe.  
You are a Winner.  
You are Winning.  
Prison isn’t your Home.  
It is Only a Test.  
Your True Home is Paradise.  
A Never-Ending Gift.  
So Be Patient.  
God is With the Patient.  
Allah is with You.

SIC CHICK

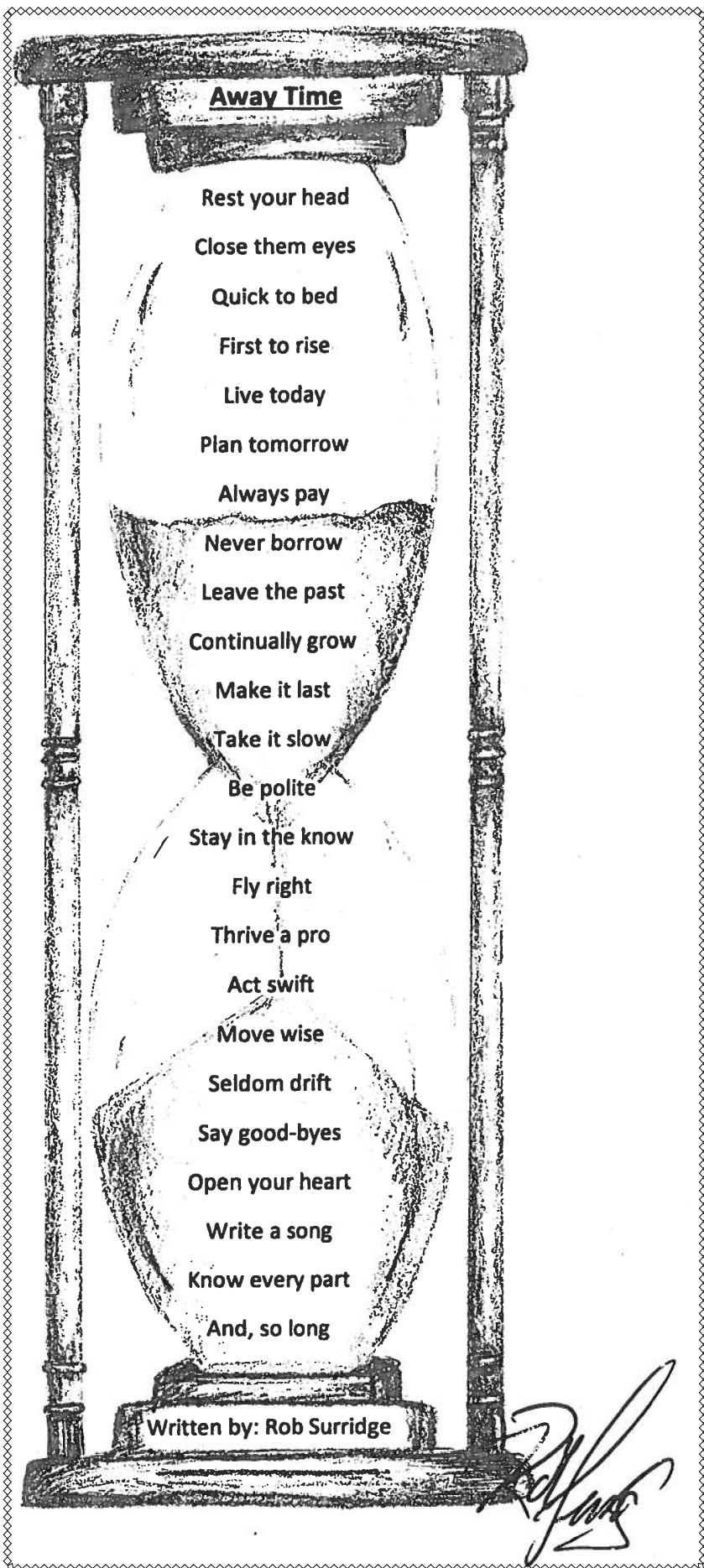
On Rogue Electrode

On rogue electrode!  
Where warriors once honed Homs  
and swords  
To specialized technique.  
On rogue electrode!  
Silver jackets encased  
Slugs of sparkling rouge  
Splashing the lips  
Of sublime atrocity.  
On rouge electrode!  
The beginning millennium

Feminist refines herself  
To precision points of chunk  
Grinding  
Asphalt  
To dust in  
a quikk!  
Stiff!  
Swiv!  
Elling!  
Strut!  
On rogue electrode!  
Tribes of urban child meet  
On post-apocalyptic beaches

Building sparks in reference to empty  
prophecy .....  
On rogue electrode!  
Bubble-gum fashions  
Plastic logos  
Onto gasmask reconstruct;  
(functional back-packs not included.)  
On rogue electrode  
Primitive snake bytes left-side cortical  
to:  
-scrambled signals  
- incoming casualties  
-radar anomalies





-and propaganda loudspeakers.  
On rogue electrode, multi-lens scope:  
i) infrared border-town  
ii) thermal sentinels, and  
iii) body-heat bawdy-house recoups:  
-H2O  
-Hardtack rations  
-and clean diesel  
Keeps me moving  
Toward the last propulsion  
And the supposed coordinates  
Of electrodes.






FEDERAL ELECTION #ItsOurVote

### Instruction Card


For Incarcerated Electors at a Federal Election

- 1  **Check in with the election officers.**  
You will receive an outer envelope with a declaration. Read, sign and date the declaration. You will also receive a plain inner envelope, a special ballot and the list of candidates for your riding.
- 2  **Go behind the voting screen.**
- 3  **On your ballot, clearly print the name of your chosen candidate.**  
If there are two or more candidates with the same name, also print the name of the candidate's political party. Do not print only the name of the political party.
- 4  **Fold your ballot to keep your vote secret.**

**Bring everything back to the election officers and, in their presence:**


- 5  **First, put the folded ballot in the inner envelope (A) and seal it.**
- 6  **Place the inner envelope (A) in the outer envelope (B). Sign and date the declaration on the outer envelope (B).**  
Declarations that are not signed will be set aside, and your vote will not be counted.
- 7  **Put the sealed outer envelope (B) in the ballot box.**  
All votes in the ballot box will be returned to Elections Canada at the end of the day to be counted.

**If you accidentally spoil your ballot**  
You must return the ballot to the election officers who will give you another one. This can only be done once.



*It's Our Vote*

Visit [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) for the official information you need to vote  
1-800-463-6868 | [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) | TTY 1-800-361-8935



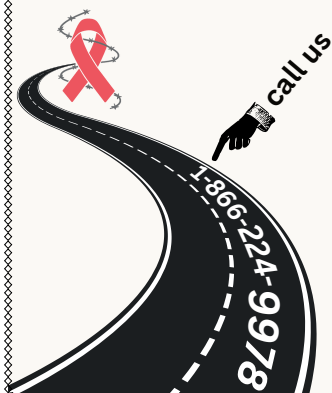
### PASAN IN-REACH SCHEDULE

**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 penal service (other than ours) and would like to share it with other Cell Count subscribers, please write to us or call. We can list it in a future issue.

### MOVING?

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

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

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

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

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

Women are the fastest-growing

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

### CELL COUNT AT BATH INSTITUTION

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

### CONTACT NUMBERS

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

### NEXT CELL COUNT DEADLINE

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

### CELL COUNT EVALUATIONS

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

### CELL COUNT PEER LIAISONS

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

ATTENTION PRISON FAMILIES!!!!



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## EAST COAST

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 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**

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 FN, 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 411 306-373-7766

**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  
NOM 1C0  
Aftercare support: 1-888-842-6898

## PRISONER SPECIFIC

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

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

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

**SMAAC. org**  
The Saskatchewan-Manitoba-Alberta Abolition Coalition is an alliance of groups from

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

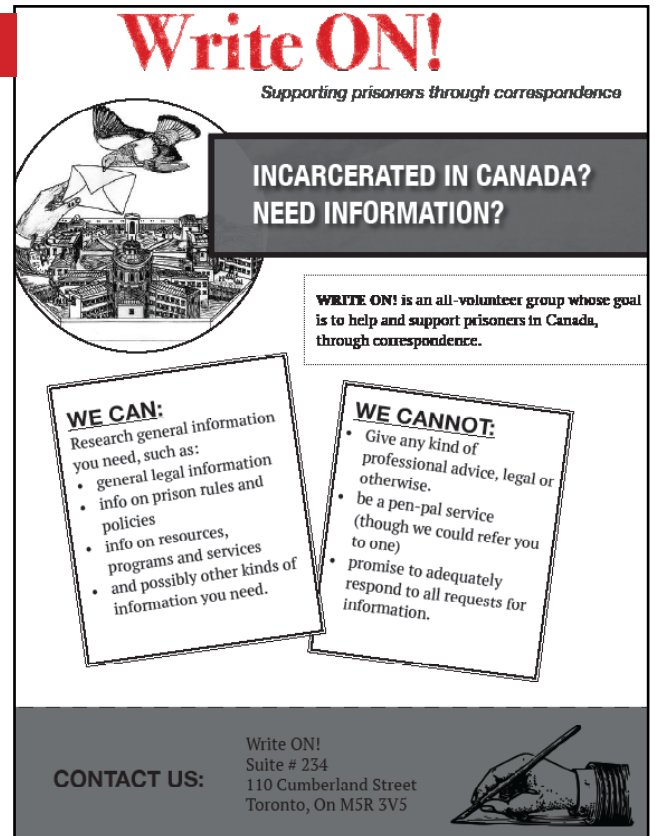
## PRISON BOOK PROGRAMS

**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)**



**Write ON!**  
Supporting prisoners through correspondence

**INCARCERATED IN CANADA? NEED INFORMATION?**

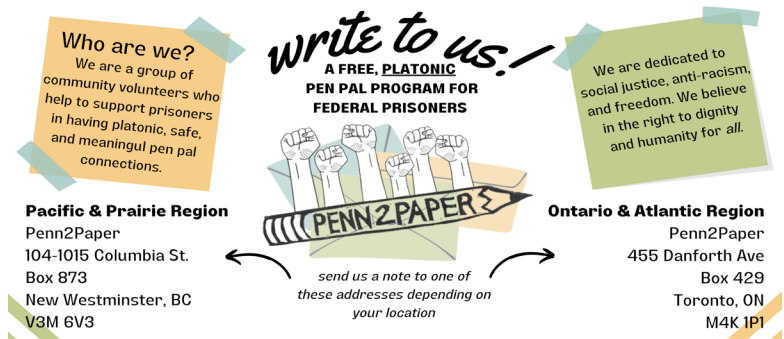
**WE CAN:**  
Research general information you need, such as:

- 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.

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



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

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

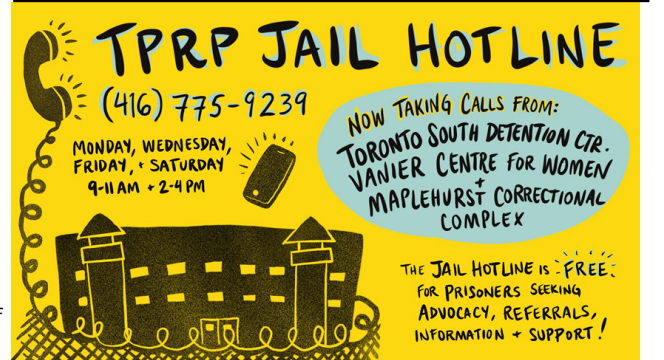
We are dedicated to social justice, anti-racism, and freedom. We believe in the right to dignity and humanity for all.

**Penn2Paper**

**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



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

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

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

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