

# CELL COUNT

YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

CONNECTIONS - MARCH 2026 - #111

## BREAK-IN AT GRAND VALLEY INSTITUTION

By K80 Romard & Tanya Bogdanovich

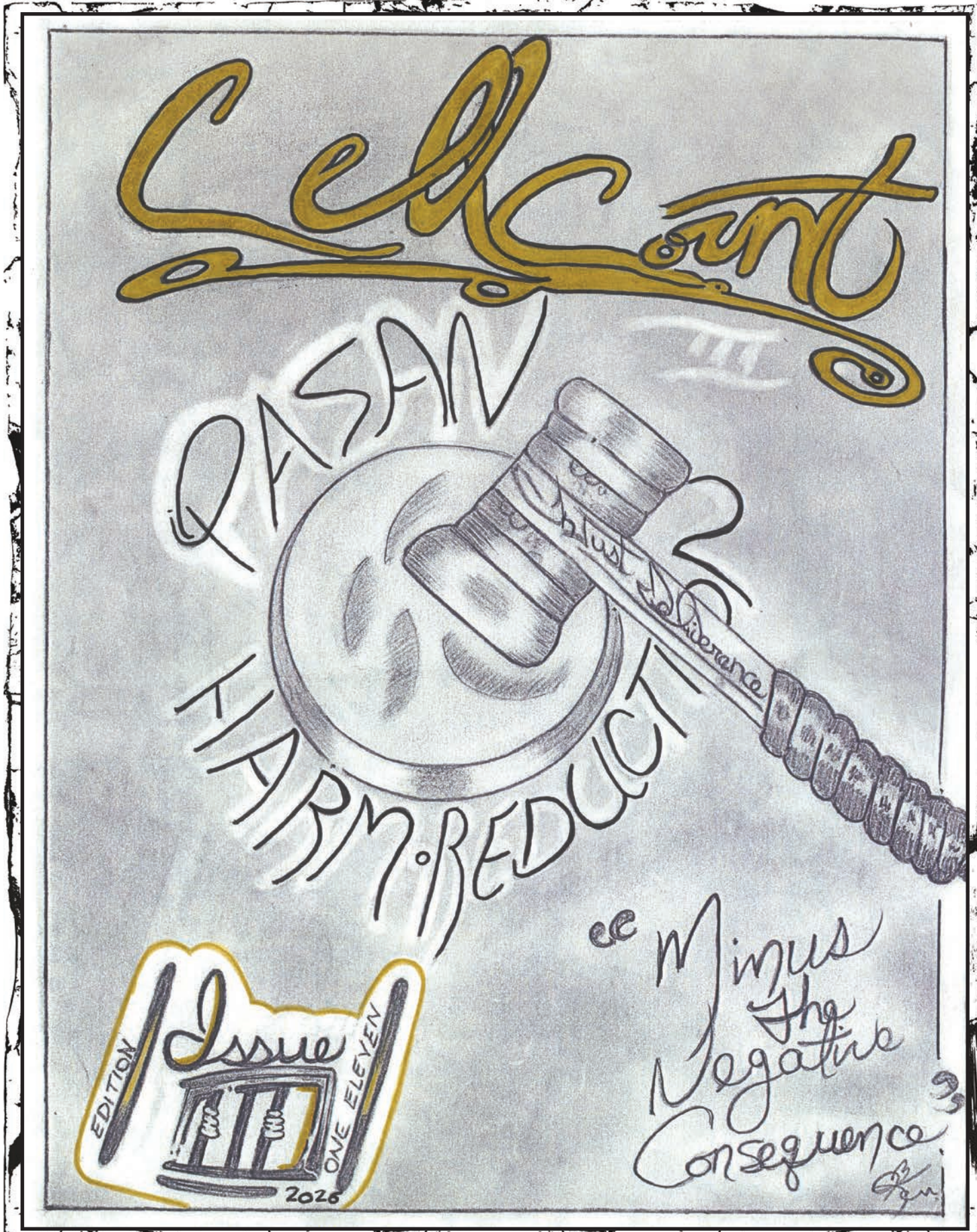
For reasons unknown, on Sunday, November 2nd, 2025, at approximately 8:15pm, an unknown male had breached the perimeter of the institution, going unnoticed by staff in both the minimum institution and medium institution. This required the running of the length of the driveway of the minimum-security unit from the main city transportation road that travels throughout the city of Kitchener. This individual was fully dressed in white clothing, which would have stood out drastically against their camera, which I, Tanya, have seen the fully coloured camera optics, while supporting individuals through my position as an advocate in court. Also, this area of the property is not regularly accessible, and this should have been noticed had it been properly maintained.

After the perimeter was breached, two women were assaulted, several women were chased, and the individual attempted to gain access to more than one living unit. Several calls were placed to MCCP for help. GVI's official stance is that their response time was no more than 3-5 minutes, which is heavily disputed by individuals involved and witnesses. Staff have also stated that in times of distress that time feels lengthier than it actually is. It is believed that staff were under the impression that it was a member of the population who is transgender, not an intruder, and they did not respond with the same intensity to the situation.

At the time of the incident, I (Tanya Bogdanovich), was a resident of living unit 6, now currently living in unit 12, and resided in 12 during the lockdown, witnessed the staff response. The SIO (Security Intelligence Officer), stated the staff were responding to the call from living unit 14 for assistance after an assault. Which if true, was an extremely slow response time for an assault by an outside person who breached the perimeter. There were minimal staff in this initial response. They walked, in no rush to respond, and they approached the individual casually and spoke to them as though they were a resident with no inclination there was a real and present danger to their safety. I heard someone yell. I later found out this was a woman who was chased and she yelled to the officers that this was a person who did not reside within the prison. At this point, it appeared to become a more aggressive situation, and more staff ran from the building to assist. There was no direction to lock up in units. I stood outside on my porch watching the whole incident. I witnessed the staff arresting a community member and place him in a wheelchair and at that point an announcement to return to living units were made.

I, K80, was in the gym when the individual breached the perimeter. Suddenly, there was an influx of people going into the gym and they were stating that there had been a fight. There were still people moving within the building

con't on pg.10



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### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Cell Count Readers,

Thank you for all of your welcome messages. It's been great connecting with so many of you over the phone and through letters, and getting to know you all more from my new Cell Count role. Over the last few months I've been having a lot of conversations with people both inside and out who are sharing that the winter months can feel extra hard on them. Even for those of us who love the season (*controversial, I know!*), the lack of sunshine and warmth can still really have an impact. It can't feel easy to manage the seasonal heaviness that can come with winter while still having to manage the heaviness of life inside. Maybe this is why we've had such a flood of poetry submissions and contributors submitting stories sharing their knowledge and personal experiences of their own milestones in healing, in trying to take care of themselves, and in trying to survive. Sharing our experiences, our wisdom and learning, our writing and our art are ways that we can reach out to one another and connect - to feel less alone and feel seen, especially during the bleaker months and times. Thank you for continuing to share your stories and your art. We've loaded this issue with updates, introductions, resource information, and added a little extra art and poetry in an attempt to invite a little extra warmth to us all. I hope you can find some connections in these pages.

Speaking of updates: you'll likely see some small (or not so small) changes in this issue (*eg. the Cell Count font on the cover*). Not all of this is intentional. As I'm getting ready to send this issue to the printers, my fingers are crossed that all of your words and all of your artwork comes out crisp, clear, and as beautiful as when you sent it to me. I've faced some technical difficulties in producing this issue, but wouldn't let that stop us. I will be working out some kinks over the next little while - so please bare with me!

**Upcoming Cell Count Issues: Our next two issues are focused issues, so get ready.**

Issue #112 will highlight 2SLGBTQ+ voices, experiences, and stories (allies included!) in recognition of Pride month (June). Suggestions for submissions: What are the challenges and barriers faced as a queer or trans prisoner? What do people need to know? How do you build community inside? What does it mean to be an ally inside? // Get your submissions in ASAP! Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2026.

Issue #113 is Prisoners' Justice Day for August 10. Suggestions for submissions: What does PJD mean to you? Why is PJD important? Names and stories of people you want to honour/remember. What can people on the outside do to support prisoners? // Deadline for submissions is June 26, 2026.

Send artwork, poetry, stories, articles, fiction, etc. We want to see it all! Even though we can't print it all, we love to receive it. And it might still end up in a future issue down the road.

In solidarity, and in trouble,

**RJ Chevalier, Cell Count Editor**

### FEBRUARY: BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT PASAN

By PASAN Staff

On February 9, during our regular drop-in, we opened the space to clients from PASAN and CAAT to celebrate Black History Month together.

The gathering opened with a reflection on the importance of a dream, any dream - and how dreaming has always carried our communities forward. Dreams have pushed us to shatter ceilings, to imagine freedom, and to build lives beyond what we were told was possible. We were then grounded by the steady beat of a drum, bringing rhythm and presence into the room. Our speakers reminded us that while Black history includes struggle and loss, it must also hold Black joy, and honour the living just as much as the suffering and the dead. We shared incredible food, and as always, food brought us together. Between trivia, music, laughter, and conversation, the room was full. It felt good to be surrounded by community, sharing space, stories, and culture. Gathering like that - around food and music - is something that has grounded our people for lifetimes. The afternoon was a reminder that celebration, connection, and joy are part of resistance too.

### WHAT DOES BLACK HISTORY MONTH MEAN FOR CELL COUNT & PASAN?

By Mik Vattiata

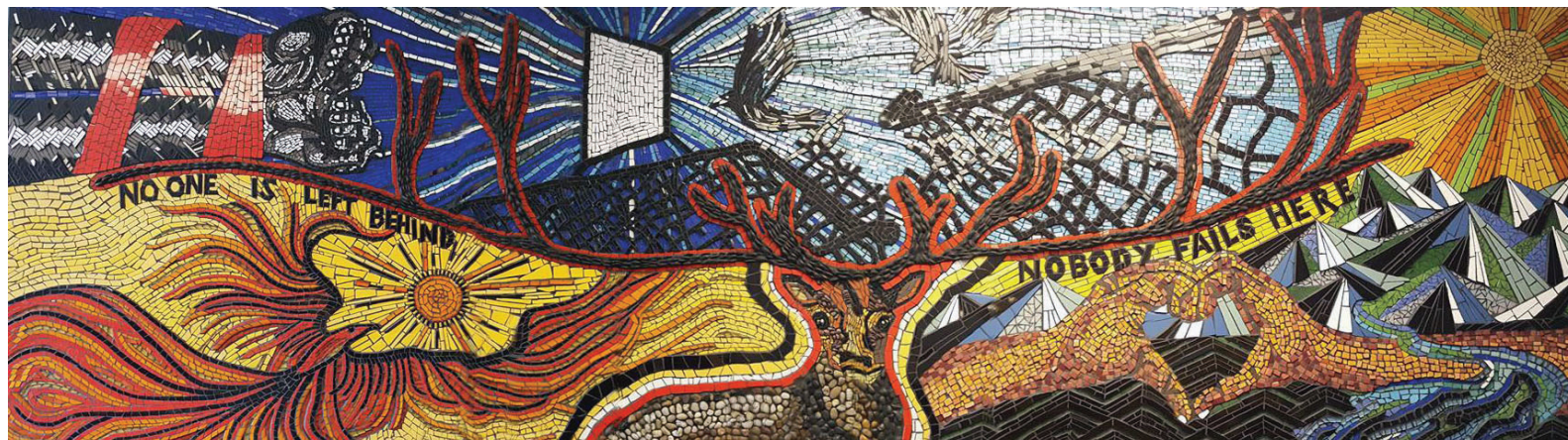
Black History Month. Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Dates on a calendar can be powerful - but only if we carry their meaning beyond a single day or month.

At PASAN and in the pages of Cell Count, Black history isn't something we recognize once a year. It's ongoing. It's lived. It's present in the realities of incarceration, HIV criminalization, medical racism, and the over-surveillance of Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. For generations, Black and Brown people have been treated as the scapegoat and labeled the problem. While at the same time being expected to fix broken systems, build culture, and hold communities together. We can't be everything. Society cannot cage and oppress us while also leaning on us to create, lead, and heal without acknowledging that contradiction. Black History Month has to be more than symbolism. It has to mean action. It has to mean challenging the systems that criminalize, cage, and marginalize our people. It has to mean listening to those most impacted. To our readers and contributors inside: we hope you feel us in your corner. We will continue doing this work - amplifying voices, building community, and pushing for change until these systems are abolished. Because no one is free until everyone is free.

### RAMADAN MUBARAK & EID SA'ID

By PASAN Staff

The month of March also brings the closing of Ramadan. All of us at PASAN extend our warmest wishes to our Muslim readers, clients, and community members observing this sacred month. Ramadan is a time of reflection, resilience, generosity, and deep spiritual connection. We also recognize that in today's political climate, being Muslim can too often mean facing stigma, discrimination, or vilification. To our Muslim community inside and outside prison walls: we see you, and we stand with you. We know that practicing your faith while incarcerated can come with many barriers in observing religious traditions fully and freely. During this holy month and beyond, we remain committed to supporting you and advocating for your ability to practice your religion with respect and freedom. Even though by the time you read these pages, your holy fasting has come to an end, with respect and solidarity, Ramadan Mubarak and Eid Sa'id.



### ABOUT 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
- Individual support, case management, referrals, and follow up care for those released and in community

- We assist our clients in accessing adequate medical care and support both while incarcerated and when in community

### 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 articles, poetry and art produced by current and ex-prisoners

- Facilitates Prison 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 harm reduction outreach workers who go out into the surrounding community to hand out supplies, water, resources and overdose prevention kits. They also assist in the event of finding people who may be experiencing an overdose.

### THE PASAN TEAM

#### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Janet Rowe Executive Director x225

Anton McCloskey Prison In-Reach and Cell Count Manager x236

TBD Harm Reduction & Community Programs Manager

#### PRISONER IN-REACH & SUPPORT STAFF

Chance Cordon Ontario Provincial HepC Program x230

Cherisa Shivcharran Ontario Provincial In-Reach x233

Damjan Francic Toronto South & East Detention Centres In-Reach x231

Omar Ramcharran Federal In-Reach x239

Yasmeen Federal In-Reach x222

RJ Chevalier Cell Count Editor x234

#### LINKAGE TO CARE & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Eveline Allen x238 | Trevor Gray x232 | Mik Vattiata x.228

#### COMMUNITY HARM REDUCTION TEAM

Andre Hermanstynne Program Coordinator x223

Claudia Vergara Community Care x243

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Toronto, ON M5A 1R3



Call us toll-free:  
1-866-224-9978

## ISSUE #111

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Thank you to all of you who helped mail out over a thousand copies of this issue!



Staff and community at February's BHM event

### THERE'S NO CELL COUNT WITHOUT PASAN ... SO WHO AND WHAT ARE PASAN??

All community organizations are bound to experience many different shifts and changes over both short and long periods of time. Here at PASAN it's no different, and there's been a lot of changes over the last year. PASAN has three main areas of services and support. **In-Reach Support:** we have 2 federal workers that work with people inside across Canada and 3 provincial workers that work with people inside around Ontario, and 1 Cell Count editor. **Linkage to Care & Community Support:** we have 3 community workers that work with people after they have been released and are living in community in the Toronto area. **Harm Reduction & Community Care:** we have a small team of part-time harm reduction workers and 2 full-time staff who help to coordinate all of the harm reduction work. These are also the same people who answer the phones, answer your questions, and connect you to supports whenever you call us. So why not take a minute or two and let us (re)introduce you to the new (and not new) staff at PASAN and let them tell you themselves what it is they do here.

### HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

#### Andre Hermanstyne

The Harm Reduction Outreach Coordinator at PASAN supports people living with or impacted by HIV who are criminalized and have experienced incarceration. Workers meet folks where they're at with non judgmental, client led harm reduction support. We are in the community weekly, distributing harm reduction supplies on streets around downtown Toronto (like George St, Sherbourne and Dundas Street E).

We know that stigma and discrimination create challenges when a person who uses drugs is trying to access services. So, we try to provide a service that is stigma free and meets people where they are. We hope that and in doing so it removes some of the barriers to service that exist within our system.

Some of the items we distribute include clean syringes and pipes, new socks, winter survival kits, sleeping bags, warm coats and clothing (if available) and snack food items and drinks.

We also link people to the care they need. For example, if someone is struggling with managing withdrawal, then our highly skilled workers can direct them to the local Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinic, if that's what they want - understanding that they should be directing how they should get care, not us.

### HARM REDUCTION COMMUNITY CARE

#### Claudia Vergara

The Harm Reduction Community Care Project is a low-barrier employment program run by PASAN in partnership with other downtown east agencies in Toronto. The program employs people with lived experience of incarceration, drug use, and street involvement to do harm reduction work in the community.

Our team goes out on foot Monday to Friday to safely pick up and dispose of discarded needles and other harm reduction supplies. This work helps reduce harm for everyone, including people who use drugs, community members, and sanitation workers. The team is trained in overdose response, safe disposal, and harm reduction, and brings real-world experience and care to the work.

Alongside clean-up, our team also builds relationships and trust in the community and offers practical harm reduction support and education as a way to connect with people and support overall community health.

### LINKAGE TO CARE & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our LTC team provide case management support, in person and over the phone, to formerly incarcerated people living in the Toronto area and connects them to health care services and community-based programs and supports.

#### Trevor Gray

I am one of 3 LTC staff at PASAN. I prepare a meal each Monday for our clients, for the first three Mondays of every month. The venue and meal provides a space where clients interact with comfort, exchanging information around their health and

wellbeing.

I keep a list of the clients' telephone numbers and do biweekly telephone check-ins with each client. I liaison with client's mental health and housing workers to enhance roundabout care. I provide accompaniments to courts and medical appointments when necessary. I assist clients to connect with doctors and lawyers via telephone. I also assist incarcerated people from across Ontario with basic information on a wide range of issues over the phone.

#### Eveline Allen

As part of the Linkage to Care & Community Support Team, I provide in person and over the phone case management & support as well as accompaniments when requested to home bound/non ambulatory HIV+ clients and clients who are unable to come to our office for various reasons. For our clients being released from prison, I am one of our 3-member team you may be assigned to and am looking forward to connecting with you in the future. Our team is also in community making connections and referral pathways to other organizations to help ease your transition from prison to community. Like all front-line staff, we answer the phone when in office, so you may hear me on the other end of the phone when calling.

#### Mik Vattiata

Linkage to care has always been a core part of the work at PASAN. Supporting people as they move between institutions and the community, and making sure no one falls through the cracks, is something we've been doing for years.

What's new is that we're building more structure around this work. We're developing clearer procedures for referrals, strengthening our community outreach, and working more closely with our federal and provincial teams to make transitions smoother. That includes transitions from prison to community, between institutions, and even between workers; so support stays consistent and connected.

While our team continues to work collaboratively and share clients, we're also identifying areas of focus so each of us can deepen our work in certain spaces. I'm beginning to take more of a lead in supporting women, trans non-binary folks, as well as strengthening community programming and connections.

At the end of the day, the goal is simple: stronger relationships, smoother transitions, and better support for our community - inside and out.

### PROVINCIAL HEP-C PROGRAM

#### Chance Cordon

As the Hep-C Coordinator at PASAN, I help to connect and coordinate prisoners with accessing Hep-C testing and treatment in Ontario. Our Hep-C program includes a Hep-C Education Program at two provincial jails in Ontario: Central North Correctional Centre and Central East Correctional Centre. I visit each jail once a month for this program and spend

two days providing programming and one-to-one support. I also support prisoners over the phone should they have any questions about Hep C or are interested in being connected to a Harm Reduction, OAT, or Hep C clinic in their local area before being released. If you are incarcerated anywhere in Ontario and have any questions about Hep-C in prison or in community (risks, testing, treatment, general questions, etc.) you can call in to PASAN and ask.

Hep-C education plays such a crucial role in addressing Hep-C stigma in prisons. Through discussions and laid-back educational sessions, we're able to ask crucial questions for that address prison health and prison safety head on. We ask questions like: "What do we know about Hep-C already? What does Harm Reduction look like for your range? What are good practices to keep yourself and those around you safe?" and more. We know that every prison is different and every range within that jail is different, which is why we want to listen and always try to centre and empower the experiences of those of you who are incarcerated. PASAN offers certificates for those who complete the Hep-C Education Program. This certificate can be taken to court as proof of participation in the program. If you are incarcerated at Central North Correctional Centre or at Central East Correctional Centre and think your range would benefit from a Hep-C education session or would like to be in contact with the Hep C coordinator, ask for extension 230 or ask for me by name when you call PASAN toll-free at 1 866 224 9978.

### REGIONAL IN-REACH (TSDC & TEDC)

#### Damjan Francic

My work is part of PASAN's Provincial In Reach Education, Support and Advocacy Program, which offers harm reduction, HIV, and Hepatitis C education and support to people incarcerated in Ontario's provincial institutions. This program exists to ensure that people inside are not forgotten, and that they have access to information, care, and support that affirms their dignity and humanity.

I support individuals who are living with, or at risk of acquiring, HIV and/or Hep C both over the phone and in-person, weekly at Toronto East Detention Centre and Toronto South Detention Centre. A core part of my role involves providing HIV and Hep C education and resources that are clear, accessible, and grounded in harm reduction. I take time to explain information in ways that make sense to the individual, answering questions, and addressing concerns without judgement. Supporting people to better understand their health helps them make informed decisions, both while incarcerated and after release.

I also provide pre release support for people living with HIV and/or Hep C and work with them to plan for continuity of care and to reduce gaps in services upon release. This includes helping people connect to community specific health care providers, social services, housing resources, and income supports, based

on where they are returning.

My goal is to ensure that people inside know they are seen, supported, and deserving of care, both during incarceration and beyond.

### PROVINCIAL IN-REACH (HWDC & MAPLEHURST)

#### Cherisa Shivcharran

I provide HIV and Hep C education, prevention & transmission information to prisoners over the phone and in-person at Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre and Maplehurst Correctional Complex. This program is offered in a group setting or one to one. Discussions on prisoners' health, staying healthy inside, harm reduction and agency information is also provided. If people are interested in having a group on their unit or meet one to one, they can call PASAN and speak with me directly or put in a written request to Volunteer Services Organizers. Programming is offered on Wednesdays, once a month at Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre and twice a month at Maplehurst Correctional Complex.

### FEDERAL IN-REACH (ONTARIO PRISONS)

#### Omar Ramcharran & Yasmeen

Our federal team is made up of two in-reach workers who do workshops across all federal prisons in Ontario that focus on prison health and harm reduction. We also offer over-the-phone support services and create educational resources for people inside across Canada.

The work we do focuses on prison health - especially around HIV and Hep C prevention and care. Because of that, our case management services and our workshops focus on things like safer tattooing inside, safer drug use inside, safer sex practices, and working with people to prevent the spread of HIV or Hep C in prison, or managing care related to a diagnosis. Prison health is public health, and our goal is to ensure people inside receive the same information and access to testing or treatment that is available on the outside. If you're looking for other support services we don't offer, our team can still chat with you and connect you to organizations to meet your needs. We can also do intake with you over the phone, so give us a call if you want to learn more about our federal services or become a client.

If this doesn't seem relevant to you, but you're passionate about your own health and/or prison health, give us a call still! We work with volunteers, or peer liaisons, in federal prisons across the country. They let us know what's going on inside and what information we should focus on for our education materials or workshops.

Want to find out when PASAN will be at your Ontario institution next? Give us a call! Our workshops are open to anyone who wants to attend. Since we are such a small team, we sometimes are only able to visit an institution 1-2 times a year. That's why our peer liaisons are such a valuable part of our work. Every institution is different and it wouldn't be possible without your input!

# 4 HEALTH & HARM REDUCTION

ISSUE #111: CONNECTIONS



## CORRECTION FOR "CHANGES TO CSC OAT POLICY" (ISSUE 110)

By PASAN Staff · March 2026

In the article titled "Changes to CSC OAT Policy" published in issue #110 (on pg.3) it was stated "Since suboxone is no longer considered an 'open benefit', it will only be accessible through a non-formulary request process. If the Suboxone request is not approved, the incarcerated patient will have to pay out-of-pocket if they want to continue taking Suboxone."

**Unfortunately, this is not true.**

Our sources for this information – a group of clinicians, lawyers, and researchers – have provided updated information for us after corresponding with CSC's administrative team.

**As of April 1, 2026, Suboxone will no longer be on the formulary, and you cannot pay out-of-pocket to continue receiving it.**

If you want to stay on Suboxone, talk to your CSC doctor. If your CSC doctor agrees that you should remain on Suboxone, they can apply for an individual exemption for you. From what prisoners have shared with us so far and from our information sources regarding CSC's changes to OAT policy, this exemption has not been an easy process. For some people, it might not even be an option at all.

By the time you're reading this, it's most likely after April 1, 2026.

### So what can I do now?

- If you have been forced to switch medication before you're ready, you can file a grievance about the new policy and how it is being applied to you. In your grievance, explain:
  - You do not consent to switching medications
  - Why your current or past medication worked for you
  - How being forced to switch could destabilize you or cause harm
  - Any other relevant information
- Addiction (such as "Opioid Use Disorder" or OUD) is recognized as a disability in human rights law. You can state in your grievance that forcing you to change OAT without proper medical justification

is discriminatory. Discrimination grievances can go directly to a first-level grievance. You should not have to start with a complaint. If your first-level grievance is denied, file a final-level grievance.

Keep track of any changes to your health, your symptoms, your cravings, and keep track of your health visits by recording them on paper or sharing them with a support person during phone calls and asking them to keep a record for you. Try to remember dates, times, and the names of healthcare providers you spoke to.

**I do not want Sublocade and have been forced into withdrawal. What can I do?**

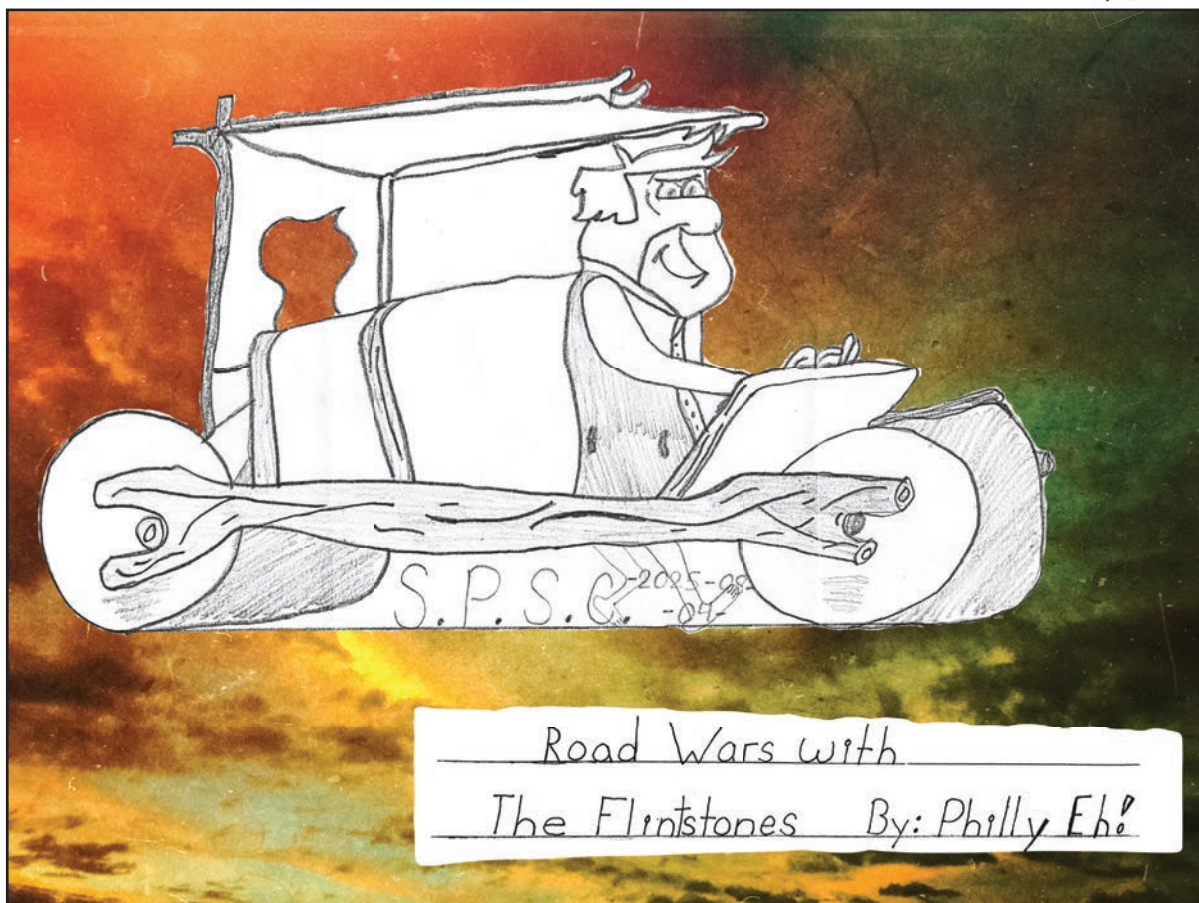
If you were refused a second opinion, if you were taken off Methadone or Suboxone before April 1, 2026, or if you were not given enough time to transition from the medication you were receiving to Sublocade, file a human rights complaint as soon as possible.

Complaints to the Canadian Human Rights Commission are about discrimination in relation to a characteristic protected by the Canadian Human Rights Act (such as your race, religion, gender identity, disability, etc.). Since addiction (including OUD) is recognized as a disability in human rights law, you can complain that CSC is discriminating against you on the basis of your disability by forcing you to switch OAT medications without a proper medical reason.

Phone the Commission at 1-888-214-1090 to request a complaint form. You can also ask someone to print one off the internet for you.

If you decide to file a human rights complaint, make sure you also file a grievance. Often the Commission expects people to go through the CSC grievance process first. If you file a human rights complaint and a grievance at the same time, you can tell the Commission you have already taken steps to use the grievance process if they ask.

Be aware that the Commission has a large backlog, and it may take a very long time (often more than a year) for your complaint to be processed. This means filing early may be important if you think you will need this option later. Keep a copy



of your complaint.

**You can also complain to a medical college.**

If you think your healthcare provider (doctor, nurse, etc.) is treating you in a way that is unprofessional or unethical, you can make a complaint against them to their professional college (such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons in your province).

All medical professionals have ethical rules and standards of practice they have to follow, and you can complain if you think they are breaching those ethics. This would be a complaint against a specific person, not CSC as a whole.

You can ask healthcare how to do this or call an advocacy organization.

**Who to contact for help:**

- 1) Prisoners' Legal Services (B.C.): People in prison in British Columbia can access legal advice

and assistance by phone.

- Federal prisons: 1-866-577-5245 (toll-free common access number for all federal prisoners in BC)
- Provincial prisons: 604-636-0464
- Monday – Friday 9am – 11am and 1pm – 3pm PT. Closed Wednesday afternoons.

2) Queen's Prison Law Clinic (Eastern Ontario): If you are a federal prisoner in Eastern Ontario and financially eligible for legal aid, you can contact Queen's Prison Law Clinic for advice or assistance. Legal services are provided by law students under the supervision of a clinic lawyer.

- 1-866-546-1171 (toll-free common-access number from all federal prisons in Eastern Ontario)
- Mail: Queen's Prison Law Clinic 303 Bagot Street – Suite 500 Kingston, ON K7K 5W7

3) Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI): You can contact the

OCI to complain about how you are being treated by CSC.

- Mail: Office of the Correctional Investigator | P.O. Box 3421, Station "D" | Ottawa ON K1P 6L4
- Telephone: 1-877-885-8848 (Toll Free) | Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m. EST (outside of regular office hours, leave a message)
- In Person: During scheduled institutional visits by OCI staff, you can request an interview in advance or approach the investigator during their institutional visit.

**Who else to contact for help:**

- Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society (CAEFS) is a national organization that advocates for the rights of criminalized and imprisoned women and gender-diverse people. They may be able to provide information, referrals, or advocacy support. Their advocacy line is on the common access list in all federal prisons designated for women. There are set times for each region, which are posted in the penitentiaries. Voicemails are monitored. 1-800-637-4606
- HIV Legal Network works to advance the human rights of people living with HIV and other marginalized communities, including people in prison. They provide legal information, policy advocacy, and public education on issues related to health care, human rights, and criminalization. Mail 1240 Bay Street, Suite 600 Toronto, ON M5R 2A7

**Would you like more information?**

You can always give us a call or write to PASAN to share your experiences and get support on navigating the treatment of your transition from Suboxone or Methadone to Sublocade, or from being taken off OAT.

We have an informative and updated resource on the changes to CSC's OAT policy (with the corrections made from CSC HQ). If you would like PASAN to mail you a copy, give us a call and request more information from any staff member who answers the phone. To send you the information package, PASAN will need your first name and last time, and the institution you are at.



## 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 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**

## PRISON FAMILY

PODCAST FROM MOTHERS OFFERING MUTUAL SUPPORT OTTAWA & THE PROS AND CONS PRISON ARTS PROGRAM

ALL 11 EPISODES OUT NOW

WHEREVER YOU GET YOUR PODCASTS



# 5 NEWS ON THE BLOCK

ISSUE #111: CONNECTIONS



## SENATOR CLEMENT SAYS: YOUR EDUCATION MATTERS

By Senator Bernadette Clement · Personal Article for Cell-Count · March 09, 2026

Your education matters. Your rehabilitation matters. You matter.

I've been hearing from incarcerated folks across the country for the past few weeks who have been very clear: education and rehabilitation go hand-in-hand.

On February 27, CSC emailed my office with this comment: *"The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) recognizes the important role education plays in supporting the safe and successful reintegration of offenders...our primary education focus is ensuring that offenders who have not yet completed high school have opportunities to upgrade their education and work toward a secondary school diploma. These programs help build the literacy, academic, and personal development skills needed for reintegration."*

They wrote this in response to my questions about cuts to education programming. I don't have all the details around what CSC is planning. I'm hearing about cuts to education, to librarian positions, to hourly wages, and to jobs for incarcerated folks. I'm very concerned about how this will impact you.

There is talk about increasing the use of "a secure digital learning management system that supports classroom instruction, computer based learning, and self directed study." Does a shift to digital learning work for you? How does in-person learning benefit you?

Education is a massive part of rehabilitation, of planning for reintegration, of personal growth. Folks I've met in prisons have told me that. I've witnessed that. And I'll be speaking more about this as we try to find out more about what's coming.

I want you to know that many of us are worried about these cuts.

People are getting organized to raise awareness about the services that matter to you. Librarians matter. Your education matters. You matter.

There's a coalition of folks who are going to try to get more information about spending cuts. Who are going to spread the word about the negative impacts of those cuts.

Here's what I'm hoping for, from you:

1. **Keep using the services that matter to you, like libraries:** Request books at the library. Ask your librarian for help finding resources. Participate in programs at the

library.

2. **Make sure prison administration knows education matters to you:** enroll in a class, request a course that will help you rejoin community after your release, and let your teachers know about the impact they've had on you.

3. **Send me a letter, if you can:** when I'm advocating for you, I want to be able to tell stories about how librarians, education, and jobs have impacted your rehabilitation. I won't use your name. If you have questions, you can also ask them by sending a letter, and I'll try to find some answers. You can send me letters without a stamp.

Send them to:  
**Senator Bernadette Clement**  
The Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, ON, Canada  
K1A 0A4

There's a lot we don't know about these cuts. I'm hoping we'll learn more in the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, please take care of yourself and your loved ones, and keep an eye on the future!

In solidarity,  
Senator Bernadette Clement

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE MOVING TO CUT PRISON LIBRARIANS AT FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

By Ashkay Kulkarni · CBC News · March 11, 2026

Correctional Service Canada is finalizing plans to cut all prison librarian positions at federal institutions, in a move that advocates say violates human rights and will actively harm efforts to rehabilitate prisoners.

In a statement, the correctional service said the move is a cost-saving measure as numerous government departments look to make trims under the 2025 federal budget.

Advocates and a former commissioner of the correctional service say, however, that prison librarians are essential for helping prisoners access a safe space within prisons.

They also say that cutting librarians is tantamount to depriving prisoners of libraries as a whole, which would violate minimum rules around access to libraries established at the United Nations.

"The most effective crime prevention strategy that can happen in the prison is to provide more education, more training, more access to reading materials," said Melissa Munn, a retired professor of criminology at Okanagan College.

"Cutting anything from the library, whether it's the budget or the librarian or any of the space allotted for libraries, is detrimental to society as a whole."

Munn has worked directly with prisoners for 40 years and studied the impacts of incarceration.

She said librarians are invaluable in providing prisoners with access to things like distance learning or correspondence courses, and that they make decisions based on prisoners' diverse interests and their limited budgets.

Under the United Nations "Nelson Mandela rules," adopted in 2015, accessing libraries in prisons is listed as one of the rules for good treatment of prisoners.

Cutting librarian positions, Munn said, flies in the face of research that showed the importance of prison education in rehabilitation.

Don Head, who was the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada between 2008 and 2018, said that he stopped a similar effort to cut librarian positions when he was in office nearly 20 years ago.

"They have educational information, they have legal information, that many of the offenders need to access in relation to their own personal cases," he said of librarians.

"So just having books, or digital access to some information, isn't necessarily going to be helpful unless somebody is there who has the knowledge and skills about that material."

Open letter  
Tom Best, the director of non-profit Book Clubs for Inmates, said librarians are critical in finding books appropriate for prisoners' reading levels, and losing institutional knowledge like that would be a shame.

His organization estimated there were at least 31 librarians employed across 38 unique federal prison libraries.

Best said an open letter started by the non-profit that asks federal Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree to reverse the cuts has been signed by over 2,000 people, human rights organizations and other groups.

"This is not merely a budgetary adjustment. It is a policy choice that disproportionately harms those already marginalized and contradicts Canada's stated commitment to evidence-based corrections and human rights leadership," the open letter reads in part.

In a statement to Radio-Canada, a Correctional Service Canada spokesperson said the service was mandated to save \$132.2 million by the

2028-29 fiscal year.

They estimated cutting the positions would save the department around \$2.4 million, and said 18 librarians had already received letters in January indicating their employment could be affected.

"As part of our efforts aimed at increasing access to digital resources in our institutions, inmates now have better access to information and learning opportunities," the statement reads in French.

"Many institutions already operate according to a modern library model without a dedicated librarian on site."

The statement adds that, starting on April 1, the last librarian positions would be gradually eliminated as part of plans that were still being finalized.

Munn said she doesn't understand the department's justification that resources were being digitized, saying the librarian cuts are coming at the expense of human rights and public safety.

"There are some digital mechanisms that people can use within the libraries at very particular supervised times, but that is extraordinarily limited and certainly not a replacement for what we currently have," she said.

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## PROPOSED BAIL REFORMS WILL IMPRISON INNOCENT PEOPLE

By Dale Smith · The CBA National · October 2025

Legal observers say the federal government's proposed bail and sentencing reforms risk being self-defeating by diverting judicial attention and scarce resources away from serious matters. They're also going to imprison innocent people.

Tabled [in October] by Justice Minister Sean Fraser, Bill C-14 expands the use of reverse onus provisions with bail applications for violent and organized crime-related offences. That includes violent auto-theft, break and enter, human trafficking and smuggling, assault and sexual assault, and extortion involving violence.

It provides directions on applying the principle of restraint in the law of bail, modifying the third ground for denying bail to require courts to consider the number or seriousness of any outstanding charges when determining whether releasing the accused would undermine confidence in the administration of justice.

"Today is about stronger laws and safer communities," Fraser said when introducing the bill.

"This new law follows extensive consultation with law enforcement, provinces and territories, municipalities and community partners."

He stated that the justice system has failed to keep up with what Canadians are witnessing and experiencing in their communities. As a result, the proposed changes have a strong focus on public safety.

The bill contains more than 80 measures that increase sentences for repeat offenders of auto theft, organized crime and home invasion, and allows for consecutive sentences for violent and repeat offenders. There are also provisions for harsher sentencing for organized retail theft, and to repeal the eligibility for conditional sentences for sexual assault.

**Reforms risk being self-defeating**  
Melanie Webb, chair of the Canadian Bar Association's criminal justice section and a criminal defence lawyer in Toronto, says some of the proposed amendments address areas which are already routinely taken into consideration during bail and sentencing hearings.

"Practically speaking, when it is a serious offence such as one involving serious violence, or gun offences, whether a Crown onus or reverse onus applies has **con't on pg.6**

### Prisoner Support Lines

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Niagara.....	905-227-5066
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**con't from pg.5**  
little practical effect: it will always be an uphill battle for the defence," she says.

In anticipation of the legislation, the CBA's criminal justice section wrote an open letter to Fraser, warning that increasing reverse onuses or ladder provisions would not achieve the intended deterrent effect, and are unlikely to be Charter compliant, especially given the disproportionate impact on Indigenous and other racialized accused.

The letter also warned that these reforms risk being self-defeating as they divert judicial attention and scarce resources away from serious matters.

"Further, since no bail system can eliminate all risk, such reforms would undoubtedly face renewed criticism after the next high-profile incident in which someone on bail commits a serious offence, leading to renewed calls for another round of bail reform," the letter states.

Webb says the letter was first drafted by past chair David Parry, an assistant Crown prosecutor in Toronto, and received feedback from both the Crown and defence bar members in the section, which shows consensus about what needs to be addressed.

The letter called for increased resources for community supervision and for streamlining the bail system to improve the efficiency of bail courts, which includes a greater role for provincial judges.

To that end, the section proposed legislative amendments to clarify that all bail hearings can be conducted in a bifurcated manner. It also saw value in enacting an explicit provision requiring the court's leave for any cross-examination. The goal is to reduce the need to cross-examine every surety that appears before the court.

However, Webb says that the most significant part of fixing the bail system is ensuring that the provinces properly resource their courts.

"It would be constructive for

anyone who has a genuine concern about the bail system to sit in and watch a full day of bail court in a busy urban centre, or frankly any bail court, and really get an understanding of what the unique challenges of day-to-day bail court are."

Nationally, 71 per cent of people in provincial and territorial prisons are awaiting trial and have not been convicted. In Ontario, that figure hovers around 80 per cent. Facilities are also overcrowded, with frequent reports of triple-bunking in tiny cells. Earlier this year, Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé said in his annual report that provincial jails are in a "state of crisis" with severe overcrowding and frequent lockdowns. He found that pre-trial jail conditions often lead to sentencing discounts.

Webb says internationally, the situation is often reversed. In England and Wales, for example, 80 per cent of people in jails have been convicted, while only 20 per cent are awaiting trial.

"That should tell you something about how far the pendulum has swung in Canada about the strictness of our bail conditions."

#### No data to support claims that bail causes crime

Shakir Rahim, director of the criminal justice program at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, has denounced the proposed changes, insisting that there is no evidence to suggest that bail causes crime.

He points to the lack of data showing that these changes are necessary, particularly given that the number of accused being denied bail has climbed to 76 per cent, from the low 20s in the 1980s. There is no data to back up claims about the number of people on bail who are allegedly reoffending.

"There is no way to say that ... x-number of people are released on bail in Canada and y-number of people allegedly reoffend. And of those alleged re-offences, this many are a new substantive violent offence and this many are a breach of condition," Rahim says.

The CCLA and others made this

point in the C-48 debate three years ago, and former justice minister Arif Virani and David Lametti before him admitted there was a

gap. The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquired about evidence to show that reverse onuses would do something, and recommended more data collection. Three years later, no data has been collected, and no province or territory has announced any projects to do so.

"We know that StatsCan continues to have these meetings with their provincial and territorial stakeholders, but nothing has been announced about any data they are going to collect," Rahim says.

"It's very perplexing that this issue is something we're being told is the be-all and end-all of public safety in Canada, but no single government has made any commitment to actually evaluate or measure the problem. So how on earth are we going to evaluate this new legislation?"

He points to StatCan data, which show that charges for motor vehicle thefts are down 10 per cent since 2020 and a full third since 2010. In Montreal, gun violence is down 47 per cent since 2021, shootings are down 40 per cent this year in Toronto, and Vancouver has seen a 23-year low in violent crime.

"Obviously, there are concerning cases in the headlines, and we should study those cases, but it's almost like we've been told there's this marked increase in crime and that bail is the problem," Rahim says.

"There is a vacuum of political leadership of people stepping up and saying this is what it would really mean to address public safety, here's how we have to address the problem in an even-handed way."

He adds: "I think there is a fear to actually speak the truth to Canadians."

#### Bail shouldn't be a political issue

Webb says there's a prevailing sense that some people will not be satisfied unless everyone who has been charged is in jail while awaiting trial. But trotting out slogans like "jail, not bail" and dismissing the law of bail as "Liberal bail" are completely unhelpful.

"It's disheartening," she says.

"I appreciate that when there are tragic incidents in the news, it hits an emotional touchpoint. People will immediately ask if the person was on bail—it's not productive to single out stories like that. This should not be a political issue."

At its core, this isn't a law reform issue, but one about the functioning of the courts.

"When I talk about bail court delays, I speak from experience," Webb says.

"If you were to go into the bail court at 10 Armoury Street (court-house in Toronto), they cannot get to every single person on the list. They cannot hold contested bail hearings for all individuals who are granted (them). There is no such

## Write ON!

Supporting prisoners through correspondence

### INCARCERATED IN CANADA? NEED INFORMATION?

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

**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)
- Send anything that could be viewed as sexually explicit
- Send store bought items such as notebooks, crafts, etc.

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Suite # 234  
110 Cumberland Street  
Toronto, On M5R 3V5

thing as the so-called catch-and-release. It's nonsense."

She says there needs to be more resources through groups like the John Howard Society or Elizabeth Fry Society for people who are struggling with mental health and addiction issues who aren't getting proper treatment.

Rahim takes issue with the silence in the political discussion around the presumption of innocence. He points to the case of Umar Zameer, whose release on bail after being charged in the death of a cop was denounced by everyone, including the Ontario Premier Doug Ford. Meanwhile, nearly three years later, he was acquitted.

"Without pre-trial release, innocent people would lose their jobs, their ability to see their loved ones, and their liberty despite having committed no crime at all," Rahim says.

"That's a real problem. Everyone is presumed innocent, but in addition to that, half of criminal cases will never lead to a finding of guilt. That has very much been lost in this debate."

As for where this proposed legislation will lead if enacted?

"These changes will imprison innocent people," he says.

**Editor's note:** *The notion of innocence in this article is irrelevant (if not problematic). "Innocent" or not, people don't deserve to lose access to their supports and livelihoods at a time of great need. The impact these "bail reform" changes will have are harmful no matter who it is being applied to, and beyond.*

### CARNEY CALLS BY-ELECTIONS ON APRIL 13 IN 3 RIDINGS

**By Benjamin Lopez Steven - CBC News - March 08, 2026 [summarized]**

Prime Minister Mark Carney has called by-elections in the Toronto ridings of University-Rosedale and Scarborough Southwest and the Quebec riding of Terrebonne — races the Liberals will want to win to secure a thin majority government.

Candidates will be looking to replace Chrystia Freeland — who stepped down after accepting a voluntary role advising Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — and Bill Blair, who's been appointed Canada's high commissioner to the United Kingdom.

As things stand, the Liberals have 169 MPs in the House of Commons. They need 172 to form a thin majority government, making these three races vitally important for the party.

The most eventful race will likely be in Terrebonne [QC]. Last month, the Liberals were dealt a blow after the Supreme Court of Canada annulled the 2025 federal election result in the Montreal-area riding. The electoral district was initially

declared for Bloc Québécois Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné, but a judicial recount later found Liberal Tatiana Auguste had won the seat by one vote. The two will go head-to-head again in April.

Sinclair-Desgagné, called on the courts to annul the results and call a new election after CBC News reported that a voter had their mail-in ballot returned to them due to a misprint on the return envelope. The voter, Emmanuelle Bossé, had marked her ballot for the Bloc Elections Canada acknowledged the error but said the results had already been finalized.

In October, a Superior Court judge rejected Sinclair-Desgagné's call for a do-over, arguing that a postal code mishap amounted to "human error" and does not constitute an irregularity as defined under federal electoral law. The top court overturned that ruling after hearing arguments in February.

The by-election in Terrebonne will also occur shortly after the Liberals' national convention in Montreal, which is being held April 9 to 11.

In a news release, Elections Canada said voters in the area can cast their ballots on election day or vote in advance polls from April 3 to April 6 at their assigned polling station. If someone wishes to vote by mail, they must apply by April 7.

**Editor's note:** *The outcome of this specific by-election has potential to impact big changes to the federal government's current decision-making powers (however that lands for you). This may not feel so relevant to you if you don't live in the ridings holding the by-election. Or if you do/did, this Cell Count issue may not get to you before April 13. But this is a good reminder to know our voting rights for when things like this happen!*

*Thank you to the anonymous Cell Count supporter who contributed the following information to share:*

#### If you are a Canadian citizen over 18yrs of age on voting, you have a right to vote!

When you register to vote, use the first address you know from this list:

- Your residence before going inside
- The address of your spouse, common-law partner, a relative, a dependent, a relative of your spouse or common-law partner, or the person who you would be living with if you were on the outside (*just make sure to get their permission first*)
- The place you were arrested
- The last court where you were convicted or sentenced

If you have questions or concerns about being able to vote (or having been able to vote), you can call these toll-free numbers:

**Elections Canada:**  
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**Commissioner of Canada Elections:**  
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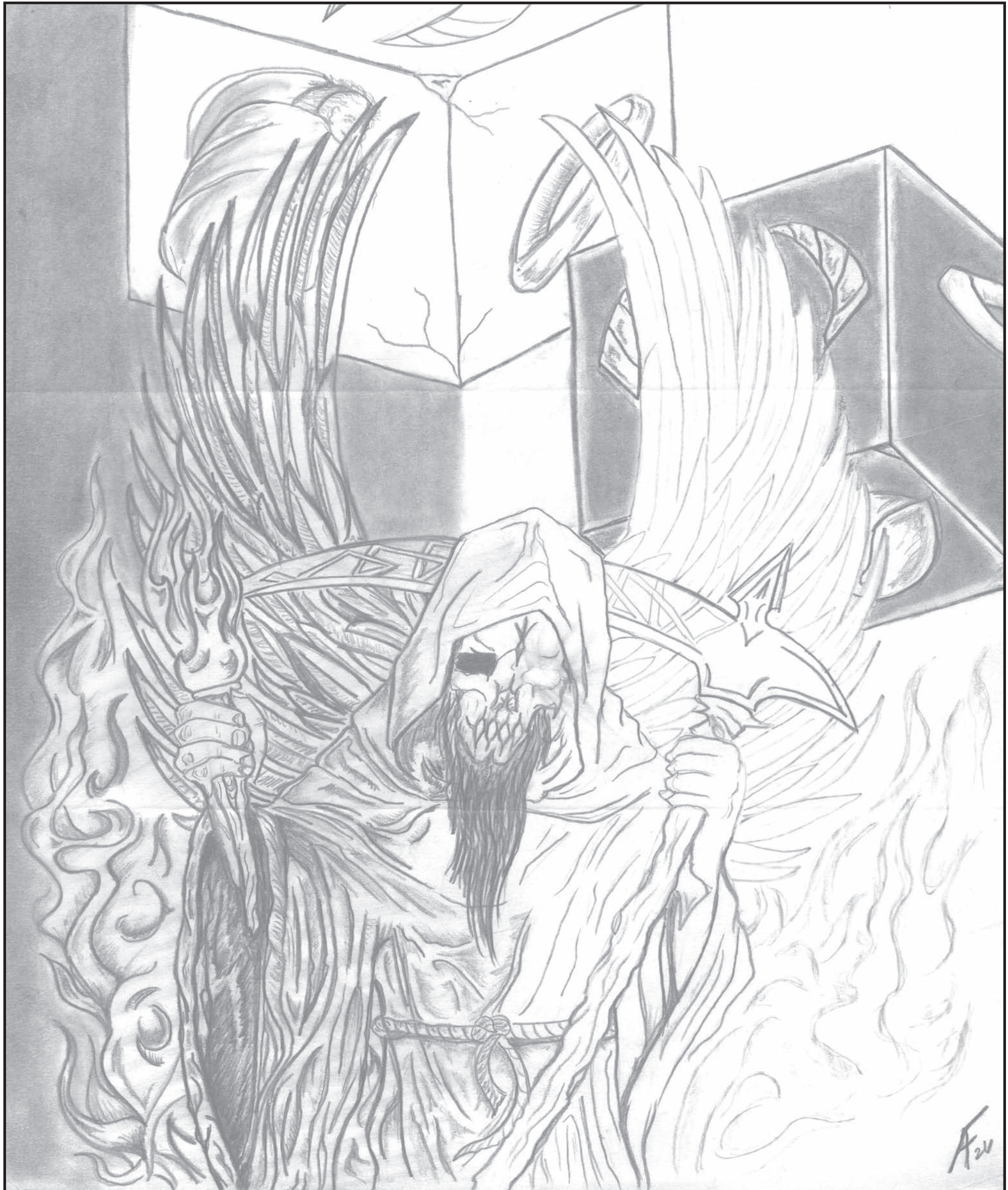
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**"VISUAL MANIFESTATION;  
AFRICAN BEAUTY"**

**By Hamid Ayoub**

*(December 2025, coffee on  
water colour paper)*

*Through the window  
of my mind's eye, I  
observed the rhythm  
of African beauty  
manifested in nature.  
This manifestation  
incorporated my  
favoured number  
three in depth. Yet,  
the visual manifesta-  
tion depicted what my  
words fail to convey.*

*I diverted the usage  
of instant coffee from  
drinking to water co-  
lour sensation. Then,  
on an artistic waterco-  
lour paper, I utilized  
its space to be my ref-  
uge from the confined  
jail cell.*

*Consequently, with  
some creative ar-  
rangement, I end  
up with what I can  
proudly call my mas-  
terpiece. The master-  
piece entitled "Visual  
Manifestation".*



### Message from the Commissioner to Inmates

WE ARE RESIDENTS



As I have shared before, it is important for you to accumulate some savings while you are incarcerated and plan for your potential release one day. Given that costs have been going up, I want to ensure that you are thinking about having some money on hand that can help with your successful reintegration.

Wow! Finally someone other than the OCI report, in a higher-up position is going to note that incarcerated persons not having a "raise" since 1981 is NOT helping with reintegration.

And ideally she has read the OCI reports that note our pitance pay leads to ↑ violence, drug trades, and other institutional issues that also affect staff safety. Eureka - CHANGE!

The second yearly increase for the required minimum balance starts today, March 31, 2025. The increase is from \$100 to \$150.

You have got to be F\*CK!NG kidding me lady! Your concept of "help" is to take more from the poor, forcing them further into the frantic cycle of survival for a laughable \$150.

I beg of you - tell me what \$150 is going to get someone upon release? You know what would help? A wage that would allow people to save money AND buy shampoo AND laundry soap AND stamps. THAT would HELP!

Oh yeah and something a little less patronizing wouldn't hurt either Anne.

#### con't from cover page

and people waiting near the med line area. There was no definitive direction to remain in the gym. There was no definitive direction at all from staff. We were not directed to return to our living units until after they had detained the intruder.

The following day we expected a full lockdown due to this incident, as well as a public statement to be made. Numerous people made several phone calls to members of the community to see if there had been news coverage, any statement on the CSC website, or anything to the community of Kitchener. Nothing had been said at all, and movement began at its usual time. Ironically, previously we had once been locked down due to a missing plant from the large classroom. Later, a statement had been released that led to the public to be allowed to infer that a lockdown or "restricted movement" had begun immediately afterwards. The "restricted movement" did not begin until Tuesday at 3:45pm.

I, K80, met with the Warden, Angela Beecher, on Wednesday morning at which point she stated that it was not a Section 53, because there must be legal grounds to initiate a Section 53 search. She stated that there would be restricted movement due to the immediate influx of population.

This is a great article because of all the conflicting behaviours and information shared between staff during the searches. At house 12, where I (Tanya) live, the dog search staff stated that the search was being conducted due to rumours that the assailant had a weapon and may have had contraband, so the search was for our safety and theirs. There was no reference to a population influx, and how influx would then relate to searches has no parallel at all. In addition, if restricted movement had been occurring versus a lockdown, then people would have been escorted to mental health and healthcare appointments versus missing them entirely. In addition, since it was obviously a lockdown, then there should have been access to fresh air for one hour a day as per law, which we were denied. The obvious thing that would have happened during restricted movements did not begin to touch the horizon of this situation; it appears as though GVI failed to connect even semantics.

Eventually statements were made to the public, although they were minimal and misleading. They informed the public that there was a restricted movement after a break-in but failed to mention it was days later and not immediately afterwards. Yet, if someone behind the walls was ever to play with words in this same

fashion we would be accused of being manipulative and non-transparent.

The response now is to waste taxpayers' money and run a vehicle 24/7 where the perimeter was breached, instead of fixing the electric fence, taking a hard look at security protocols, looking at the homeless encampment less than 200 meters from the fence line, or asking how this was all missed in the first place. I mean there's a lot of questions that I am sure a giant rug from IKEA will cover. Ahh why waste the money at IKEA when you have access to Corcan, they don't get breaks and could make that rug for way less.

The end result will be that people who live at Grand Valley will ultimately be punished by the failure of those with a Teamsters union. We will be hyper-surveilled about sharing cupcakes, because that affects security more than our literal safety. There should be contingency plans for security breaches such as what we experienced, which is why we thought they walked the perimeter hitting it with a stick and responding to each other each morning. "Safety-check check." All the people of Grand Valley really want is some accountability from the people that demand it of us. They should model the behaviour they require. Or they

won't, and no one except them and their own people will ever find out anyways. We curiously pose the question as to why there is not a public inquiry into this incident and not simply a CSC inquiry. Since when do the "police" investigate the "police"? The only time that happens is when we all know there is something to hide and things that should never be shared publicly. At the end of the day, this is a publicly funded business, and the public has a right to know how their money is being used, when it's not being used properly, and when errors happen within their business which will cost them more money. The public does not have to care about people behind the walls during a time when affordable housing and food is difficult to find, but all of that is a convenient smoke screen to allow big business to use your money carelessly. Ask questions - and then demand real answers!

**K80 and Tanya** - People who care about those on the inside and the outside

#### NOT ALL GOOD

##### By Anonymous

When I'm asked why I haven't strung up after so long being here (CNCC in Penetang), well, Penetang is home. Or was, before I got stuck doing 64 months over 5 years in here (at CNCC). Once I'm out, I'm saying goodbye to home and getting far away from here. Let me explain what it's like. Take all the bad shit that's out in the world, slam that all together in an enclosed, locked area and turn a blind eye to the problems. Say oh well, they (meaning us incarcerated) deserve what they get because, what, we're no longer people? Or is it you're all just as lost and can't really do anything either? If that's so, we really are truly fucked!

Fights, yeah. Drugs, got that. Lots and lots of methadone, the liquid handcuff. Processed food, that one's a big problem, you really are what you eat. Very little ways to better yourself while you're here. There's gambling, brew, and my favourite hustle. Everyone's got a hustle, find yours. You'll hear horror stories. Don't get fooled, stay out of politics. Do your time, get out, and someday forget about this fucking place. Maybe the policy makers can come try an over-nighter? Just a thought. Might be a good learning experience. You've got STG, D.O.s, GP, PC, the safer program (broken by the way, already), new fish, short timers, lifers, over-nighters, hide outs - you'll be housed with them all.

Not all inmates are created equal. Where you're housed, who you know, what's your mindset, and can you stand by your word are all really important. Mind your own and do your own thing. So many ways to fuck up, with no manual. Stay away from all politics. Fuck politics! Control yourself, you're not a child anymore, learn that quick. C.O.s have favourites and you ain't it. How you carry yourself and who you associate with reflects on you.

No one deserves to be locked up

without an end date. LET US OUT! You can't keep us forever. We're all in the same cooler, right? So get on the same page. So we can really fix this broken system from inside out. The system won't fix itself, then we have to! We're in this together, so act right and fight the system, not each other. We need to make a better system for everyone, unfortunately, within this very broken system.

#### PRUNING AS REHABILITATION: A JOURNEY OF GROWTH & RENEWAL

##### By Adrian Acosta M.

As I enrolled in a pruning course, I pictured a row of apple trees perfectly aligned, ready to have a few branches snipped - a way to spend time in nature and find some peace.

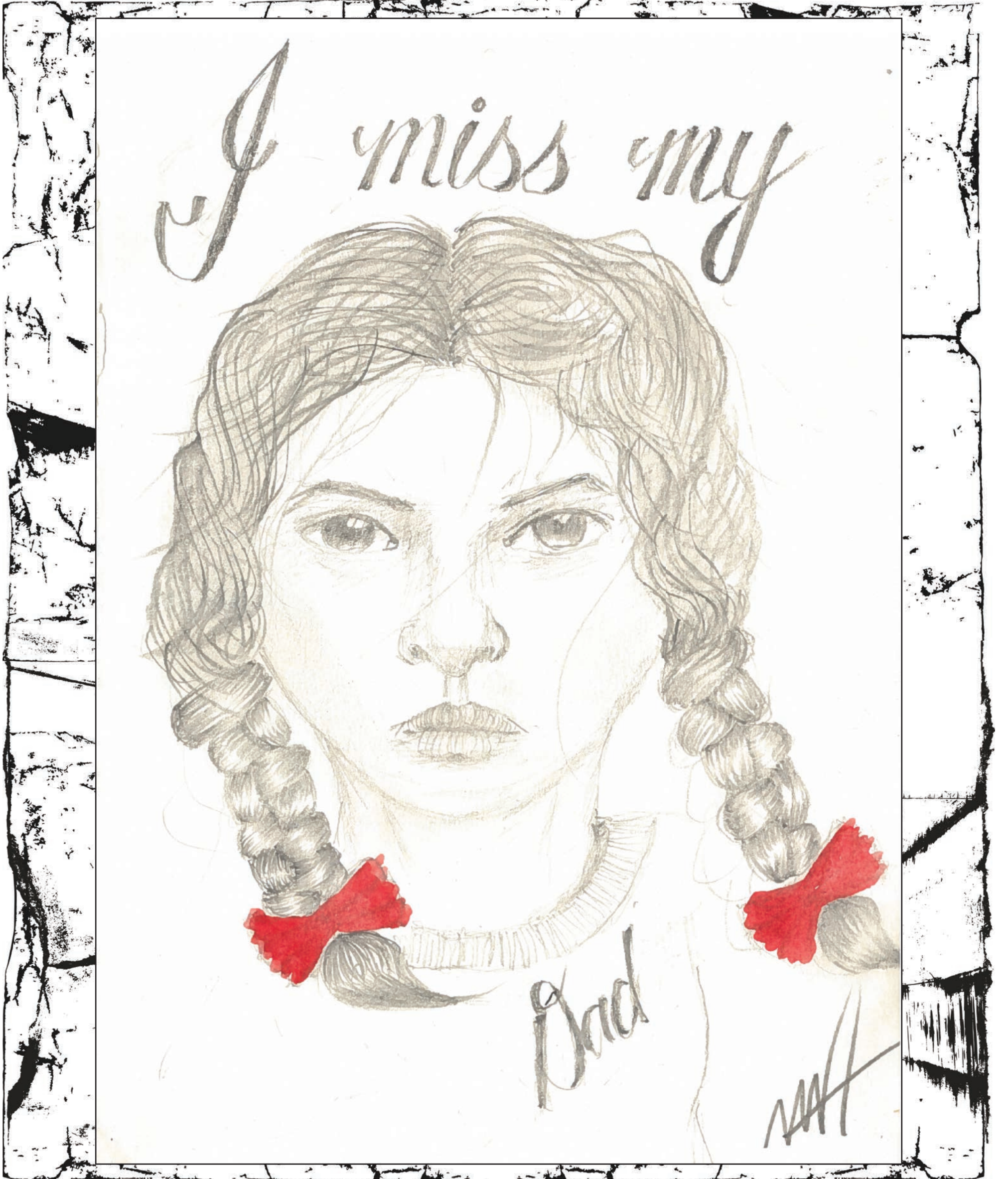
To my surprise, I arrived at an orchard of wild apple trees scattered around in the middle of an uneven field, with grass so tall that it reached my knees, keeping holes and boulders out of sight. A couple of hours into this physically intense training, I came across a clearing, and right in the middle, a massive apple tree emerged. You could tell it was, at some point in its life, a very productive and fruitful tree, by looking at the piles of rotten apples around its roots. As I got close, it was clear that nature had taken back control of the tree; any signs of human intervention had long been erased. Most of the other trees were half the size of this one, maybe because they were growing closer together. This giant one stood isolated from any other tree by at least triple the average distance.

By this point, I was already sweaty, tired, and the weather had not improved at all. Skipping this tree crossed my mind. I mean, who cares if this one tree keeps growing out of control? Maybe I could just leave it for the next group, or next year even. While deciding I took a second glance at it, I started assessing the damage not visible from afar; some of the big branches were almost 100% dead wood with just a few green sprouts at the end of the large twigs. Some of the younger branches were on a collision course with each other or growing towards the ground, where they would eventually die. Somehow, I felt sorry for the tree; a feeling of empathy grew in me. This tree needed help now! Or it may not make it to the next season. As I started removing its dead wood, I could feel weight being lifted from my own shoulders. I could not understand this strange sensation; I just kept going. Until it suddenly hit me. The reason I felt connected to this tree was because I saw part of myself in it. I had to stop for a moment to fully take in the feeling.

As I saw its rotten fruit on the ground, I thought of all the 'fruit' of my life - my achievements, promotions and status; all now rotting in the soil.

The tree was twice as big but twice as lonely too. I was able to see how I was comparing my own success over others. That success came with a heavy price; one I thought was worth it - a lonely path with no support around. Like the tree, having to withstand storms without any protection.

Those once-strong branches, now barely holding on, **con't on pg.12**





**con't from pg.10**

reminded me of times when I was a strong provider.

Now, as I have no more fruit to give, I still was holding onto what I was. These dead branches were just starving any attempt of new growth, new opportunities.

Those little new branches, a living promise for a new fruitful season to come, if not guided and taken care of, would end up in the same place as the old dead ones. In them, I saw a renewed identity, new habits, and core beliefs rediscovered. It is not enough acknowledging what needs to change, but to know why change is needed and where I want to go from here. To the same old place? Or could I change course?

Without any more hesitation, I continued pruning. With each piece of dead wood removed, I thought to myself "it's time to let go - it's harming you." Cutting off the new wood was trickier, any cut made and redirection of branches would not produce any immediate result. It was all about making the decision and hoping that maybe next year (or years) would help the tree flourish again.

It took me a long and harsh path to reach this tree. Even then, I almost walked away from it.

I felt it has been a similar path to observe myself and not dismiss the work needed. I had to go through discomfort on uneven pathways full of hidden rocks and pits waiting for me to stumble and quit. Nevertheless, I kept going.

It was so easy to live on autopilot, letting "nature take over and do its thing" without any control, ignoring every now evident cry for help. It was easy to measure success just by how much "fruit" I was producing or how tall I grew compared to others.

The work of true growth requires vulnerability - a willingness to look at our most protected parts and ask difficult questions. As Dr. Brene Brown might say, it required the courage to be imperfect and face our shame stories head on.

Now, as the tree was almost dead, corrective action was needed with no immediate effect. Only hope remains that it's not too late, that the tree can be saved. That I can be saved.

As I do this massive work on my-

self, I make a promise never to neglect myself like this ever again. It is easy to dismiss all the warning signs when caught in a daily routine, when the most important thing seems to be planning the next vacation trip, or saving enough money for the newest smartphone, even mundane activities like writing a list for the supermarket.

However, I hope this tree analogy helps you, the reader, to realize that you need to pause occasionally and look around. "Pruning" little pieces when needed will do great good in the end.

In my case, I was forced to stop and look at what was going on. I had to be arrested for me to realize what is important in life. I had to be stripped of titles, status, money, relationships even. When only my core values remained is when I had to redefine my identity. I had "grown" way out of control and people I cared about were getting hurt.

I was so ashamed it had to get to this point, but if there is something I have learned in this environment - prison, is that either I could just spiral down in the shame vortex or recognize what I've done wrong, accept it, and try to make amends.

Rehabilitation, like proper pruning, isn't just about cutting away the harmful parts - it's about nurturing what remains to grow in healthier directions. It's about understanding that we can't selectively numb emotions; when we numb shame and pain, we also numb joy and connection.

The most significant insight I've gained is that my worth isn't tied to my productivity or achievements. Just as a properly pruned tree might produce fewer apples but healthier ones, I'm learning that quality of my connections and contributions matter more than their quantity.

When I look back at what led to my offence, I can trace a pattern of disconnection - from myself, from my values, and from those who truly mattered. I had become so focused on external measures of success that I lost sight of the internal compass that might have steered me away from harmful choices.

Now, each day presents a choice: continue the careful work of pruning or allow the wild growth to resume.

I'm learning to identify the early warning signs - the slight discomfort when I'm veering from my values, the small rationalizations that once led me to bigger ones.

I've discovered that sustainable change requires both self-compassion and accountability. It is not enough to feel bad about past actions; I must understand which need those actions were attempting to fulfil and find healthier ways to meet them.

Just as the apple tree needs regular attention rather

than a single dramatic intervention, rehabilitation isn't a one-time event but an ongoing practice. Some days, the work is harder than others. Some cuts are more painful. But I'm committed to the process, believing that with time and attention, new growth will emerge.

The apple tree I encountered that day taught me more than any classroom lecture could ever have. It showed me that even when much appears lost, there remains potential for renewal. It reminded me that growth requires both letting go and nurturing what remains.

As I continue my rehabilitation journey, I carry this image with me: a once-neglected tree, now carefully tended, standing stronger through seasons of change. I don't know what fruit my life will bear in the future, but I'm committed to ensuring it grows from healthier roots and more intentional care.

The work of pruning - both trees and ourselves - is never truly finished. But with each mindful cut and each thoughtful redirection, we create space for new possibilities to emerge. And perhaps that's the most important lesson of all: that even in the midst of consequences, there exists the opportunity for meaningful growth and change.

## LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN IN CORRECTIONS

**By Philly Eh!**

Because I am incarcerated within a correctional institution, I am unable to obtain proper, adequate pain-relieving medication.

My Maladies include: 8 full screws, 2 half screws (broken), 2 rods, 4 fused vertebrae with bone cement/grafting, all in my back; osteo-arthritis in both knees, right hip, right wrist, and my spine; and a fractured right hip. As well as soft-tissue damage in my right hand. And scoliosis.

Because I do not have shingles or diabetic nerve pain I am not allowed to be on Gabapentin or Lyrica. However, the doctor I currently deal with is nice and sympathetic and allows me 150mg of Lyrica in the mornings and 25mg at night. Once I return to Federal, I'm sure this grace period will end.

Other than a few non-opioid medications, such as: Arthrotec and Cymbalta, I am on no real painkillers. As time goes on, my pain increases. Sometimes I am barely able to walk.

Even though I have no history of diverting my medications nor of abusing them, I am still not allowed any opioid medications, which is what I am in desperate need of to control my chronic pain.

Being in chronic pain, I sometimes relapse on drugs/alcohol to give myself a few hours of reprieve. As well, I am on a waiting list to see a spinal surgeon to discuss the removal of all the hardware in my back. However, this would entail losing the function of my legs, putting me in a wheelchair for the rest of my life.

Options: a) be in chronic and severe pain 24/7/365. Or b) lose the function of my legs for life. I'm truly stuck between two crushing boulders! Can anyone help me?! It does not seem so.

## MAKING IT TO CAMP: MR. ALAM MOHAMMAD HAI'S SECRET FOR SUCCESSFUL CASCADING

"Finally, after 16.5 years of incarceration, I have made it to a Minimum Security Institution! It has been a long and challenging journey. However, after all the time and hard work put in, I've finally been recognised for the changes in my life that I have made. I would like to therefore share with you the secret I have learned, through experience, of how I was able to make it to 'camp'. I call it **Your Big House of Doing Time.**"

(Letter to Cell Count, Jan 2026)

### Your 'BIG HOUSE' of Doing Time:

Criminals in the Sub-Culture have a saying...

**"Don't Do The Crime Unless You're Ready To Do The Time."** ★

Prison Guards, and CSC Staffers have a similar saying...

**"If You Don't Like It, Don't Come To Jail."** ★

There is an **'Inmate Code'**★ one is expected by to live by while in Prison.

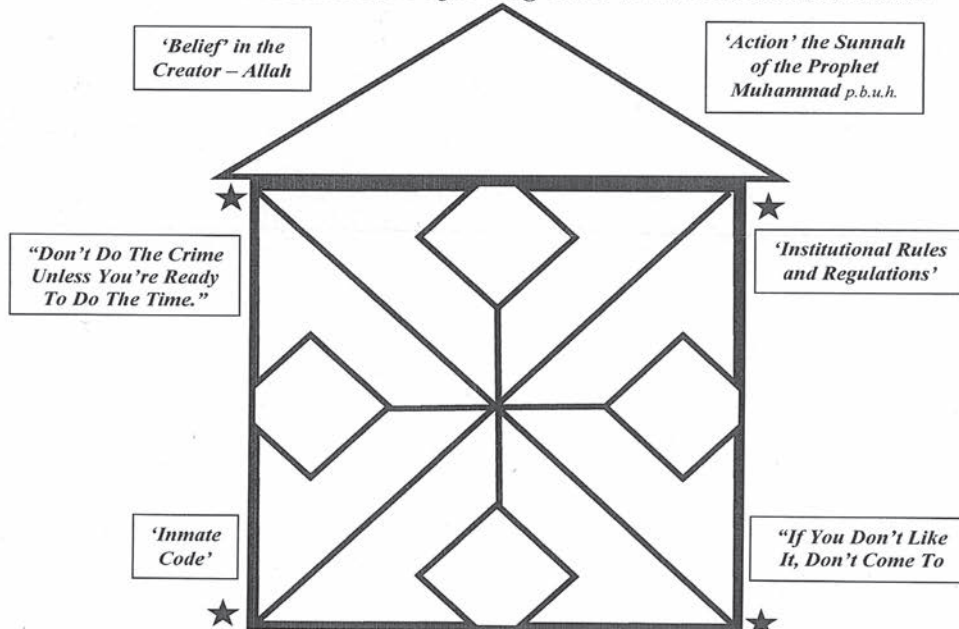
There are also **'Institutional Rules and Regulations'**★ one is expected to live by.

These four points create a boundary. A boundary that one should live within in order to **"Do Time in the BIG HOUSE."**

In between these four points, there are fine lines that one should learn to walk. Learn to walk those fine lines and you will receive the respect and admiration of both, your peers in the inmate body, and the administration. Concede to the first two and live by the second two, and your time and mental/spiritual state will be much more at ease.

However, every house must have a roof. That roof is built upon two very important principals - **Belief and Action** - As for myself; the **Belief** is in the Creator (Allah) and the **Action** is the Sunnah (Prophetic Way of Muhammad p.b.u.h.). For others it may be Belief in the Creator and the Seven Grandfather Teachings. For some it is the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA/NA. Whatever your positive **Belief** system may be, and positive **Action** it calls you towards...

### Govern Your BIG HOUSE Of Doing Time With Belief And Action.



## Canadian Inmates Cupid's Corner

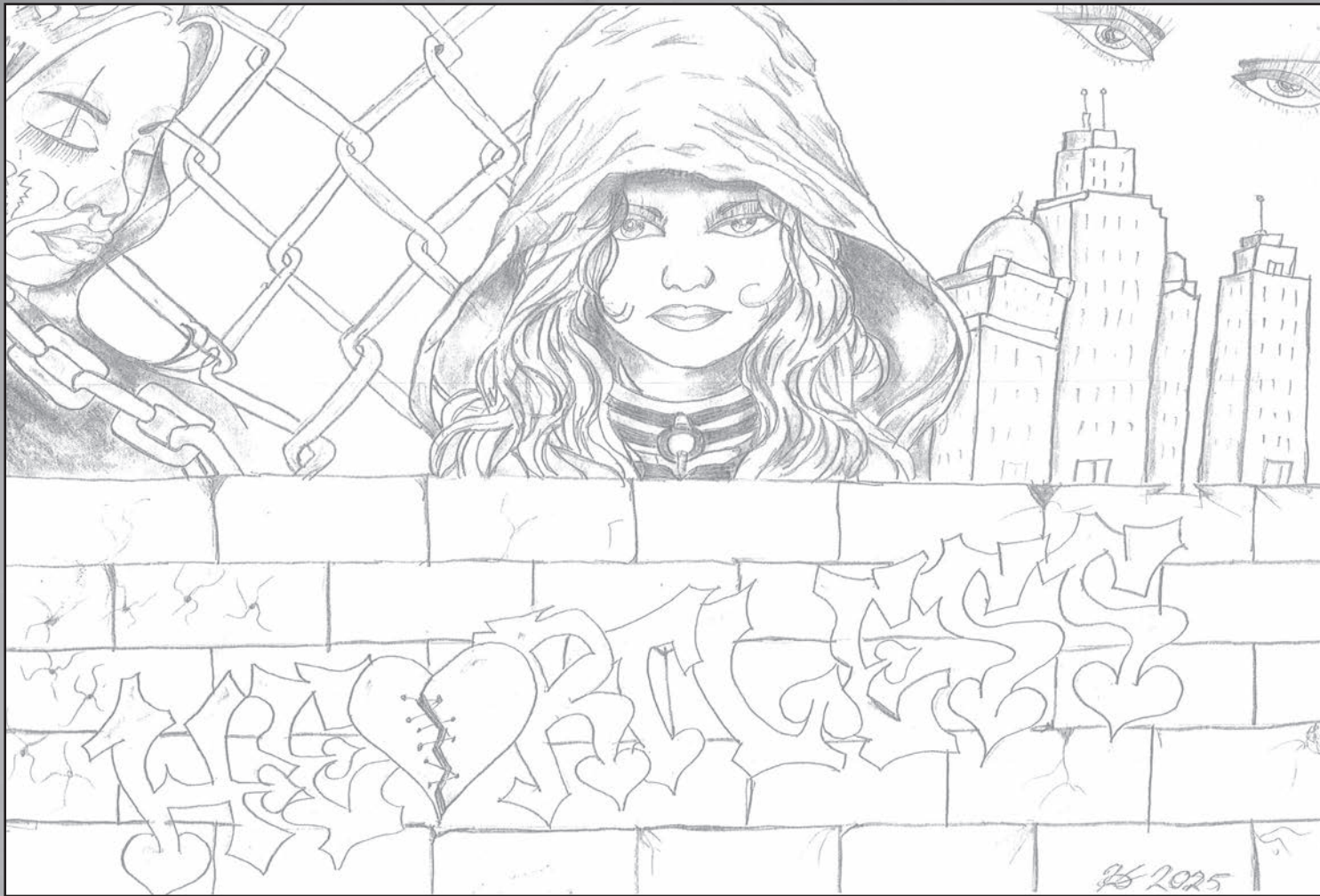


### Looking for Love Beyond Bars?

Canadian Inmates Cupid's Corner offers a safe and respectful way for incarcerated people in Canada to build genuine connections with those on the outside. We believe love, friendship, and hope can flourish—even across distance.

**Want more info?**

Canadian Inmates Cupid's Corner  
PO Box 21041  
Chilliwack RPO Southgate  
BC, V2P 8A9  
E-mail: ttc.prison.wife@gmail.com



## YOU ARE "SHE"

By Forgotten Warrior

She was the bridge, the push, that I needed to search and reach deep within myself to find that positive energy. She then guided me to recover my powerful soul, my ancestral medicine – to authentically know who I'm meant to be and inspire change in my life. She helped me to remember myself, led me back to myself. To step forward with courage and purpose, giving clarity, giving self-reflection and self, waking up to who I am.

She touched my heart, nobody's ever given me a reason to allow them that power.

She helped me find that inner medicine and now meet with my animal spiritual guide, my power.

ARE YOU - "SHE"?

## UNTITLED

By Sophie Alexander

Of all the noises in the world  
I want to run away from  
Run fast, fast, faster  
They are dictating me  
Telling me what do  
What to say  
How to live  
And there's nothing more in life  
That I want  
Than to be my true self  
Free, free, out of jail  
Cageless.



## DON'T LET DEATH COME SWIFT

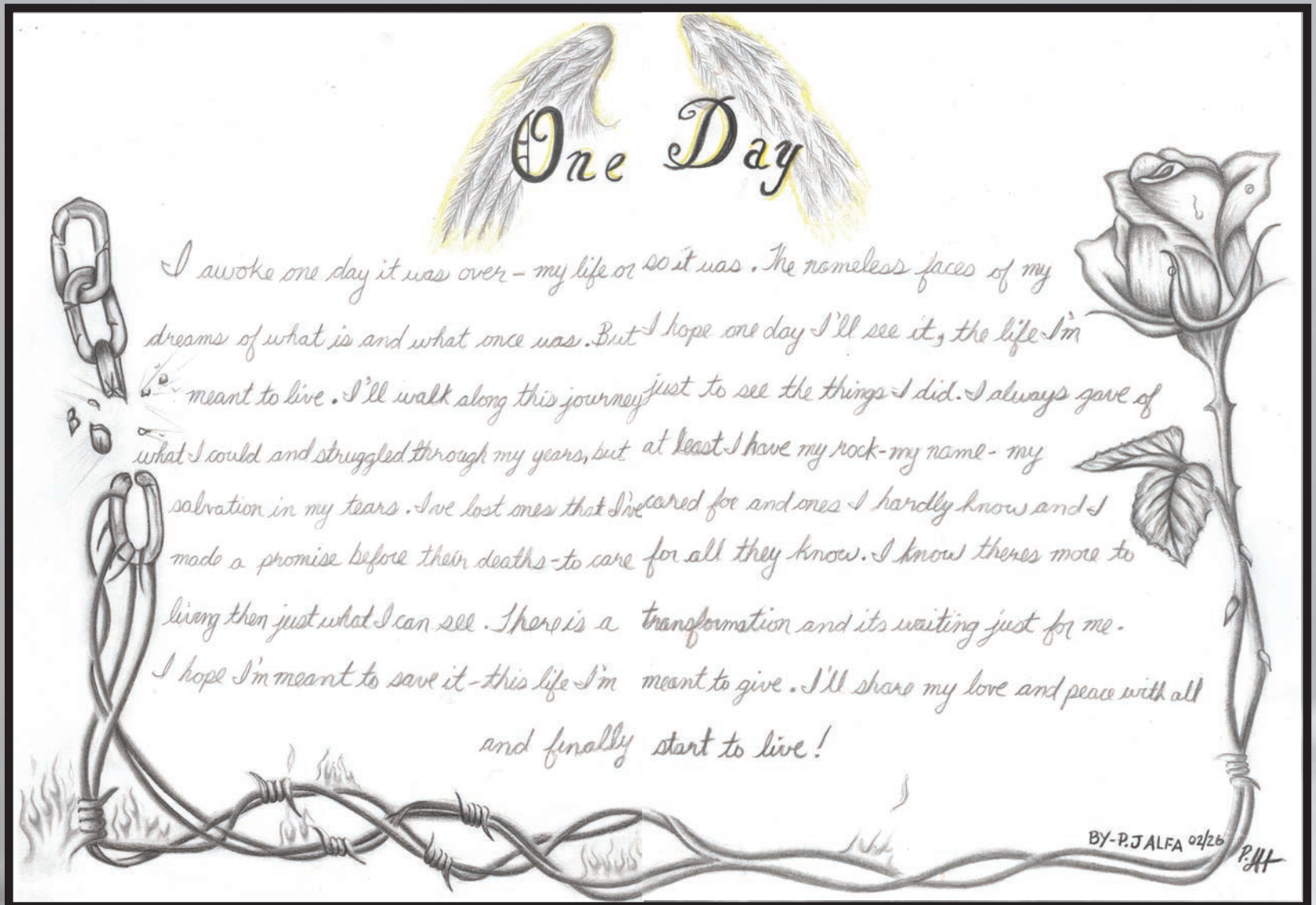
By Justine Wayne

Have had a few bad breaks and depression is in the midst,  
Don't ever let death come real swift  
When you're on the road trying to make it a no stop trip,  
Don't ever let death come real swift  
Smoking a few years and losing your breath bit by bit,  
Don't ever let death come real swift  
Finding it hard to quit and now drinking it stiff,  
Don't ever let death come real swift  
Know it's bad for everything but addicted to the lift,  
Don't ever let death come real swift  
When you feel all hope is gone, remember there is a gift  
Don't ever let death come real swift  
And when you take care of all possibility and declare it all fixed  
Don't ever EVER let death come real swift

## ALONE

By Aaron Fairfield

Alone, yes alone  
You must battle your demons alone  
You stand or fall alone  
All alone  
Make your choices alone  
And face the outcome  
With pride  
Head high  
Aware and in control  
But still alone



## One Day

I awoke one day it was over - my life or so it was. The nameless faces of my dreams of what is and what once was. But I hope one day I'll see it, the life I'm meant to live. I'll walk along this journey just to see the things I did. I always gave of what I could and struggled through my years, but at least I have my rock - my name - my salvation in my tears. I've lost ones that I've cared for and ones I hardly know and I made a promise before their deaths - to care for all they know. I know there's more to living than just what I can see. There is a transformation and it's waiting just for me. I hope I'm meant to save it - this life I'm meant to give. I'll share my love and peace with all and finally start to live!

BY-PJALFA 02/26

P.H.



### The Dream Of Past & Present

*A Dream Of Love*

*Let Me Weep You This Poem As Heaven's Gate Close And Point You My Soul*

*Scarred And Alone*

*Faith Is Lust For My Personal Hell Regained And Love Dust In The Hands Of Shame*

*Let Me Bleed You This Poem Of My Heart*

*I Dream Of Winter In My Heart Turning To Spring*

*While The Ice Gives Way Under My Feet And So I Drown With The Sun*

*I've Been Burning In Water And Drowning In Flame To Prove You Wrong And Pushed You Away*

*I Admit Defeat And Want Back Home*

*And Never To Roam Or Let You Be Alone*

*I'm Drained But Aching For More*

*And The Devil Inside Is Reading The Words Of The Saddest Poem*

*To Be Engraved On The Stone Of My Grave*

*I'd Kill To Share Your Pain*

*And Sell My Soul For You Just To Say*

*"I Dream What You're Dreaming And Feel What You're Feeling"*

*Our Love Is A Shadow On The Wall Of The Face Of God*

*Nothing Will Be Enough For The Ones Who Keep Stumbling In The Garden Of*

*Withering Trust And Lost Love Without The Courage To Leave Or Fight*

*I'd Take My Life For Your Kiss, And Lose It All To Take You Back To Our Loving Bliss*

*To The Woman Who Has Always Been My First True Love, I Am So Afraid Of Life Without You*

*I Try To Call Your Name, But I'm Silenced By The Fear Of Dying In Your Heart And Being Alone Once Again*

*I See The Seasons Changing And In The Heart Of This Autumn*

*I Fall With The Leaves From This Family Tree That Was Split By Me*

*I Play Dead To Hide My Heart Until The World's Gone Dark And Fades Away*

*I Cry Like God Cries The Rain And I'm Just Steps Away From End Of Today*

*I See The Reasons Changing And In The Warmth Of The Fiery Past*

*I Crawl, Scorched By All My Shame*

*I Stay Dead Until You, My Love*

*Veil My Scars And Say Goodbye To Fate*

*And Save Us Before It's Too Late*

*You Are My Past But Are The Dream Of My Future*

*So Don't Give In And I'll Never Give Up*

*"Forever We Are Forever"*

*"We've Been Forever"*

*"We'll Be Crucified To This Dream Of My Bleeding Heart."*

*Forever.*



By: Brenden Groskopf

### ADDICTION

By Michael B.

They say it only takes sixty days to form a habit.

But trauma? That can take a lifetime to untangle.

It's no wonder we fall apart just trying to cope.

Repeat something often enough, and it loses its edge.

Boredom sets in – and with it, temptation.

Push the goalposts. Try something riskier.

Numb the ache in new ways.

We chase more. And more. And more –

But it's never enough to silence the noise inside.

The habit becomes its own shame.

And shame? It demands hiding. So, we retreat. Into the dark.

Away from friends. Away from family. Trying not to feel anything at all.

This is addiction. This is war with yourself.

I've heard it said: The opposite of addiction is connection.

But how far must someone fall before they reach out?

Just one more time, then I'll quit. I promise.

Knock on the door. Twelve officers. Cuffs. Chains. Silence.

"It's not my fault!" "I didn't do it!" "They made me!"

Days pass in a cell until the mirror finally clears: "I did this."

Sometimes, it takes a storm to force a reckoning.

To strip the lies down to the bone.

Family tried to warn me. Friends held on through chaos.

Some walked away. Others stayed.

Now, I sit in stillness.

And time? - Time becomes my teacher.

Yes, addiction steals your will. But I still had choices.

And my compass? It drifted.

Wrong started to look reasonable. Boundaries blurred.

I needed a reboot. A new map. A new belief in myself.

Do I believe in God? Could I? What would

I lose by trying?

"Dear God, I've made mistakes. I've caused pain.

But I want to change. Please be patient with me."

The habits are strong. But I am learning to stand.

I joined a group. Others like me. And for once – I didn't feel alone.

They held me accountable. They offered grace. They didn't judge.

One day at a time, I reach for the fight.

I reach out instead of shutting down.

I am not my addiction. I am not my worst choices.

I am a man – Still healing. Still learning. Still worthy.

I will love myself.

And I will stay the course.

### SKYFALL

By Dayla Robinson

If the sky fell upon our graves, if it was me and you against the world my bae, you can count on me, to shield you from the rains, we'll reminisce about it on the better days.

Cause if the sky falls on our graves, if the last light shone on us bae, I'll be right here, cause I'm here to stay, I'll find you in the next life, I'll find a way.

If it was me and you bae against the grain, right or wrong I'm in your corner, we can share the pain, just tell me all your secrets, let me take it away and I'll lie to you that it will be okay.

If the world just went insane, we could lose ourselves and become tame, maybe we could try all the twisted games, maybe the government could use a change.

Cause it seems like we're all a part of a play, where only the famous end up with a praise, something's gotta give or the stage will cave, if I could only choose one, you'd be the one I'd save.

### THE SHAPE OF TEARDROPS

By Fuzzy (The Bastard Gnome)

I am a son and an orphan. I'm a sailor holding fast and yet I've never sailed the seven seas. I'm as loyal as a dog and yet I'm a wolf that howls its anguish in the moonlight. I'm an addict and yet I'm sober. I have no siblings and yet I have brothers. I struggle to forgive myself and yet they forgive me. I'm a father with arms full of love and yet I grieve for the loss of my child. I am more than what the world chose to see, so look closely and see what it is, or do you dare to dream of what it could be. For I am so much more than the world has chosen to see, for I am me and there is only one me.

Yet the more I share of myself the more I become the illusions others see. For my truth, your truth, the truth of identity is hidden in the whispering shadows of our guarded hearts. Only ever to be seen by those who dare to lift the masks of perceptions and look underneath. So, I ask you, how could I ever be lost on this adventure of life, when the stars themselves are guiding my imagination to a destination it cannot fathom, just yet.

But on this journey of life do the puddles I see truly show a reflection of me or what the world's chosen to see? Do they truly show a reflection of a world that was or a world that could be?

For when I look into the mirror, the image is clouded by age, I cry out, who am I? What is my name? Who am I? What is my name? Tearfully I whisper forget me not, forget me not. For sadly I've already forgotten. My darling daughter, my sweet little princess changed the shape of my teardrops and taught this old fool the most incredible of things, how to simply change my world by simply changing how I see.

### NO GOOD WALLS

By Bear

I built these walls I am tearing down; it took years for the walls to be so thick.

I stacked up heartaches one by one and sorrows brick by brick.

I carried this burden from town to town; it became a part of me.

And here I am, just setting it down allowing myself to be free.

I made the choices that led to here, there's no denying that.

But I've decided now to change my mind, I'm breaking these chains that bind me.

I built these walls I am tearing down. But I don't need them any longer.

You see, I know who I am, and I know who I was, and tearing down these walls makes me stronger.

### THIS LOVE INSIDE

By Kayla Rose

This love inside me won't stop

It's bursting at the seams...

Let me out, let me out!

It screams!

So full of love, it cannot be contained.

It's in the small giggles, the blushing cheeks,

The endless letters of love written to you.

It's in all the love songs being written only

For me and you.

It's the permasmile stuck on my face

Any time I think of you

This love inside is real, it's true.

It refuses to be hidden

It wants to be seen; it wants to be free.

This love is in everything I am and

All that I can do...

I truly love you,

And let the world know...

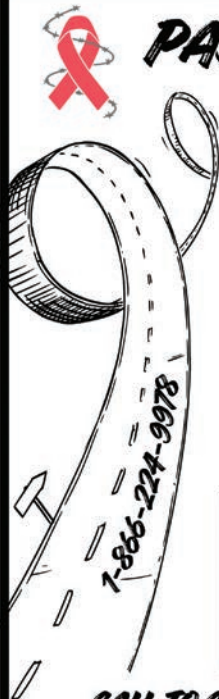
I'm in love with you!

# 15 BULLETIN BOARD

ISSUE #111: CONNECTIONS



## PASAN IN-REACH SCHEDULE



**TEDC:** Weekly on Fridays  
**TSDC:** Weekly on Wednesdays  
1-to-1 and Groups - Contact **Damjan** at ext. 231

**MAPLEHURST & HWDC:** Alternating Wednesdays  
1-to-1 and Groups - Contact **Cherisa** at ext. 233

**HEPATITIS C PROGRAM / WORKSHOPS**  
**TSDC:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month  
**CNCC:** 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday & Wednesday of the month  
Contact **Chance** at ext. 230

**ONTARIO FEDERAL PENS**  
No regular schedule. Watch for our posters in your institution for different workshops and Cell Count newsrooms - Contact federal workers **Omar** (ext. 239) and **Yasmeen** (ext. 222)

**CALL TO CONFIRM - SCHEDULES CAN SOMETIMES CHANGE**

### 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 are in Eastern Standard time)

- Phone Hours: Mon – Fri from 9am-4pm  
**\*We are a small staff and a busy office, if you call and don't get through to anyone, please keep trying!**
- 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)
- Release Funds - \$50 (twice a year max)
- TTC Tickets – 2 each for clients who attend workshops/programming
- Harm Reduction Materials (safe smoking kits, safer needle use kits, condoms, etc.) available for everyone Mon - Fri from 10am-5pm

### CALL TOLL-FREE! (FORGET COLLECT)

If you are in any Federal or Provincial Institution or Detention Centre call us using our toll-free # 1-866-224-9978

### 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: 900+ / 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."

### !! NEXT CELL COUNT !! !! DEADLINE !!

**PRIDE & Pre-PJD ISSUE for JUNE '26  
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT = MAY 15**

**PJD 2026 ISSUE for AUGUST '26:  
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT = JUNE 26**

Submissions to Cell Count are also accepted on an ongoing basis. Submissions that don't make it into the next issue, will be prioritized for the next one. This goes for all future submissions. So don't hesitate to send in your submission whenever it's ready!

### \*\* SUBMIT TO CELL COUNT !! \*\*

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 include a completed submission form or a short letter that includes:**

- Your name
- The name you want published
- Permission to publish your work
- If you want your stuff mailed back to you or sent to someone else
- If it's okay to edit your writing for grammar, spelling, or length, etc.
- If it's okay to make any minor changes to your art for publication

*We recommend you keep a photocopy of your work 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!

**Please note:** If you do send something to us, you're welcome to give us a call so we know to look out for it in the mail. We suggest you call us a week or two after you send it to make sure we got it. This is why we recommend keeping a copy, just in case. If mailing is a concern, call us and we can talk about transcribing instead.

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 from PASAN staff, 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.

### DID YOU MOVE? GET TRANSFERRED? DID YOU STOP GETTING YOUR CELL COUNT?

We often get about 75-100 Cell Counts returned to us each mail-out (and sometimes more!). Please help us reduce our mailing expenses and help us get your issue to you by letting us know of any address change, ASAP! Thank you for taking care with this.

### CELL COUNT AT COLLINS BAY INSTITUTION

We have been informed that all Cell Count subscriptions at Collins Bay Institution are given to the volunteer liaison to distribute. So please give them a visit and ask for your envelope by name!

### 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 RJ if you're interested! 1-866-224-9978 x234

### A NOTE ABOUT PEN PALS:

Here is a list of correspondence services for people inside (alternatives to pen pals, which is still, 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

• **Penn2Paper:** A group of community volunteers who support prisoners in having platonic, safe, and meaningful pen pal connections.

\*PACIFIC & PRAIRIE INSTITUTIONS write to them here: Penn2Paper, 104-1015 Columbia St. BOX 873, New Westminster, BC, V3M 6V3

\*ONTARIO & ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS write to them here: 2-140 King St. E. BOX 308, Hamilton, ON, L8N 1B2

• **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" (quote from their website). *Write to them here:* QPIRG Concordia c/o Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest, Montreal, QC H3G 1M8

If you have had success using a pen pal service 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.

## ASPIRE 2 HEAL

FROM HURT TO HOPE



Micro-scholarships, financial literacy resources, mental health support, and a strong community network



**YOUTH AGES  
18-29**



**PARENT/GUARDIAN  
INCARCERATED IN CANADA  
(OR RELEASED WITHIN LAST 10YRS)**



**ENROLLED IN HEALTH  
RELATED POST-SECONDARY  
PROGRAM**



# SUPPORT RESOURCES

ISSUE #111: CONNECTIONS



## EAST COAST

### ALLY CENTRE OF CAPE BRETON

Accepts collect calls  
75 Prince Street, Sydney NS, B1P 5J9 / 902-567-1766 (Exec Director)  
**AIDS NEW BRUNSWICK**  
Accepts collect calls  
203-440 Wilsey Rd, Fredericton NB, E3B 7G5 / 1-800-561-4009, 506-459-7518  
**AIDS COMMITTEE OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**  
Accepts collect calls  
47 Janeway Place, St. John's NL, A1A 1R7 / 1-800-563-1575

### AIDS PEI

Accepts collect calls  
250-B Queen Street, Charlottetown PE, C1A 4B8 / 902-566-2437

### BOOKS BEYOND BARS

P.O. Box 40047  
Robbie Street PO, Halifax NS, B3K 0E4

### HEALING OUR NATIONS

Toll-free calls  
31 Gloster Court, Dartmouth NS, B3B 1X9 / 1-800-565-4255, 902-492-4255

### HEALTH EQUITY ALLIANCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

Toll-free calls  
200-5516 Spring Garden Road, Halifax NS, B3J 1G6 / 1-800-566-2437, 902-425-4882  
**MAINLINE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**  
Toll-free calls  
5367 Cogswell St, Halifax NS, B3J 3X5 / 1-877-904-4555, 902-423-9991  
**SHARP ADVICE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**  
\*Run by Ally Centre of Cape Breton  
Accepts collect calls  
75 Prince Street, Sydney NS, B1P 5J9 / 902-539-5556 (Program Coordinator)

## QUEBEC

### CACTUS

Accepts collect calls  
1300 rue Sanguinet, Montreal QC, H2X 3E7 / 514-847-0067  
**CENTRE for AIDS SERVICES MONTREAL (Women)**  
Toll free calls  
2301 rue Jean- Talon Est, Montréal QC, H2E 1V8 / 1-877-847-3636, 514-495-0990  
**COALITION des ORGANISMES COMMUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de LUTTECONTRE le SIDA (COCQSIDA)**  
Accepts collect calls  
1 est, rue Sherbrooke, Montréal, H2X 3V8 / 514-844-2477

## ONTARIO

### 2-SPIRITED PEOPLE of the FIRST NATIONS

Accepts collect calls  
105-145 Front Street East, Toronto ON, M5A 1E3 / 416-944-9300  
**AFRICANS in PARTNERSHIP AGAINST AIDS**  
No collect calls, call PASAN  
163 Queen St E 2nd floor, Toronto, ON M7A 2H6 / 416-924-5256  
**AIDS COMMITTEE of CAMBRIDGE, KITCHENER, WATERLOO & AREA**  
Toll-free calls  
1770 King St E Unit 5, Kitchener ON,

N2G 2P1 / 1-877-770-3687, 519-570-3687

### AIDS COMMITTEE of NORTH BAY and AREA

Accepts collect calls  
147 McIntyre St W #102, North Bay ON, P1B 3W8 / 705-497-3560

### AIDS COMMITTEE of OTTAWA

Toll-free calls (ON & QC only)  
Accepts collect calls  
19 Main St, Ottawa, ON K1S 1A9 / 1-800-461-2182, 613-238-5014

### AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY

106 Cumberland St N #102, Thunder Bay ON, P7A 4M2 / 1-800-488-5840, 807-345-1516 (Collect)

### ANISHNAWBE HEALTH AIDS PROGRAM

No collect calls  
425 Cherry Street, Toronto, ON / 416-360-0486

### ASIAN COMMUNITY AIDS SERVICE

No collect calls  
\*But they offer small bursaries to prisoners to cover calling fees  
260 Spadina Ave., #410, Toronto ON, M5T 2E4 / 416-963-4300

### BLACK COALITION for AIDS PREVENTION

Accepts collect calls  
20 Victoria St, 4th Flr, Toronto, M5C 2N8 / 416-977-9955 (Collect)

### BLACK LEGAL ACTION

Toll-free calls  
180 Dundas St W unit 1509, Toronto, ON, M5G 1Z8 / 1-877-736-9406, 416-597-5831

### Correctional Facilities Toll Free:

1-877-279-0680 or 1-844-302-2694

### FIFE HOUSE

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

### HIV/AIDS LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO (HALCO)

Toll-free calls  
55 University Avenue, Suite 1400 Toronto, ON, M5J 2H7 1-888-705-8889

### HIV LEGAL NETWORK

Accepts collect calls  
1240 Bay St #600, Toronto, M5R 2A7 / 416-595-1666

### HIV/AIDS REGIONAL SERVICES (HARS)

Toll-free calls  
844-A Princess St, Kingston ON, K7L 1G5 / 1-800-565-2209, 613-545-3698

### JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF TORONTO

Toll-free calls  
1669 Eglinton Ave West, Toronto ON, M6E 2H4 / 1-866-265-4434

### ONTARIO ABORIGINAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

Toll-free calls  
282 Parliament St, Toronto ON, M4X 1A8 / 1-800-743-8851, 647-490-6339

### PEEL HIV/AIDS NETWORK

Toll-free calls  
601-7700 Hurontario St, Brampton ON, L6Y 4M3 / 1-866-896-8700, 905-361-0523

### PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE NETWORK (PARN)

Toll-free calls  
60 Hunter St E 2nd Floor, Peterborough ON, K9H 1G5 / 1-800-361-2895, 705-932-9110

### POSITIVE LIVING NIAGARA

Toll-free calls / Accepts collect calls (from registered clients) - We recommend that you get a case manager to get registered with them  
120 Queenston St, St. Catharines ON, L2R 2Z3 / 1-800-773-9843, 905-984-8684

### STREET HEALTH CENTRE (KCHC)

Accepts collect calls  
Hepatitis C Treatment Program  
115 Barrack St, Kingston ON, K7K 1G2 / 613-549-1440

### THE AIDS NETWORK (TAN)

Toll-free calls  
101-140 King St E, Hamilton ON, L8N 1B2 / 1-866-563-0563, 905-528-0854

### TORONTO COMMUNITY HEP C PROGRAM

Accepts collect calls  
955 Queen Street East, Toronto, M4M 3P3 (SRCHC) / 416-461-1925 (Collect calls only on Tues & Fri 11am-5pm)

### TORONTO PWA FOUNDATION

Accepts collect calls (clients only)  
163 Queen Street East, 2nd Fl., Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1S1 / 416-506-1400

### ASSOC.

No collect calls  
54 10th St E, Prince Albert SK, S6V 0Y5 3/ 06-763-5356

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

Toll-free calls  
2735 5th Ave, Regina SK, S4T 0L2 / 1-877-210-7622

### STREET CONNECTIONS

496 Hargrave St, Main Floor, Winnipeg MB, R3A 0X7 / 204-981-0742

## WEST COAST

### AVI HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Toll-free calls  
Accepts collect calls  
713 Johnson St, 3rd Flr, Victoria BC, V8W 1M8 / 1-800-665-2437, 250-384-2366

### LINC

Toll-free calls  
33270 14th Ave, Mission BC, V2V 4Z7 / 1-877-424-4242 (BC only), 1-866-224-9978 (Federal Toll-free)

### CAAN

Toll-free calls  
6520 Salish Dr, Vancouver BC, V6N 2C7 / 1-800-727-5835 (toll-free), 1-306-332-0553 (local toll-free), 604-266-7616

## NATIONAL

### BRAIN INJURY ASSOC OF CANADA

Accepts collect calls  
440 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 200 Ottawa ON, K1R 7X6 / 1-866-977-2492

### CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES (Women)

Accepts collect calls  
701-151 Slater St., Ottawa ON, K1P 5H3 / 613-238-2422

### CATIE

Toll-free calls  
555 Richmond St W #505, Toronto ON, M5V 3B1 / 1-800-263-1638

### EAST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SOCIETY

Toll-free calls  
6061 University Ave, PO Box 15000, Halifax NS, B3H 4R2 / 1-877-589-9294

### NEW LIFE PRISON MINISTRIES

Toll-free calls / No collect calls  
P.O. Box 123, Arva ON, N0M 1C0 / 1-888-842-6898, 519-666-1950

### WEST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SOCIETY/PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICES

Toll-free calls  
Accepts collect calls  
302-7818 6th Street, Burnaby BC, V3N 4N8 / 1-866-577-5245 (toll-free for federal prisoners), 604-636-0464 (for provincial prisoners), 604-636-0470

## OTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

**OUT OF BOUNDS MAGAZINE**  
6000 William Head Rd, Victoria BC, V9C 0B5  
**PRISON FREE PRESS**  
PO Box 39 Stn P, Toronto ON, M5S 2S6

## PRISON BOOK PROGRAMS

### BOOKS BEYOND BARS

No collect calls  
PO Box 33129  
Halifax NS, B3L 4T6

### BOOK CLUBS FOR INMATES

c/o Centre for Social Innovation  
720 Bathurst St, Toronto ON, M5S 2R4

### BOOKS 2 PRISONERS

Accepts collect calls  
PO Box 78005, 1755 East Broadway Vancouver BC, V5N 5W1 / 604-682-3269 x3019

### BOOKS 2 PRISONERS CANADA (new!)

Welcomes individual-prisoner requests for books. Write to them here:  
Riverside South P.O., PO Box 82021, K1V 2N9

### BOOKS TO PRISONERS - OPIRG Carleton

326 UniCenter, Carleton University  
Ottawa ON, K1S 5B6

### GELA PRISON LIBRARIES PROJECT

PO Box 35022, Edmonton RPO, Midtown AB, T5J 0B7

### OPEN DOOR BOOKS (ODB)

c/o QPIRG Concordia  
Accepts collect calls  
Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve O, Montreal QC, H3G 1M8 / 514-848-7585

## PRISONER RIGHTS

### BLACK INMATES & FRIENDS ASSEMBLY

Accepts collect calls  
2518 Eglinton Avenue W, Toronto ON, M6M 1T1 / 416-652-3131

### CRIMINALIZATION AND PUNISHMENT EDUCATION PROJECT (CPEP)

University of Ottawa, Dept of Criminology, 120 University Private, room 14002, Ottawa ON K1N 6N5

### DISABILITY NETWORK OF ONTARIO'S PRISON PROJECT

Accepts collect calls  
Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion  
423 King St East, Hamilton, ON L8N 1C5 \*see page 3 for contact numbers

### PRISONERS UNITED ORGANIZATION

No collect calls  
PO Box 30009, Greenbank North PO, Ottawa ON, K2H 1A3 / 613-567-JAIL (5245)

### TORONTO PRISONERS' RIGHTS PROJECT

(Runs the Prisoner Emergency Support Fund)  
PO Box 291 Toronto P, Toronto ON, M5S 2S8

## SUBMIT TO CELL COUNT: TEAR IT OUT - FILL IT OUT - SEND IT IN WITH YOUR SUBMISSION

you do not need this form to submit! you can also just send a letter or note with your stuff that answers these questions or give us a call toll-free and let us know your answers

- IT'S OKAY TO EDIT MY WRITING FOR:  SPELLING  GRAMMAR  LENGTH

(NOTE: WE WILL NEVER EDIT THE MEANING OF YOUR WRITING! WE ONLY EDIT BECAUSE YOU ASK US TO, OR IF WE REALLY WANT TO PRINT YOUR PIECE BUT IT'S TOO LONG OR CONTAINS NAMES THAT CAN'T BE PRINTED)

- IT'S OKAY TO EDIT MY ART IF YOU NEED TO:  YES  NO

(EXAMPLE: SOMETIMES WE ADD BACKGROUNDS, MIGHT NEED TO REMOVE VISUALS OF WEAPONS OR NUDITY, ETC. WE TRY TO DO THIS AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE, WE PROMISE!)

- I GIVE PERMISSION TO USE MY ART FOR OTHER PASAN MATERIALS AND PROJECTS:  YES, YOU CAN USE MY ART FOR ALL THE THINGS  NO, ONLY USE MY ART IN CELL COUNT

(EXAMPLE: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES & BOOKLETS, OUTREACH POSTERS, FUNDRAISING MATERIAL, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.)

- CLEARLY PRINT THE NAME YOU WANT TO HAVE PUBLISHED WITH YOUR WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

OR CHOOSE ONE OF THESE OPTIONS -  ANONYMOUS  UNKNOWN

- DO YOU WANT YOUR ORIGINAL ARTWORK OR WRITING RETURNED TO YOU?  NO  YES (TO INSTITUTION)  YES (SEND IT HERE): \_\_\_\_\_