

CELL COUNT

YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY- AUGUST 2026 - #113



BY: P. JOHNNY ALFA

PRISONER'S JUSTICE DAY

By Tanya Bogdanovich

Who knew that a tragedy in 1974, which led others to come together in a day of solidarity in 1975, would become a recognized day around the world. The tragedy was the suicide in segregation of an advocate, Eddie Nalon, who wanted nothing more than reasonable working conditions and reasonable wages. His cries for help were ignored in lieu of a poker game being played by those in uniform. It was a sad and terrible August 10th in 1974.

The following year, on the day of Eddie's death, all those who lived behind the walls which Eddie once did, decided not to work, eat,

or speak to anyone who did not live behind the walls with them. It was frightening for those in uniform to see such solidarity. And every year it continued. A day of justice. Slowly, word of this practice spread, sadly so did the deaths of other activists and advocates. As the years passed, it flowed from prison to prison. And then into the women's sector where I reside. And from the federal prison system to the provincial system where I first encountered Prisoner's Justice Day. I was awed by this. Encouraged by this. Enraged by this. Enlightened by this. I was inspired by this.

It carried beyond the walls, beyond the gates, and into communities. Prisoner's Justice Day is becoming the revolution that I dreamed of while staring at cinderblocks, when others told

me I dreamed too grandly. In towns and cities, it is recognized and observed. Accountabilities for lost lives is being demanded. Violence against those who live in carceral spaces is no longer accepted as deserved; their deaths no longer viewed as acceptable losses. Answers are being demanded to questions that are being asked loudly by masses, that were never expected by the corporation of Corrections Service Canada.

Love for those behind bars comes from around the world, when we have never met face to face. We build bridges of solidarity. We find strength together through a common belief. That we are all people, that we all have value, that we all deserve fair and equal treatment, and that regardless of walls or fences, we all look out for one another.

Prisoner's Justice Day is more than not eating, not working, and not talking to CSC employees to me. To me, it is a day of reflection. Many people observe it in different fashions. Some do not watch television, some simply read, many pray, some give up niceties that were fought for that we often take for granted. Last year, I tossed together something quickly just to see who would show up. After 5:30pm, suddenly 104 people all converged. We smudged and drummed the Men's Honour Song, the Women's Honour Song, and the Travelling Song, before peacefully parting ways. It was beautiful to see so many of us all come together. Frankly, I was shocked. It was stunning to see the solidarity. A giant circle of loss, love, and support. It meant a lot to see that people [con't on pg.7]

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Cell Count Readers,

I'm going to keep this one short, because you're going to have plenty to read this issue. Your voices, your insight, your wisdom, your creativity, your comedy, your anger, your grief, your distress, and your strength all fill these pages every issue. This PJD issue is no different, there is such a depth of both hopelessness and hope, rage and joy, sorrow and solace. August is a funny month for that - between Prisoners' Justice Day on August 10 and Overdose Awareness Day on August 31. Both of these days are steeped in such grief, sadness, and rage. And yet from that, they also incite such fervor, solidarity, and intentional action to fight against injustices. I think PJD is a testament that things like *anger* and *rage* are not *bad* feelings, that they are emotions that are telling us something, it's more about what we do with them. The very first PJD saw prisoners using that rage to honour the deaths that were caused by injustices behind prison walls and to demand changes and more rights. And they did this by doing less, intentionally, not more. Hunger strikes, cell strikes, work refusals. Because sometimes "*less*" is **so much more**.

It's understandable when some of you share your discouragement about Prisoners' Justice Day; changes have been slow and small and things inside are still nowhere where we need them to be. Because you're still inside. And for many of us out here, that's the point for why we need to keep fighting. Sometimes by doing less, sometimes by doing more. But by *doing*. And doing it together. As communities and as comrades, inside and out, we can continue to advocate for change and for a system that doesn't profit off of oppression and violence. Let's keep fighting for a community system that leads with empathy, compassion, and transformation when addressing harms done and prioritizes healing, not punishment.

Thank you for sharing your fight within these pages. Your perspectives and your stories are so important and are making a difference for each other on the inside, and continue pushing the fight forward on the outside. And these pages are committed to always raising your voices to the frontlines.

Until next issue, in solidarity and in trouble,

RJ Chevalier, Cell Count Editor



Upcoming Cell Count Issues: What You Need to Know

Issue #114: Special Issue on HCV (in partnership with Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre)

- Deadline for submissions: EXTENDED TO September 05, 2026**

Looking for art, stories, accounts, poetry, recommendations, creative writing, information sharing, harm reduction tips, and more on the topic of Hep-C, stigma, access to care, treatment, testing, etc. What does harm reduction, testing, treatment for Hep-C look like inside? What would you like to see happen differently? What needs to change?

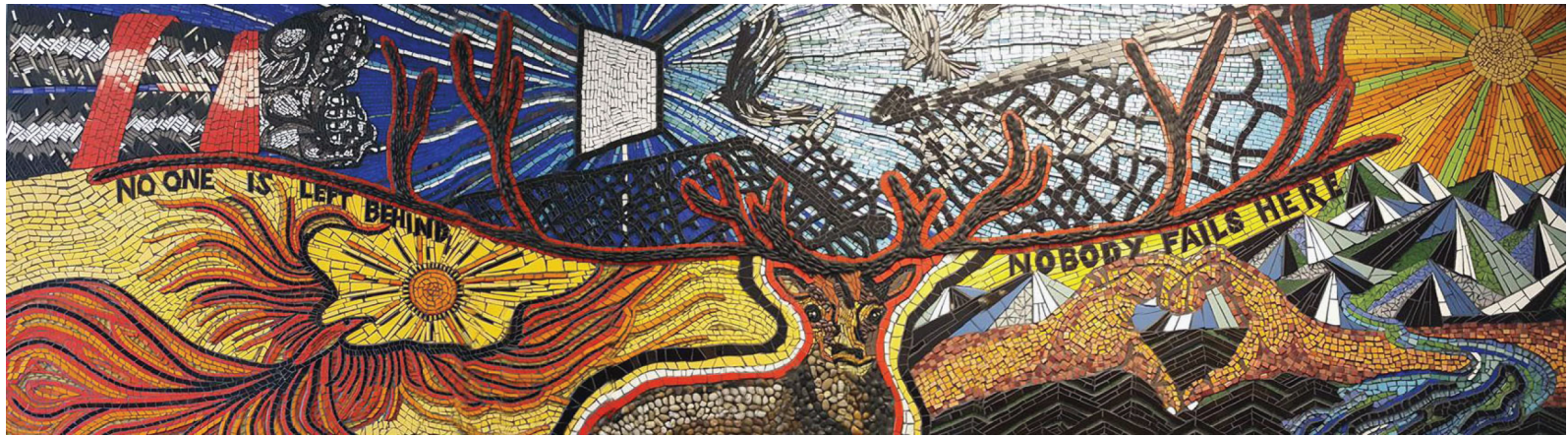
Issue #115: Programs, Resources, and Access

- Deadline for submissions: November 01, 2026**

For this issue we want to hear more from you on programming and resources inside. What is available to you and/or what is supposed to be available to you (education, different therapies, skills development, literacy learning, work training, life skills, ... ??) Have you accessed any of these things? What does accessing programs look like? What is it like to try to create programming for yourself as a prisoner? What did programming used to look like (old timers, we're looking at you) vs now? Tell us your wish list of what supports and programming you would like to see inside. Tell us how you take care of yourself from day to day when access is slim to none. We want to hear the good, the bad, and everything in between.

Send artwork, poetry, stories, articles, recommendations, fiction, etc. We want to see it all!

Even though we can't print it all, we love to receive it. We also keep submissions on file for a while for potential use in future issues.



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.

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

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PJD: BEYOND THE WALLS & THE HISTORY WITHIN THEM

by PASAN Staff

This year's Prisoners' Justice Day once again brought many people together, in many different cities and places across the country, to remember those who have died in custody, to honour those who have fought and those who continue to fight for their rights and demand an end to the conditions that cause harm inside prisons and jails. This year, Toronto organizations – Oahas (Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy), 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nation, Black CAP (Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention), CAAT (Community Alliance for Accessible Treatment), LOFT Community Services, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (PQWCHC), Rittenhouse, and PASAN – filled a bus and took our PJD spirit to the walls and rallied outside Toronto South Detention Centre. We made lots of noise, carried large banners and signs and posters, we shared our demands, and read the names of people who have died in custody. From outside, we could hear people inside yelling and banging on the walls back, which meant that they could hear us too. That exchange was a powerful reminder that the walls between us do not erase our connection or our collective voice.

After the rally, we gathered at The 519 Centre on Church St. for a dedicated vigil, where community members shared their experiences of incarceration and the conditions they have survived. We spoke about policies that continue to harm pris-

oners and created space for people to grieve, to listen, and to connect. The following day, on August 11th we gathered at Oahas and broke the fast together around the sacred fire, honouring those who have passed while connecting with those who remain here, and are continuing the struggle for justice.

Why does this day matter? (Some fast facts for the Newbies!)

Prisoners' Justice Day originally began as its own kind of rallying cry – its final igniting spark attributed to the death of Eddie Nalon in 1974 at Millhaven Institution (ON). Eddie wanted to transfer from the working living unit he was on to a non-working living unit and was told that would only happen (maybe) if he refused to work. So he did, he refused. He signed the form refusing to work in hopes of transferring units. Instead, on June 7th he was taken to segregation and on June 14th he was given the maximum penalty (for a lifer) for the institutional charge of refusing to work – 30 days in solitary confinement with restricted diet. Eddie was returned to segregation after his month in the hole. He requested a transfer back to gen-pop and on July 31st the Inmate Training Board recommended the transfer be granted, but no one communicated this to Eddie. On the morning of August 10, 1974 Eddie Nalon took his own life in a segregation cell with no functioning clocks or panic buttons. One year later, on August 10, 1975 (the anniversary of Eddie's death), the prisoners at Millhaven Institution refused to work, held a one-day hunger strike, and had a memorial service. They knew two things: that this was really the only option available to them as



a form of non-violent protest AND that they will still be disciplined for it regardless. It is rumored that some of the suspected organizers of the one-day events were held in seg' for about a year afterwards.

Momentum grew after the death of Bobby Landers the next year. In January of 1976 Bobby was involuntarily transferred to Millhaven from Archambault Institution (QC), where he was on the Inmate Committee, was an active and outspoken advocate fighting for prisoners' rights, and was suspected of planning a prisoner strike. On May 21st 1976, Bobby called out for medical help from his cell in Millhaven's segregation unit, others joining in to try and get staff's attention, but were unheard and ignored. Bobby was found dead the next morning, with a note he wrote describing his symptoms and requesting medical help located on his bed. Bobby died of a heart attack.

From then until now, Prisoners' Justice Day has grown to be recognized and honoured, both inside and outside of prison walls, internationally. People from all over the world mark the day by fasting, work refusals, and vigils.

PJD is historical, it is current, and it is ongoing – because prisoners' rights are human rights. People inside deserve safety, dignity, healthcare, connection, and access to the resources they need to survive and to thrive. Prisoners' Justice Day means many things; one of those meanings is that incarceration does not erase people's humanity, and that the fight for justice continues within and beyond the walls.

PREVENT HIV WITH POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS

by PASAN Staff

... What is PEP?

PEP can be used by people who are HIV negative to prevent getting HIV after a potential exposure to HIV. It is meant to help prevent HIV transmission from a single accidental exposure. It is a combination of three HIV medications that you take every day for four weeks to reduce your risk of getting HIV after a potential exposure to HIV. This is different from pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), which involves taking HIV medication on an ongoing basis, starting before and continuing after an exposure to HIV. Instead, PEP is taken after a potential exposure to HIV and needs to be started as soon as possible, but definitely within 72 hours of the potential exposure. A potential exposure to HIV might be through sex or injection drug use,

like having sex without using a condom and not taking PrEP, or having a condom break during sex, or sharing equipment used to inject drugs, or experiencing a sexual assault.

How does PEP work to help prevent HIV?

PEP interferes with the pathways that HIV uses to cause a permanent infection in the body. For HIV to cause infection the virus must enter the body, infect certain immune cells, make copies of itself (replicate) within these immune cells, then spread throughout the body.

When PEP is taken, the HIV drugs get into the bloodstream and the genital and rectal tissues. If there is HIV in the body, the drugs can prevent HIV from replicating within the body's immune cells, and help to prevent a permanent infection from developing.

PEP drugs need to start working against HIV as soon as possible after the virus enters the body, meaning that PEP should be started as soon as possible after a potential exposure and not more than 72 hours afterwards. Drug levels must also remain high during the month of treatment to help prevent infection. If the pills are not taken consistently, as prescribed, there may not be enough medication in the body to prevent HIV infection. So, it is very important that a person must have high adherence to the full course of PEP drugs and should have no further exposures to HIV while taking PEP for it to be most effective.

What is the evidence for the effectiveness of PEP?

The effectiveness of PEP in reducing HIV transmission risk has not been evaluated in randomized controlled trials, which are generally considered to produce the highest quality evidence. However, observational research has been conducted which suggests that PEP can reduce the risk of getting HIV by more than 80%. Effectiveness is likely much higher than 80% if PEP is used consistently and correctly, as prescribed. The timing of starting PEP after an HIV exposure is a key determinant of its effectiveness (so again, as soon as possible, up to 72 hours maximum). The evidence supporting the early initiation of PEP is primarily from animal studies. One study in macaques demonstrated that PEP initiated 12 hours and 36 hours post-exposure to HIV was more effective compared to 72 hours after exposure. Animal studies also suggest that PEP effec-

tiveness diminishes if the full course is not taken as directed (i.e., every day for 28 days).

What is involved in taking PEP?

Assessment of HIV risk is based on the type of exposure and the likelihood that the contact person was HIV positive. PEP may not be recommended if a person's chance of getting HIV is low, either because their exposure carries no risk or very low risk of transmission (for example, oral sex) or because it is unlikely that the contact person is HIV positive. PEP is also not intended for people with ongoing exposures to HIV. People who engage in high-risk behaviours on a regular basis, or who find themselves using PEP frequently, should consider using PrEP to prevent HIV instead.

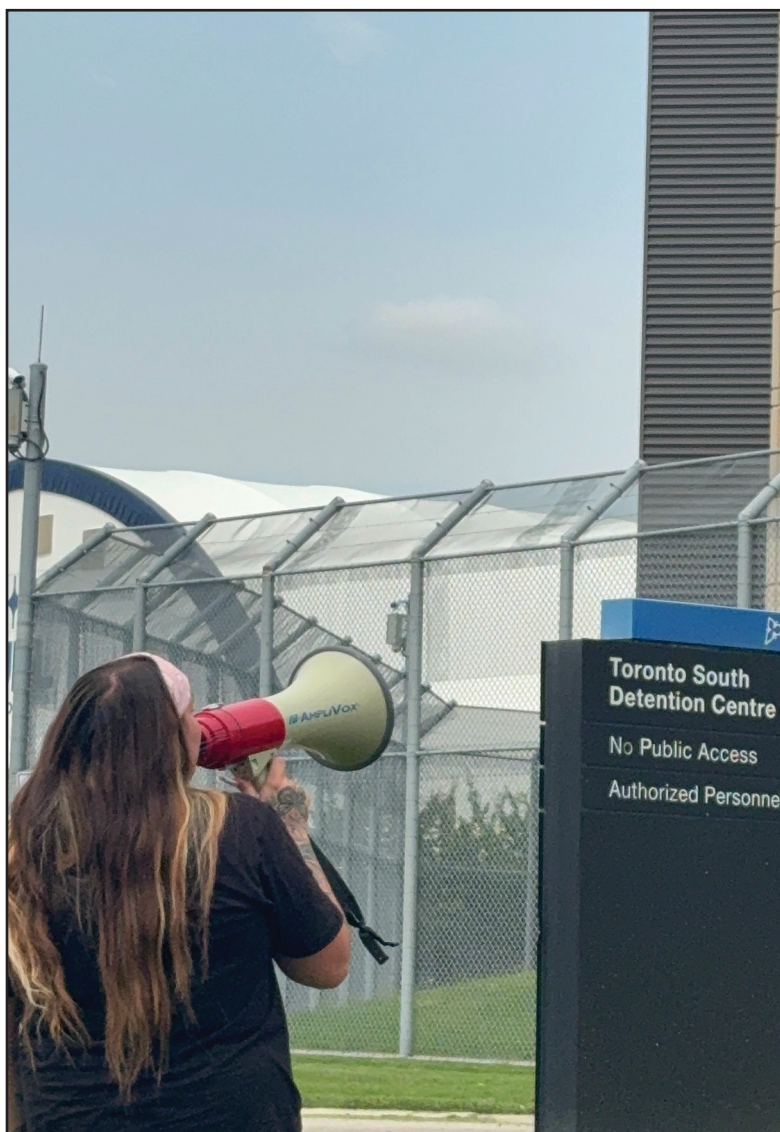
First, a healthcare provider will assess whether the risk of HIV transmission is high or low, using the risk assessment described above. If the risk is high enough, PEP will be prescribed. PEP should only be used by people who are HIV negative. When a person starts PEP, an HIV test will be done to determine their HIV status. If the person tests positive they should be referred to HIV care and treatment. If rapid HIV testing (which gives results within a matter of minutes) is not available, the test result



may not be ready for one to two weeks; however, PEP should and can still be started immediately. PEP will be discontinued if the PEP user tests HIV positive, or if the contact person is confirmed to be HIV negative.

A person taking PEP needs monitoring for side effects and other complications such as drug toxicity, though this is rare. Blood tests may be needed to

[con't on pg.4]



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PEP is meant to be used for emergencies and should not be used as an ongoing HIV prevention strategy. People who may be exposed to HIV on a regular basis, or who find themselves using PEP frequently, might consider using PrEP to prevent HIV instead. However, there is an approach called PEP-in-pocket (also called PIP) that is recommended for people who recognize that they are sometimes at risk for HIV



PEP is very effective but will not prevent 100% of HIV transmissions from occurring. It's important to continue taking extra precautions (for example, using condoms, not sharing rigs) to reduce the risk of being exposed to HIV (and other infections like HCV, etc.).

New modelling data from the Public Health Agency of Canada shows there was a 22.8 per cent increase in new HIV infections between 2022 and 2024. In 2024, an estimated 2,517 new infections occurred compared with the 2,050 infections recorded

Cuts, slow tracking undermine future progress

Jody Jollimore, an executive director for the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE), agrees that more can be done. Jollimore says despite Canada's commitment in 2016 to eliminate HIV, investment in the HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund that supports programs, like CATIE, has mostly been stagnant. Public Health Agency of Canada says funding through the HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund and the Harm Reduction Fund amounts to \$33.4 million annually and is "tailored to reach key populations and the regions of the country most affected by HIV, hepatitis C" and other sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. "A dollar does not go as far as it used to," Jollimore

"Once you're tested, you can be treated, and once you're treated, you're going to live a normal life."

TT

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PRISON WATCHDOG
ROLE LEFT VACANT
FOR MONTHS

Concern for prisoners' rights amid 4-month wait for interim correctional investigator to be appointed

By Elizabeth Thompson • CBC News • Aug 10, 2026

Prime Minister Mark Carney's government left the position of Canada's prison watchdog vacant for several months, despite written warnings from the outgoing correctional investigator that doing so would seriously compromise the office's powers to do its job protecting inmates. Records obtained by CBC News under Canada's Access to Information Act reveal that former correctional investigator Ivan Zinger advised Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree that the failure to fill his position before he left "would create a serious legal void." After around four months of sitting vacant, the role was filled by an interim investigator — a move that has itself raised concerns because of the role's temporary nature.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) acts as an independent watchdog for prisoners across Canada, dealing with an average 4,000-5,000 complaints a year. In previous years its work has helped trigger significant inquiries, such as the commission of inquiry into Kingston's Prison for Women in the mid-1990s that uncovered infringement of prisoners' legal rights and "cruel, inhumane and degrading" treatment of women there.

During his time as correctional investigator, Zinger flagged several problems in Canada's prisons including lack of access to adequate mental health treatment and the over-representation of Indigenous inmates. Last year he announced he would be stepping down early from his five-year mandate. Zinger told CBC News that he gave the government seven months' notice so it could find a new correctional investigator before he left in February. "As my departure date came very, very close, I grew increasingly frustrated that the government had done nothing. No posting of the position, or there was no plan to replace me. So I grew concerned," he said.

Warning of 'far-reaching' consequences
In a letter obtained by CBC News, dated Jan. 5, Zinger warned Anandasangaree that without a correctional investigator, the office couldn't initiate any new, non-routine investigations into problems with Canada's prison system; issue any special or annual reports; or warn prison psychologists or wardens about confidential information obtained during investigations such as suicide risks or an inmate's plans to harm other prisoners or correctional service staff.

"As these examples demonstrate, the consequences of failing to appoint either an interim or permanent CI [correctional investigator] in a timely manner would be significant and far-reaching," Zinger wrote. "In my view, ample notice was provided to allow for appropriate steps to be taken to identify a temporary or permanent successor." In an earlier letter to Anandasangaree, dated July 16, 2025, a couple of weeks after he announced he was going to step down, Zinger said it was "critical" that his position be filled before he left. "The role holds exclusive statutory authorities and investigative powers that cannot be delegated," he warned the minister. "As such, it is critical that the position be filled by February 2, 2026, to ensure the office remains operational, effective and compliant with its legislative mandate." Zinger's letters provide a glimpse behind the scenes at a larger problem: delays in recent years in filling some government appointments, with some organizations being left for weeks or months without key positions being filled.

A CBC news analysis in 2023 of governor in council appointments to 206 government bodies or institutions found 416 of the 1,731 positions — almost a quarter — were either vacant or occupied by someone whose appointment had continued past its end date. "It's administrative delays after delays. And bureaucratic inertia, if not blatant incompetence," Zinger told CBC News. Despite Zinger's warnings, Anandasangaree has yet to name a permanent replacement. His office says "a process to identify a full-time replacement is underway" but would not provide a timetable or say whether it will hold an open competition for the job.

Interim investigator admits there are challenges

In June, OCI executive director Valerie Phillips was named interim correctional investigator for up to one year. In an emailed response to CBC News, Phillips said there were no delays in dealing with complaints while the investigator's position was vacant and she was granted the power to disclose information in cases where there was an imminent risk of serious harm to an inmate or correctional staff. However, she said there were challenges dealing with Correctional Service Canada's headquarters and getting final signoffs for some reports. Phillips said she now has the same powers as someone appointed on a longer-term basis and can initiate investigations. But she acknowledged an interim role can "create challenges when planning for longer-term strategic initiatives, implementing significant organizational change or making decisions with implications that extend beyond

the interim period." Zinger told CBC News that during the four months the position was vacant, Phillips, as executive director, didn't have the authority to do anything beyond routine processing of individual complaints. He says he is concerned he hasn't seen any sign of a competition for the long-term job, a process he says can take five or six months. Zinger said a key part of an ombudsman-type job like the correctional investigator is the ability to speak truth to power and not be afraid to criticize the actions — or inaction — of the government. "If the minister goes ahead and hand-picks a person, the criticism that he may get at this point was that he [chose] somebody who will not be trying to rock the boat or would have reluctance to criticize his actions," he said.

Sen. Kim Pate, a long-time advocate for prisoners' rights, said leaving the investigator's position vacant for four months is "a huge issue" and called on the government to appoint a permanent successor to Zinger. "When you only have someone in an interim position, when they have no idea how long they'll be in that position and whether a new investigator would actually follow up on those issues, it really curtails the incentive and the ability of them to investigate issues that may very well need important and in-depth investigation," she said.

Emilie Coyle, co-executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, which advocates for issues affecting women, girls and gender diverse people in the justice system, said the OCI is the only body with authority to enter prisons unannounced and can compel records from Correctional Service Canada. Coyle said the absence of a correctional investigator and, consequently, "independent oversight," came as overcrowding was making conditions worse in prisons. "It was the most critical time for people who are inside to have that independent oversight happening," she said, adding that the delay in filling the position doesn't bode well for the rights of those in prison.

New Democrat public safety critic Jenny Kwan said there are several issues in Canada's prison system that have to be dealt with, including the over-incarceration of Indigenous people, inadequate mental health support and barriers to rehabilitation and reintegration into society. "I think that this is not a priority for the government," said Kwan. Kwan said Zinger should not have had to warn Anandasangaree about the need to fill the position. "To date, we still don't have a permanent appointment, and there is no clear process of how the government will proceed with respect to that," she said. "That should be alarming for everyone, for

Canadians, for the minister who is in charge of Canada's public safety."

BLACK PRISONERS
ARE ASSIGNED HARSHER
LIVING CONDITIONS
IN ONTARIO JAILS —
THANKS TO AI

Ontario jails are using a program that claims it can predict prisoners' behaviour, disproportionately putting Black prisoners in higher-security facilities

By Desmond Cole • The Breach • July 17, 2026

Black prisoners in Ontario's jails are being assigned to harsher living conditions than other prisoners, through the use of an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that claims to predict their behaviour. A class action lawsuit says the province was aware its use of the software could disproportionately target Black prisoners, but went ahead with it anyway. The Security Assessment for Evaluating Risk (SAFER) program has been operating quietly in Ontario's jails since early 2021. SAFER inputs a prisoner's personal information—including arrests, charges, and disciplinary records—into an algorithm. The program assigns each prisoner a score from 0 to 100 that determines whether they'll be placed in minimum, medium, or maximum security detention.

Critics of the program argue that the data that SAFER is fed is racially biased: they cite documented patterns of police and courts handing out more severe punishments to Black people because of anti-Black racism. SAFER then uses that data to make harsher risk assessments of Black people who are sent to jail. The ministry responsible for Ontario's prisoners agrees. It wrote in internal training documents viewed exclusively by The Breach that "Indigenous and racialized individuals face systemic discrimination in our justice system ... As a result, assessments like SAFER would likely contribute to the overrepresentation of Indigenous inmates in maximum security." Despite this, the ministry has been using SAFER for five years. And while the province has included several measures in its rollout of SAFER to reduce the number of Indigenous prisoners in maximum security, it does not appear to have taken such steps for Black prisoners. "We are continuously evaluating to determine if it is necessary to make similar adjustments for other groups," the same training document from the Ministry of the Solicitor General says.

Nana Yanful, a human rights lawyer with a focus on racial justice, slammed the government's decision not to curb the number of Black prisoners in maximum security, as it has done for Indigenous prisoners. "They are knowingly contributing to a program that will further exacerbate the conditions of confinement for Black folks," Yanful said in an interview. "They just don't care that this is going to impact them more negatively than non-Black incarcerated people."

Safer for whom?

Shauna first learned about SAFER in 2024 while trying to schedule a visit with her partner, who is incarcerated in an Ontario jail. (The Breach has changed Shauna's name and withheld the name of her partner's jail, as she fears he may face retribution if identified.) "When I was inquiring about how to visit, I was told that I would have to wait to find out his score," Shauna told The Breach. "That's when I got a phone call from him. He told me they run

some program in there—he didn't know the name of it—where they assign you a security level." Shauna's partner, who is Black, said her ability to visit him in-person would depend on his SAFER score. "If he's in max, it would be one video visit a week. If he was in medium, I believe it was two in-person behind-glass visits." Shauna said her partner learned about SAFER from other prisoners. When The Breach asked if he had inquired about his SAFER score, she said, "He's been requesting it for about a month now, and he keeps being told, 'Yeah, they'll bring it.' He's even requested it from sergeants, and nobody has come to him with it yet."

Security designations determine what level of access a prisoner will have to visits, programming, and living spaces. The class action lawsuit describes the conditions in medium- and maximum-security spaces: "more restrictive cells and environments, with less access to movement, activities, programs, and amenities." It says prisoners' freedoms are severely limited in these settings. The class action lawsuit, filed in 2025 by Koskie Minsky LLP and Goldblatt Partners LLP, is based on the unequal detention outcomes the SAFER assessments have produced. Black people are the most likely group to be placed in maximum security. While Black people make up only 5.4 per cent of Ontario's population, they represent nearly 27 per cent of all prisoners housed in maximum security detention from 2022 to 2025, according to government data analyzed by University of Toronto criminologist and professor Scot Wortley. By contrast, white people comprise 63.3 per cent of Ontarians, but only about 41 per cent of prisoners held in maximum security are white.

Black women are particularly affected: in a 16 month period between 2024 and 2025, over twice the proportion of Black women received a maximum-security designation from SAFER, compared to white women. The class action lawsuit claims that SAFER violates Black prisoners' Charter rights by denying them access to equal protection and equal benefit from the law. "Ontario could have reduced the discriminatory impact on Black inmates by adopting similar mitigation measures as have been adopted for Indigenous and women inmates," the lawsuit's statement of claim says. "Ontario failed to adopt such measures." Caitlin Leach, a lawyer with Koskie Minsky who is working on the class action, says arbitrary decisions in the criminal justice system—which includes choices made by police, judges, protectors, and jail guards—can contribute to bias in the SAFER data. Leach offered as one example "a police officer's decision to charge someone with a particular offense that becomes part of their criminal record." "There might be a Black person who's charged with an offense, and a white person in the same circumstances might not be charged with that offense. So when they are incarcerated, they have a different kind of criminal record that's then being used in the algorithm." Leach emphasized that the ministry has not disclosed exactly how SAFER works. The focus of the lawsuit is on the program's disproportionate outcomes.

[con't on pg.6]

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[con't from pg.5] Research from the Ontario Human Rights Commission analyzing Toronto Police Service data from 2013 to 2017 found that “despite being charged at a disproportionately higher rate, Black people were overrepresented in cases that resulted in withdrawn charges. Their cases were also less likely to result in a conviction compared to cases involving White people.” Four out of five people in Ontario jails are being held on remand—meaning they’ve been charged but not convicted. It’s unclear whether SAFER penalizes prisoners for having serious charges, even when they have not been convicted of those charges. Lindsay Jennings, a researcher with the Tracking (In)Justice Project, also pointed to the arbitrary nature of discipline by jail staff. “It’s all subjective: who you’re talking to that day, if they’re in a bad mood, if they like you as a prisoner... or they know that you’re connected to advocacy on the outside, you’re gonna get treated very differently.” Jail staff can override the SAFER program’s decisions and assign prisoners to a different security classification. Wortley’s analysis of limited override data showed that 39 per cent of overrides involved Indigenous pris-

oners, and 36 per cent involved Black prisoners. However, Wortley’s report notes that the data does not show whether the override assigned the prisoner to a higher or lower-security facility than the SAFER risk assessment recommended.

Ministry documents describe strategies to address systemic discrimination against Indigenous people. For example, jail staff must automatically review the score of an Indigenous prisoner when it falls within the lowest ranks of a maximum security placement. Staff can then choose to override the decision and assign the prisoner to a lower security level. During intake and release, Indigenous prisoners also work with Native Inmate Liaison Officers, who consider the intergenerational impacts of colonialism on Indigenous people. Yanful, the human rights lawyer, highlighted the lack of information about the use of overrides for Black prisoners. Ministry training documents allow staff to override SAFER decisions to assign a higher security level if they believe a prisoner is a member of a gang. “I’ve had clients before who say, ‘I literally am not part of this gang that the police have alleged I’m part of, I just live in this neighbor-

hood where this group of people is alleged to be operating,’” she said. Yanful questioned the criteria jail staff are using to determine a prisoner’s alleged gang affiliation. “Discretion is often used against Black folks to their detriment,” said Yanful. “So I would approach anything with these overrides, particularly around gang affiliation that’s so coded with race, with a lot of scrutiny.”

Turning human bias into algorithmic bias

Very little is known about the SAFER algorithm, and the exact data it’s fed to assess prisoners. The ministry describes SAFER as “an automated, predictive tool for evaluating an inmate’s security risk level.” It does not explain its claim that the program can predict the future behaviour of prisoners. The ministry document says SAFER was created by an external researcher using 10 years of historical prisoner data, including criminal charges and misconduct reports. The ministry says the researcher “identified the predictive factors for violent and/or frequent misconducts among inmates.” The document claims, without providing evidence, that SAFER’s ability to predict these incidents is as accurate for Indigenous and

racialized prisoners as it is for other groups. The Breach contacted the Ministry of the Solicitor General with questions about SAFER. We asked for evidence of SAFER’s alleged ability to make accurate predictions; we also requested evidence for ministry claims that SAFER has led to a “reduction in violence and occupational stress injuries.” The ministry did not respond to multiple written requests for comment. Ministry documents identify Dr. Grant Duwe, research director at the Minnesota Department of Corrections, as the designer of the program. The Breach reached out to Duwe to ask about SAFER’s algorithm, inputs, and accuracy. Duwe, too, did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

A recent report by Ontario’s Ombudsman cites 126 complaints from prisoners about SAFER. According to some complaints, staff have told prisoners they can reduce their SAFER scores by participating in jail programming, but information about which programs lead to reduced scores is not available. The report notes that the Ombudsman “also heard concerns about the disproportionate impact of this tool on Black and Indigenous inmates.”

The emerging use of AI in Canada’s jails and prisons comes with serious threats to accuracy and accountability, according to a paper by the Law Commission of Ontario. The paper explains why such tools might initially be attractive to policymakers and the public: “The simplistic perspective here is that if AI algorithms could rightly assess risks posed by individuals in the criminal justice system, such tools would eliminate human bias.” However, the paper warns about “the potential for spurious correlations the justice system should not rely on,” like using a person’s race or postal code to guess their likelihood of recidivism or relying on justice system data that’s long been riddled with bias. The paper cautions that AI operates as a “‘black box’ ... incapable of rationalizing or explaining the decisions or recommendations it makes.” The Ombudsman’s report notes that a ministry review of the SAFER rollout is currently underway. But that rollout began quietly in 2021, and the program has now been implemented in most jails across Ontario. Class actions typically take years, and while the lawsuit creeps forward, SAFER may continue operating unchanged—with much still untold about its impacts.



7 WRITINGS ON THE WALL

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[con't from cover page] were willing to learn what this day means, why we observe Prisoner's Justice Day, what we can do moving forward, and how we can all contribute to changing the world.

The August 10th Memorial observation has come to include those who died in or at the hands of state-run prisons, residential schools, in slavery, Nazi death camps, in transport, in-terment camps, psychiatric hospitals, jails, reformatories, or while being arrested, tasered, restrained, or held in a US-run secret torture prison, or any of the variety of different ways human beings lock other human beings up. Whether deemed an "enemy combatant" or a "prisoner of war," they are remembered. Regardless of gender assignment, sexuality, colour, race, nationality, personal beliefs, crime, disability, language, religion, political beliefs, weight or age; if they died while in the forced custody of any state, then they are who we remember and mourn on Prisoner's Justice Day – the August 10th Memorial Day. "There is no natural death in prison, and there is no exclusion from the August 10th Memorial if they died in custody." -Peter Collins

To me, Prisoner's Justice Day is a day of observance. It is the continuation of a revolution that began with the last breath taken in a segregation cell so many years ago. And we are the torch carriers from that cell. We are all social justice warriors, we are all revolutionaries, we all have taken a step in changing the world when we stand together on August 10th.

UNTITLED

By Z

I'm nigh on in prison for half of my life and it turns out I'm a few months shy of 50 years old. I've lived in a few max joints, a few mediums and I've even been on parole. I'm sentenced indeterminately as a (post 2014) Dangerous Offender and, I suppose as relevant, I am a status-Indian belonging to the Mikmaq Nation. I'd like to think that, having started doing time in the 90s, I might have an understanding of prison time that has substance. I listened to Carl Hines call out for his mom and his girlfriend while guards attacked him. He was dead an hour later. For \$5.80, I was tasked to wipe Gibbon's brain fragments off the cell wall and sweep up his broken teeth in the Mountain riot. I've been attacked by guards without provocation and I've watched peers get punched, sprayed and kicked while facedown and hand-cuffed. I've watched good men hurting after being singled out by CSC staff calling them *racist slur*, or in Quebec *expletive Anglophones*. I know the indignity of telling the truth of events to Case Management only to have them cherry-pick facts to support some non-reality, marginalizing narrative. I've had CSC staff wipe their "derrieres" with my deceased father's eagle feather and then send them to me shredded in an envelope. I can go on ... and on ... and on ... listening to suicides, deliberately broken property, administration blocking access to courts, falsified reporting, sexual assault by CSC staff ... on and on and on ...

For me and many of my peers, this is home ... and many people say this is what we deserve for those acts of criminality we've perpetrated. I'm certain you've heard the old sayings "Don't do the crime if you can't do the time" or "You took a life so your sentence should be for life" or "You made me suffer for the rest of my life and so you, too, should suffer for the rest of your life." How many times have you heard Poilievre's "tough

on crime" remarks ... "bad actors, criminals, scum ... get them off our streets." The truth is that all of the horrible things that are happening in prisons across Canada are deliberate. It is true that there are not many instances where people are intentionally planning these carceral atrocities, however it is clear that the structure of institutionalization is amenable to violence and adversity, if not casual (eg. the Stanford Prison Project). It seems, for the most part that incarceration (fixed or indeterminate in length) is an exercise in vengeance. "You hurt me and mine and so now you need to experience some sort of commensurate pain." I think the evidence is pretty clear about Canadian expectations for incarceration. How many politicians get elected on "let's rehabilitate criminals" versus "lock 'em up and throw away the key!'"? Or how many Canadians know what goes on to rehabilitate a person, aside from being locked in a cell?

After 25 years, the truth is that I have no idea what justice is, let alone prisoner's justice. I know when I started doing time, the ol'fellas instilled in us fresh fish some sense of solidarity and collective experience. They told us that fellas had to die in order for us to have a TV, an eagle feather, or an hour in open air. Imagine that! You live in Canada and the necessary requirement to have human beings treated with some humanity was people (ie. guards) and animals (ie. convicts) had to die. It is shocking in my mind (remember what team I'm on) that no one listened or cared about conditions and treatment until people lost their lives! I really struggle with this justice stuff. You see, the truth is that justice doesn't matter until it hits home. It is the Canadian way and I submit it is deliberately maintained that way because quite simply, it defers responsibility. We are all separated into our teams – cops and lawyers and judges, victims, criminals – and it appears that the responsibility of justice just disappears into rote policy, financial budgets and political slogans. Ask a cop about the rehabilitation process of one of his collars. Or do any judges know if their conviction was completed successfully? Do any victims know how their abusers are being treated? How do convicts know about all of the people their actions have impacted? Really, if these facts can't be uniquely engaged, how does anyone assess justice?

I paid \$50.00 for The Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language – Encyclopedia Edition. Yeah, no kidding, a book! No internet. Here's what it tells me about justice: "The moral principle by which actions are determined as just or unjust; adherence to truth or fact; impartiality; the rendering of what is due or merited; administration of law." It lists off some synonyms as well: equity, fairness, honour, integrity, truth. It says, "justice is the giving to every person exactly what he deserves, not necessarily involving any consideration of what any other may deserve." I sure got my \$50.00 worth!

I get "truth or fact." As I said, I'm a card-carrying status-Indian whose family members were scalped, murdered, placed in residential schools or foster care, who was denied access to my own identity because my grandmother had the audacity to mate with a white fella. I think that Canada has begun to come to grips with the "truth of fact" – Every child matters, Red Dress Day, the Truth and Reconciliation Report – and I give this truth to you as evidence

towards the point I'm trying to make. I don't understand Prisoner's Justice because I don't see that Canada and its people understand or even know of what "truth of fact" means for justice. Perhaps, even worse, I'm concerned that it is a choice and we, collectively, have made ours, knowing full well and accepting this façade of justice. It is not Canada's first kick at this can: Japanese prison camps, Sikh's stranded on ships, Chinese railroad workers, Residential schools for Blacks and Indians.

I'm sorry that I have failed to present a positive, uplifting view of Prisoner's Justice. I know there are people out there trying hard to achieve some good things. I think the tide is too strong ... I think that what matters in this picture doesn't pop up on iPhones or Netflix. I don't think there's a TikTok dance for this or an annoying orange. We've lost our music rooms, guitars, exercise equipment, access to volunteers, librarians, access to Elders and traditional foods, and so much more. Prisoner Justice just does not stack up against the Guard's Union and that is the only concern of Anne Kelly and her minions (Linkletter, Motiuk, etc.).

I want to tell you a truth that isn't nice and I truly don't like saying it. What happens in here won't matter until one of us hurts one of you. Until one of you good people end up hurt or worse because some person in here suffered years of abuse and social neglect (with no supports and no actual rehabilitation) ... it won't matter how many of us are beaten, sexually assaulted, marginalized, defamed, and killed. I'm sorry folks, I'm so ashamed to say this, but ... in a way, it seems like justice to me.

Happy Prisoner's Justice Day. RIP Chubbs.

WE ARE TRYING!

By Anonymous

Without an elder, without an opening or closing ceremony, with limited knowledge of the seven grandfather teachings, the inmates of Penetang's C.N.C.C have, for the last two years "without the guidance of N.I.L.O", committed themselves to smudge using only one of the four sacred medicines, all that we are allowed to use by ourselves. They're untrusting of our intentions, with some good reason I will add. Without a red bundle, still we give thanks to the creator, as best as we can and without prejudices remain a community. The institutions wrongfully removed the last N.I.L.O, who by the way was the most inspirational woman I've ever had the pleasure of meeting. My writing is truly because of her support and encouragement. It is incomprehensible the reason she's longer here. I won't get into it, but jail's a small world, so ask around if you want the story about that. Regardless, the outcome is the same. We have no N.I.L.O. We are not even getting feast at solstice. In other words, we are on our own! Seeking a spiritual connection to the creator, with no one bringing our culture, histories, and traditions. The stories are embedded within our culture and we are missing out, once again, and our way of life is being withheld from us. But what can we do? Stand up and be punished, or take it dry and pay the price. Feel free to wait, so the system can tell you what to think and who you are and where you come from.

DOING TIME TO CHANGE

By Seb

We hear about bail reform, tougher sentencing, and crowding in jails. Inmates are triple bunked and given barely enough to meet the human

rights laws. Correctional officers are overworked, and inmates are in an irritable environment. The solution that politicians preach is BUILD MORE JAILS. Journalists just regurgitate what is preached into the public and put it in the papers. Ontario's provincial system is flawed and desperately needs a facelift. Inmates in for pre-sentence custody have very minimal opportunity for rehabilitation, or shall we say "corrections." I've been incarcerated for over 2 years now and during my first few months, I was blown away at the lack of support for mental health, skills development, job skills, and overall life skills provided by the jail. Provincial jails hold a darkness behind concrete and steel. A dark world where the truth doesn't always get out to the public's eyes and ears. This world of concrete and steel is designed to destroy a person, to break them down until there is nothing left, and then dump you back into civilization and say good luck, thanks for the business! Where is the corrections in that?

Most of us are here because of the influence of drugs or alcohol. For the last 20 years, I had been smoked out, coked out, and drunk. I experienced childhood trauma from physical abuse to sexual abuse, and had severe issues with depression, self-worth, and really struggled with rejection. These feelings were painful, so I masked them with drugs and alcohol. Who wants to be in constant mental turmoil with their own existence? I'm sure many of you can relate. We all fall into addiction to feel good, but at some point it stops feeling good and instead it becomes a tool we use to just not feel bad. So, like you, I found myself incarcerated, facing reality head on with no ways to run and hide from my feelings and emotions. Living behind these walls, I've seen good people who made bad choices while struggling with sobriety and who struggle to see the light in their future. From the petty theft boosters, those stealing to get their fix, or people stealing to feed themselves, there is a broken culture out there. But this is what some people decide to call recidivism [reoffending after being released]. According to recent studies, the recidivism rate is 86%. That means out of 1000 inmates, 860 will return to provincial custody. Finding myself in the midst of this derailed system, I've realized it's time for me to make a change in my life and for others, because we can't keep doing the same thing and expect a different outcome. When I arrived here, I wasn't prepared for sobriety or for a lengthy stay in jail. Being sober

forcefully was a totally new experience for me. For most, getting sober in custody is difficult because despite the jail's best efforts, drugs do get in. And sobriety has to be an individual's decision, no one will get sober until they're ready. Eventually, I knew that in order to level-up in my life, it was time to put down the drugs and alcohol for good. There is a ripple effect of pain and damage done from every person in here, and I realized my actions that got me in a jail cell are affecting so many people, not just me. Luckily, the times of lockdown in here when there's no access to counselling or therapy, and the enforced abstinence forced me to face both

my withdrawals and my emotions in a way that turned out to be beneficial for me, but only because of the fact that I was ready to change. Let me explain.

After the 90-day mark, I started seeing my life more clearly, how I wasted almost 20 years of my life being high and selfish. How the drugs and alcohol kept me from really showing up in my relationships. Intoxicants closed off my heart and made me see life in such a selfish and shallow manner. I started reflecting on my family and how much I missed them. In those days, I would have given anything to just sit with my mother or father and hold them close and tell them how much I appreciate them. Addiction is like carrying a pack of aging shingles on your back: every day sober, each sober step I took, each hour and minute I spent locked up, those shingles were slowly breaking away. The load of guilt that I carried didn't get any lighter though. The sobriety and the conscious awareness that I started to experience became excruciating to carry. At this point, sobriety wasn't so much fun. I now had to face my fears and thoughts head on and clear headed. No masking 'tools' to numb reality and nothing to put into my body to make this pain go away. This is hard time. I had a burning desire to be better and do better. After a couple months of my body detoxing, I started filling out request forms to social workers and addictions counsellors to see what was available for me, to help guide me in making the crooked path of my life straight. I started to get involved in some of the 'programs' that the jail offered and I worked with the addictions counsellor on a substance abuse program. I also did an anger management program that really helped me do better time and be a lot more understanding of how my undealt anger puts me in a very vulnerable state of mind, and tends to always trigger me to use drugs or drink. Provincial jails are very limited to available rehabilitation resources, with understaffing being a big reason. So, frustratingly, I found myself doing long stretches locked-down and triple-bunked with no real way to keep channeling this desire to change.

Luckily, our librarian brought me two books that kickstarted my own, self-driven corrections: Dr. Gabor Maté's In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts and Gary Zukov's The Seat of the Soul. They taught me that to better understand ourselves and why we are where we are, regardless of being in jail or not, it's important to start at the beginning of

[con't on pg.9]

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9 WRITINGS ON THE WALL

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[con't from pg.7] our lives. To analyze our environments and our experiences, to see where things went wrong. Keep in mind, this can be very painful and difficult to navigate without professional help. Thankfully, Gabor Maté's writing style kept me engaged and soaking up every word like a sponge. It was a beautiful, yet bitter-sweet, feeling to now understand that the trauma and abuse I experienced as a youth increased the likeliness of me being an addict 10-fold. His book started answering questions that I've had my whole life. I learned how my limbic-brain (the emotional part of my brain) just couldn't develop normally in such circumstances. I learned how a child who is stressed early in life will be more reactive, overreactive, more easily triggered, and is more anxious and distressed. I learned that in my addiction cycle, I had a need to fill my mind and body with external sources of comfort (whether physical or emotional). I learned that this need expresses a failure of self-regulation – an inability to maintain a reasonably stable, internal, emotional atmosphere. After two months of taking notes and re-reading *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*, I was finally getting somewhere mentally. I felt the ability to grow and take steps in the right direction. I started waking up excited to learn more and to re-wire my brain – to take this new idea of building my life on conscious awareness, and this new understanding that my nervous system and brain is NOT a machine but is alive, and know that it is able to change. I can change. All of us can change, but we need motivation to get there. Sobriety was my key to levelling up. So, after my first AA meeting I decided to start my own NA/AA on my unit that could take place more often. I was surprised how many guys were willing to take the first step and sit down in the circle.

During those first few months, I also became very familiar with the Bible. Someone on my unit was hosting a daily bible group. I found myself sitting with a bunch of broken souls who were looking for guidance in life and sometimes just needed to talk. The inmate who hosted the group was released and suddenly the group ceased to exist. So, like the NA/AA group, I felt compelled to take this opportunity to start a 'prayer group' of my own. This took a little more effort to bring people in at first, but coffee and cookies that I purchased in the canteen helped with recruiting, but which I also almost regretted immediately, because each session started to cost me around \$15. I had to let everyone know that the cookies had to be shared at the end of the session, so guys wouldn't just take the snacks 5-mins into the group and then go watch T.V. Soon though, we had daily NA/AA or prayer groups on the unit!

Exercise on the unit was one of the best tools for mental health as well.

Our handcrafted weight bags helped us put in the work to burn some of the energy that gets bottled up from being so cooped up on a unit. So, as the prayer group grew, so did my workout crew. I wanted to help the guys who were skin and bones to feel the same feeling I did. I wanted these men to live each day with purpose, fulfillment, sobriety, and self-worth! Because for me, through my faith, I have felt more free inside these walls than I ever have in my life. Everyone could see it in me; it radiated and glowed from inside me. It was contagious and I wanted to share it with everyone. Days turned into months and these men were getting spiritually and physically stronger, building muscle, and seeing their life with clarity for the first time. Our unit had mirror tint installed, and we had so many guys checking their reflection in awe. Full faces, a bit of muscle, clean from drugs, and a light shining their path forward. On a daily basis at this point, I was led by my faith to do my prayer groups, spend a few hours exercising, and spend a few more hours studying the human brain and neuroplasticity [the brain's ability to change, adapt, and heal itself]. You know that saying "you can't teach an old dog new tricks?" It's scientifically proven to be untrue. Suddenly, my days weren't long enough. I started to encourage inmates to not trade their meals for medication/drugs, to face reality and put on some healthy weight and muscle. I could see the guys who were struggling and invited every one of them to the prayer groups. First, sessions always had lots of tears and low hanging heads, but everyone knew that our circle was safe to feel and to be vulnerable in. The fellowship on range grew quickly and I started to see its impact working in incredible ways in people's lives. It was common for me to hear "I owe all of this to you brother, you've changed my life!" Although flattered, I would simply say "It wasn't me pal, you had it in you the whole time. It's no mistake, chance, or fluke that we ended up here together." Katie Sousa is an ex-inmate and author that is rather popular inside jails/prisons – in her book "The Key to Your Expected End" she talks about how God might sometimes use the police, the Crown, the judge, and whole criminal system to bring us closer to faith. He knows the distractions of our desires consume us, and that we need to put it all aside to do real work on ourselves.

Now, I know workouts, books, and the Bible doesn't work for everyone though. The word 'God' freaks some people out and they write off the idea of learning or being involved. It seemed that every time we did a prayer group, the range suddenly got louder and that people wanted to sabotage our fellowship (noise distractions in a jail can be hard to overcome). Finding quiet time to think is scarce, but every minute has

its moment for reflection. For those guys who said they were turned off by it all, I made a point to share that I am NOT a religious person. From someone who hosts prayer groups and says grace before meals, that can be a confusing thing to hear. When asked, "what do you mean you're not religious?" I reply with "I'm not. Religion is for fanatics. But I walk with my God every day and I have an amazing relationship with him." Inmates would see the change in their peers' moods, attitudes, and overall energy and start thinking ... "I wish I could be happy like that in here, jail sucks!" Some guys found so much value in the fellowship that they started up their own when they were moved to different units. I have received mail from inmates who are living their best life inside these walls.

For those that find comfort and freedom in their faith (or want to) ... did you know that for every 300 inmates there is only 1 chaplain? Inmates are lucky to get a trip to the worship centre once a month. While even more Indigenous and Muslim inmates, and inmates who follow other marginalized cultures and faiths, are lucky to get access to their faith-based practices or leaders at all. It's not because our spiritual leaders don't care; it's because of understaffing, lockdowns, and the system not prioritizing these types of rehabilitation. Does the Minister of Solicitor General miss the value of faith-based services? Do they ignore the needs of broken souls who need guidance? Or is there a bigger picture here involving money and greed, and more inmates equals more business. I don't believe this is the case. But does our premier really know that a human storage centre and more beds isn't the investment that Ontario needs to make? We do have treatment centres like OCI, but 95% of inmates never make it there. And building more jails in order to address the current overcrowding situation makes sense, but let me bring you back to the topic of recidivism and provincial jails for a moment. Is 86% a high number? Why is it so high and what can be done to change the structure of provincial jails to reduce it? According to recent studies and public discussions in an article from the *Toronto Star*, it costs 600 million dollars to build a new super-jail. What if the Ontario government spent a portion of that on the rehabilitation of the inmates who are already incarcerated instead, so that they have a better chance of getting sober? Or of learning a trade, or a skillset that they can use to make a real living instead of crime? What happens in here is that "criminals" network and find different ways not to get caught, or buy drugs for cheaper, or new ways to scam. Most of these people have the drive to find easy money or to get up and get their fix; so the drive is there, but it needs to be redirected. Sitting in a 45-min-

ute group session, once every 4 months, to talk about drugs and why they are bad does not correct anything. It just ends up showing us who knows more about drugs. Now, if we had a 45-minute session, every week, for 8 weeks and we dug deeper into why we use drugs, how it started, offered sympathetic comfort to people who are addicts, and showed them that they are worthy to live a better life ... that could make a real difference. Bring in real world people who come as guest speakers – someone who has done it (i.e., an ex-inmate and recovering addict who is now a successful entrepreneur of a roofing company, or a guy who started a janitorial service, or a welder, or plumber, drywaller, truck driver, road painter, retail employee, etc.). Someone who can relate to addiction and share, with their ABC-123 equation, how they were able to make their twisted path straight. It would not be difficult for jails to structure and schedule this to happen. There is no positive correctional reinforcement for inmates that help them to feel they are capable of legit success or even feel that they are worth it. Many inmates here have never been rewarded for good behaviour. Perhaps a system that could put small amounts of money in an inmate trust account would be helpful (i.e. good behaviour gives you \$5 a week, then at least you could make a phone call without giving up a meal).

For all of the professionals in this institution, the opinions on why the recidivism rate is so high seem to be consistent: the lack of mental health support and the lack of funding for programs. If you ask any correctional officer, they agree that their workplace needs to do more to help actually rehabilitate inmates. Our addictions counsellors spend more time writing reports and checking the boxes than doing the detailed 1-on-1 therapy that they signed up for. It's clearly frustrating for these staff members. One addictions counsellor for 300 inmates is an overwhelming load. I'd like to be clear that the staff we have at my jail do an amazing job with what they have. These individuals work hard and are passionate. So are our social workers, who have been tasked with classification and assessment duties rather than being actual social workers. Most of my rehabilitation has been done on my own. I've personally experienced more guidance and therapy from the real conversations that I regularly have with the staff in charge of the different work-range positions I've done. That's not to de-value the time spent with our addictions counsellors, but rather it's the amount of time spent that brings the value. I have found that going to a recreation slot and chatting briefly with the rec staff is so helpful and influential to my (our) mental health. Self-help books have also been very important to the changes I have made. We were able to order books on Amazon and have them sent into the jail up until the end of 2025. That was taken away from us due to the librarian being overworked and overwhelmed. Our self-help reading materials are very limited. It was very discouraging to have the one solid source of help taken away. Instead of "improvements" to deal with overpopulation, there have only been added restrictions to an already strained system.

I look forward to accessing counselling when I'm released, but what about people who can't afford it? I was previously on a 3-year probation order, and my P.O. didn't care about helping me do better either. I waited until my last 2 months to finally get

counselling with a psychologist. I asked my P.O. for help over and over until I felt worthless and unworthy of getting support. It seems that there isn't enough compassion or enough patience for any ex-inmate to stand a chance at not being part of that 86%. For a large percentage of the general public, they could care less if incarcerated individuals get any help. "You did the crime, so you do the time." But what if it was your own child or loved one who was caught up in the system? I'm sure you would care more then. I certainly believe people need to be incarcerated sometimes, but dumping them into a triple-bunked cell with no emotional or mental health support or programs will only bring them back into the body of that 86% recidivism statistic. For this reason, something needs to change. Simply building more jails but not fixing the issues happening inside of them is just duplicating the existing problem, instead of actually living up to the label of a correctional centre. Ontario owes it to the public and to the people to do this. I'm blessed and grateful to be on this new path, and I want to be a voice for those who need the help. I will dedicate my life to help this movement of change happen. Let's make Ontario safer. Let's fix these flaws and provide inmates the support and rehabilitation needed so they can actually build better lives. So that jails are a safer place for correction officers to work. So that the recidivism rate drops. Let's help people to get the supports they need in community so that we reduce our jail population overall. When Canadians come together, we make things happen, and if you have watched the news lately, this is the elephant in the room that can no longer be ignored.

In the meantime, don't let this world of concrete and steel break you down and destroy you. Studying neuroplasticity and neuroscience and being guided by my faith is how I've made a difference while I'm here. So, as you live that same old routine in jail or prison, try to think of how your experiences can be influential to someone you might never associate with. Are you at the gym and you see someone looking over at you? Call them over, help them get started. Do you see an inmate with their head hung low, moping around? Take a couple minutes and let them know you're here to talk. Drag someone to an AA group, let your peers know that they're going to get through the day. You can't put a price on the value of camaraderie in institutions. Remember that if we're going to be here, let's make it that we are here for a reason. Trust that you need to meet someone, or do some type of personal growth while you're here that you couldn't or wouldn't have done with the toxic desires and distractions of life outside of these concrete walls. Coming to jail has changed me. I pray that it has or will change you too. Make every day count and ask your creator to guide you. It's taken us our whole lives to program our brains to become the person we were before we got here, so don't expect to change overnight. Conscious awareness is where it all starts. When we start our day, just try to do a little better than you did yesterday. Share what you have. Maybe it's a coffee, or a peanut butter. Perhaps it's your time. Sometimes a small gesture (in jail) can be so powerful. Your small efforts today can completely change someone's path and the direction of their life. It might also change your own too. Take some time and think of how you can be kind to someone today. We are in this together.

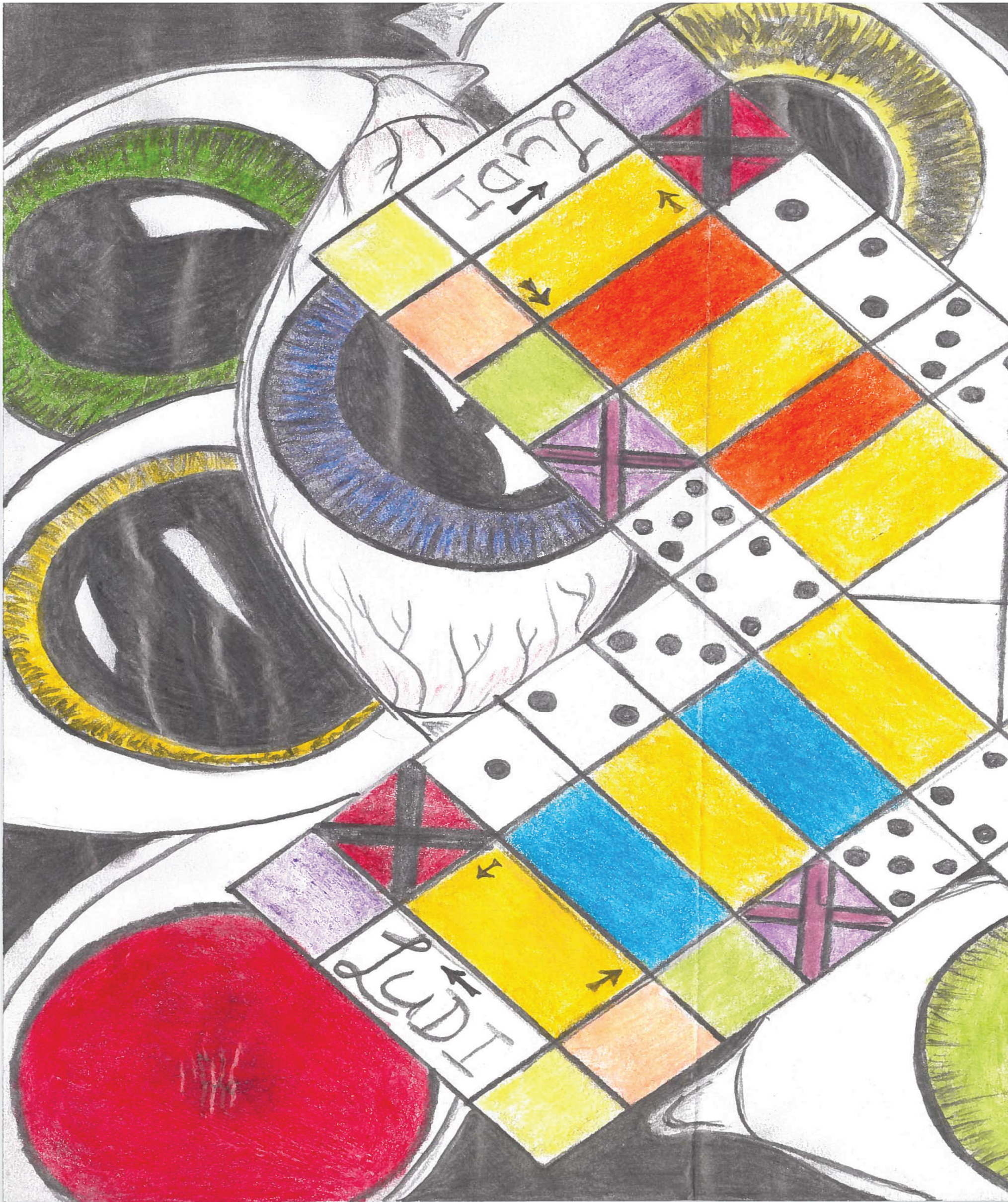
Canadian Inmates Cupid's Corner

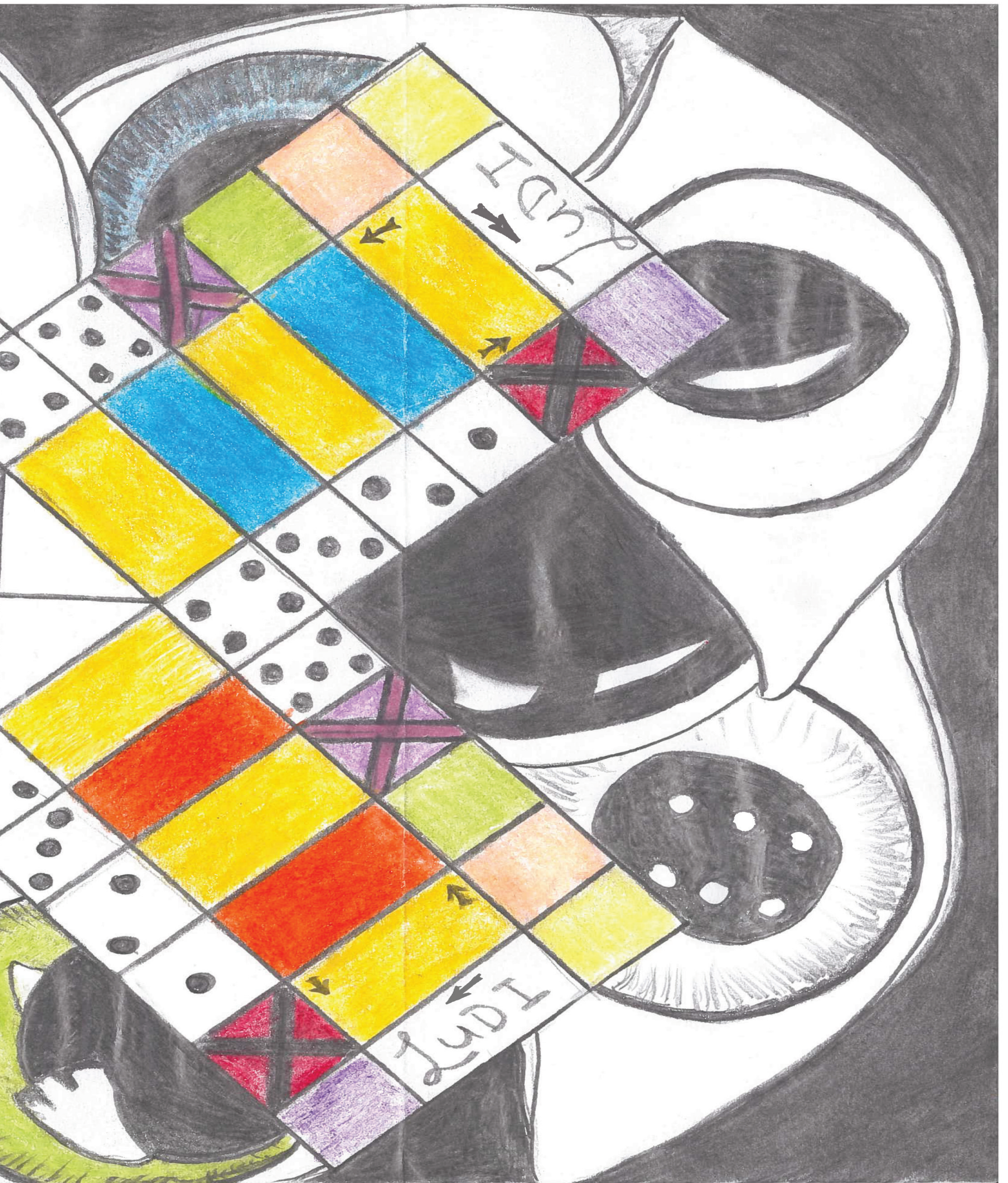


Looking for Love Beyond Bars?

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







THE LUDI BASICS
WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

- Ludi board
- 2 dice (shared) or 2 dice for each player
- Each player needs 4 play pieces
- 2 to 4 players
- 4 players can also play as 2 teams (2 people per team, players on the same team should be across from each other)

LUDI RULES

- All players roll 1 die each and the highest number goes first
- Must roll a 6 to touch road (place a piece on the board)
- Players take turns rolling the dice to get on the board and/or to move their pieces based on the number they rolled
- Always move to your right, home on your left
- Landing on the same space as an opponent's piece is a kill and their piece goes into your graveyard
- Both team players may use a 6 to buy back a piece from an opponent's graveyard or to place a piece on the board
- Once around the board, you can't pass by your gate
- Must land on your gate with 2 pieces in order to open up your home
- All 4 pieces must make it home to win game

LUDI LINGO

Touch Road: to place a piece on the board
Sixes: rolled 6 on both dice
Lock Up: 2 pieces on the same square
Triple Lock Charly: 3 pieces on the same square
Upside Down: rolled a 1 on both dice
Gallatary: move that you have to make
Shitter: 1 space away from home
Kill: you land on an opponent's piece
On the Gate: your piece has landed on your gate
Kill Your Partner: you land on your partner's piece

This is not a comprehensive guide to this game.

These are the basics of the basics. Ludi is a game of strategy. For example ... rolled a 6? Is it better to move a new piece onto the board or is it better to move a piece already on the board 6 spaces? Depends!

Still not sure? Ask a brother/sister/other in blue!
(Or green, or orange, or ... well, you know what we mean)

Thanks to Aaron F. for sharing what he knows about Ludi with all of us! He told Cell Count, "this is more info than I started with, good luck." So good luck, keep the peace, and hopefully have some fun.

LONG GONE
1 ON 1

By Frenchy

What ever happened to the good ole' days? When two men went into the bathroom with bare knuckles, brute strength, and some skill. That always helped me. What happened to those two gladiators? When it's over, shake hands and move on. No jumping the winner later when you have 6 or 7 guys with you. No, that shit didn't fly in those days. Today our system is full of, well, quite frankly, "cowards." I hate to say that, because I know that a lot of old timers got true balls. When I say "cowards" you'll know the men I'm talking about, because this article will hit a nerve and they'll be the guys that get all butthurt and insulted by the words I'm writing in this article! Today, our provincial jail system is full of little "cowards" who have this belief that 10 on 1 mugging with shanks makes you a man. The best part of all this jumping bullshit is that after they do it, they're laughing and bragging as if they won some heavyweight battle. W.T.F. is wrong with this picture, and us ole' school guys, we're either outnumbered, so we don't take a stand, or we're just too old to fight. The heart is there, but the tools are not! The new last resort these so-called "tough guys" use is putting in kites for you and the cowards to be no communication. Not only is this a shameful way to do things nowadays, but it's the reason our jails are having less and less privileges, and more and more lockdowns. When the shanks are involved, all the hospital bills pile up and the Correctional systems have

to try to explain to families and Joe Public why this violence has gone to such levels. It shines a big old spotlight on us, the inmates. I mean, where's the logic here? On top of this, we are all still only provincial inmates. The provincial system introducing safer programs is a huge education as to how fucked up the provincial system has become. Protective custody, at one time, was strictly for sex offenders and high-profile rats. Over the past decade, it's used highly due to inmates and the extreme level of violence committed during one of those famous 10 on 1's of today. Protective custody went from 10% of jail's population to now 95% of jail's population. Again, in one-on-one slugging it out and ending afterwards with a handshake, none of these issues came up: safer programs, sheet changing, lockdowns. This article is for all the newer generations of inmates. Stop the bullshit jumpings and stabbings, fight like a real gladiator, and have some class. That is still possible as an inmate. Anyway, just another issue I see today with our provincial system and sowing time in it.

HIT THEM WHERE
IT HURTS

By Anonymous

There's power in numbers and we, the inmates of the justice system of Canada, have the numbers. What we don't seem to have is a clue what to do with the power we hold. Say we really wanted something, like deodorant that works maybe ... then everyone stops buying canteen for a month. And I mean everyone buys

nothing for just one month. Got to hit them where it hurts – the wallet. But how to get so many stubborn ass, hard heads to work together for the good of our future and better treatment. It means we all have to see the same goal and make it happen! So, what is the goal? What do we really want and need? I want us to tell each other what we think we need. Tell me your ideas. So, send on and name what you want to see for canteen, programs, privileges, or hell, even T.V channels. Let's pool the ideas and the resources we have and see what comes of our sheer will – our will to be treated better, to not give in or give up, to survive this time in our lives, and to come out stronger. If we don't stick together, nothing will change. At least not for the better. The turnover here in provincial makes it hard to create a change, so keep the fight alive. It's the only way to get results.

THE ILLUSION OF THE
LADDER: FULL PAROLE,
COLLINS BAY, AND THE
REALITY OF THE
CONCRETE CEILING

By Daron Thompson

Step inside the walls of Collins Bay Institution, and it doesn't take long to notice a growing disconnect between what the correctional system says it is and what many prisoners experience it to be. Read the legislation, the Commissioner's Directives, or Correctional Service Canada's public messaging, and you will find a correctional philosophy built around gradual reintegration. Day Parole. Full Parole. Statutory Release. Each stage is intended to reflect progress, accountability, and increasing trust.

On paper, it appears to be a ladder. On paper, Full Parole exists as a meaningful opportunity for those who have demonstrated change and can safely return to the community. On paper, rehabilitation is more than a slogan. Yet among many incarcerated people, a different conversation takes place. Spend time on the ranges. Listen to men who have spent years preparing for release. Ask how often Full Parole is discussed as a realistic objective. Many will tell you they hear far more about Day Parole or Statutory Release than they do about Full Parole. Some say they have come to believe that Full Parole feels less like an achievable goal and more like a distant possibility that rarely enters everyday correctional planning. Whether that perception is entirely accurate or not, the perception itself matters.

When enough people begin believing that a particular form of release is effectively out of reach, something important is lost. Hope. Because rehabilitation is sustained not only by accountability, but also by the belief that meaningful progress will be recognized. Many incarcerated people devote years to completing programs, maintaining institutional employment, addressing identified risk factors, and developing realistic release plans. They accept responsibility for their offences because they believe the correctional process is intended to measure growth as well as risk. When they begin to feel that one step of that process is no longer realistically attainable, questions naturally arise. If Full Parole exists as a statutory form of release, how often is it being actively discussed as part of correctional planning? How often are people encouraged to prepare for it? How often are they told what additional work is necessary to become realistic candidates? These questions are worth asking—not because everyone should receive Full Parole, but because every person should understand what meaningful progress looks like and how that progress will be assessed.

A correctional system functions best when expectations are clear, opportunities are genuine, and decisions are based on individual circumstances rather than assumptions or institutional culture. If incarcerated people begin believing that only two outcomes realistically exist—Day Parole or waiting until Statutory Release—then the middle step risks becoming something that exists more clearly in legislation than in lived experience. That perception deserves honest discussion. Public safety must always remain the primary consideration. But public confidence is also strength-

ened when correctional processes are transparent, consistent, and clearly connected to demonstrated rehabilitation.

Perhaps the most important question is not whether Full Parole is granted often or rarely. Perhaps the more important question is this: **Do people who are genuinely trying to change believe the system still expects them to succeed—or have too many begun believing they are simply waiting for the calendar to decide their future?**

Because when hope disappears, rehabilitation becomes much harder to sustain. And that is a question worth asking—not only inside prison walls, but outside them as well.

ANOTHER SLAP
IN THE FACE
FROM CNC

By Anonymous

The latest racialized, bigoted slap in the face from C.S.C... "Bridges of Canada" - the sub-contracted provider of Chaplaincy for the Correctional Services of Canada (C.S.C.) - C.S.C. has seen it fit to remove all of the Non-Christian, Multi-faith Chaplains out of the Minimum-Security Institution here at Beaver Creek. I am informed that by extension, all Minimum-Security Institutions have done the same and placed them all in the Mediums and Maxs. From this, I gather that "Non-Christian – Non-Believers" are of no importance to *Bridges of Canada*, and by extension, under their contractor – are of no importance to C.S.C.

The Jewish Rabbi, Muslim Imams, Rastafarian Preacher, Sikh Guru, Buddhist Monk, etc. have all been put out of the building [editor note: names of these religious leaders had to be edited out for print]. The only exception is to the Catholic and various Christian denominational Chaplains and volunteers. This has resulted in the remaining "Non-Christian – Non-Believers" feeling like Lost Sheep without a Shepherd. Seems to me, and it has been my meticulously documented experience over the last 17-years of incarceration, at all security levels; that whenever it comes to anything that is "Christian," they roll out of the red carpet. However, whenever it comes to anything that is non-Christian, Black and Brown, they always throw out the spike strip!

I guess they only want W.A.S.P's in the beehive ...

"I bees in the trap, bees, bees in the trap! I bees in the trap, bees, bees in the trap!" – Nicki Minaj

INDIGENOUS HIV/AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

DEC 01-07, 2026



ART SHOW FOR INDIGENOUS ARTISTS

Oahas (Ontario Aboriginal HIV Strategy) in Toronto is looking to hold a community art show for IAAW this December and want to showcase art from Indigenous community members both inside and out
Cell Count is working with them to help make that happen



SUBMIT YOUR ART TO OAHAS BY MAILING IT TO CELL COUNT BY NOV 01



WHAT DOES PJD MEAN TO YOU?

What Prisoners' Injustice Day means to me is thinking about the men that made things better for us. From standing up for those that had no voice or the ones that didn't know how to use their voice. From the abuse, to the food, and conditions that have been made better for all inmates. This is why prison injustice day is a day that deserves remembrance and appreciation for those who made the difference. More needs to change, not just from the conditions, but the laws and how the system functions from extended remands and a dysfunctional correction center with a lack of programs. - Martinez

Give thanks to the prisoners who suffered for our rights in prison. Turning down food that day in respect for those who died on death row. (No whistling!) - Anonymous

Shutting the hell up, putting down the tray, and watching all these young little shits who have no respect and no idea what shit was like and no interest to learn why it matters. - A Lifer

I think Prisoners' Justice Day (PJD) means the different types of justice made with the voices heard from prison. - Anonymous

It means Eddie Nalon.
It means Bobby Landers.
It means Ashley Smith.
It means countless others.
It means getting angry.
It means feeling grief.
It means giving a shit. Even if I don't like you. Because it means I still think you should be treated like a human with at least some dignity. And so should I. It means giving us a fucking chance to get out of here and do shit differently before we're dead in our cells too. - Chris

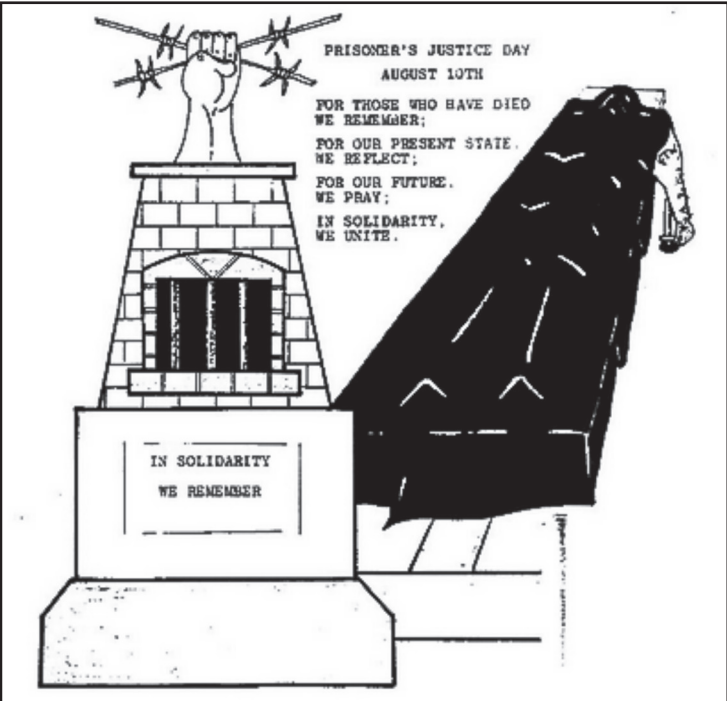
Prisoners' Justice Day brings light to the past, for those whose voices have no expiration. The ones who stood up for our rights and for the privileges we have today, because the torch for present and future generations that the powers of the day don't take in vain. - Anonymous



Thanks are given to those who came, fought, and even died to get the rights we have. But do you know what was won for us by the ones that put themselves up front of the fight for inmate rights? Things like phones, TVs, mail, visits – privileges we now take for granted. Men and women writing the system, organizing protests, hunger strikes, those that started the struggle like Robert "Bobby" Landers and Claire Culhane; we are now the torch bearers and what are we fighting for? What are we doing to support our brothers and sisters that came before us? Or the ones that will come after us? Or the ones here with us now. Where and what is the next privilege to fight for, because it could be anything from real deodorant to house plants in the cells, dental funding, better food, more programs, but what is worth the fight? Well, all of them are! - Anonymous

We show respect for those that suffered for our rights. - Albert Smith

Hope that people on the outside are still listening. Strength to keep fighting. - Jordan.



* July 1986 cover of Highwitness News (inmate-run prison publication out of Millhaven in the 1970s and 1980s)



Anonymous

PJD LETTER READ AT OTTAWA EVENT

By Daylo Robinson aka P.R.E.E.M.

My name is Daylo Robinson. Today I write from prison, but I also write as someone who believes my experience reflects a much larger issue affecting people throughout Canada's justice system. Prisoners' Justice Day is about remembering those whose voices were never heard, those who suffered in silence, and those who were failed by institutions entrusted with protecting both public safety and human dignity. I ask that today we also remember another group of people. Those whose liberty may depend upon digital evidence they cannot possibly afford to challenge. Canada's justice system increasingly relies on sophisticated digital forensic tools to investigate and prosecute criminal cases. Cell phones have become some of the most important pieces of evidence introduced in courtrooms. Reports generated through forensic software often carry an aura of scientific certainty, leading judges, juries, lawyers, and the public to assume they are complete, objective, and beyond question. But what happens when a person cannot afford to question them? Before I ask you to think about my case, I want to ask you something about yourselves. How many people in this room know what a *timestamp* is? How many know what an *MD5 hash value* is? Or a *SHA-1* or *SHA-256 hash*? What is a *file path*,

and why might it matter? What is the difference between a *physical extraction* and a *logical extraction*? If I said the words *Legacy*, *Logical 1*, *Logical 2*, *UFDR*, *Cellebrite Physical Analyzer*, *SQLite database*, *plist file*, *metadata*, *source extraction*, *artifact attribution*, *XML*, *chain of custody*, *hexadecimal values*, or *digital artifacts*, how many people here could confidently explain what those terms actually mean? Now imagine someone telling you that your freedom depends upon understanding them. Imagine sitting in a courtroom while a police officer, a Crown prosecutor, or a digital forensic expert explains these concepts as evidence against you. Would you know enough to challenge them? Would you know which questions to ask? Would you know whether a timestamp had changed? Whether a file path pointed to an original extraction or an imported archive? Whether a report represented an entire extraction or only selected portions of it? Whether two reports came from the same forensic source? Whether a hash value confirmed integrity or revealed inconsistency? Would you even know where to begin? Most of us wouldn't. Now imagine trying to understand those same concepts while living with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, autism, an acquired brain injury, dementia, or another cognitive disability. Imagine living with diabetes, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, chronic pain, cancer, or another serious medical condition that already consumes your daily life. Imagine surviving on ODSP, CPP

Disability, Ontario Works, or another modest disability income that barely pays for food, medication, and shelter. How do you hire a digital forensic expert? How do you pay someone to review thousands of pages of technical forensic reports? How do you challenge technology that even many lawyers, judges, jurors, and police officers themselves may not fully understand? This is the question I have lived with. For years I have studied the digital evidence used in my own prosecution. I have reviewed thousands of pages of disclosure, forensic reports, transcripts, and native digital records. Through that work, I have reached my own conclusions about what occurred in my case. Whether others ultimately agree with those conclusions should depend upon independent examination of the evidence—not upon my opinion alone. What troubles me most is something much larger than my own case. Most Canadians accused of a crime will never have the opportunity to conduct the type of review I have undertaken. Most prisoners cannot hire digital forensic experts. Many rely on Legal Aid. Many live with disabilities. Many survive on ODSP, Ontario Works, CPP Disability, or other modest and fixed incomes before entering custody. Many struggle with mental illness, cognitive disabilities, acquired brain injuries, addiction, or chronic medical conditions. Many are Indigenous. Many are Black. Many come from communities that have already experienced generations of systemic disadvantage. For these

Canadians, the cost of independently reviewing digital forensic evidence is simply impossible. When justice depends upon specialized expertise that only the wealthy can afford, access to justice ceases to be equal. The danger is not limited to one person or one prosecution. It affects every Canadian whose liberty may depend upon technology they cannot independently examine. We are entering an era where digital evidence increasingly determines guilt or innocence. That reality demands transparency. It demands meaningful disclosure. It demands independent oversight. It demands affordable access to qualified experts capable of examining digital evidence on behalf of those who cannot afford to retain them privately. Justice cannot become a luxury purchased only by those with financial means. It must remain a right. I believe people living with disabilities face an especially significant disadvantage. Many spend years simply trying to meet their daily needs. Expecting someone who is surviving on disability income to retain a digital forensic expert capable of examining complex extraction data is unrealistic. Yet the consequences of not doing so may include losing years—or even decades—of freedom. That should concern every Canadian. Whether someone is incarcerated today or never enters a courtroom in their lifetime, equal justice requires that truth not depend upon wealth. Prisoners' Justice Day reminds us

that people in prison remain human beings. Our rights do not disappear when prison doors close. Our lives do not become less valuable. Our voices do not become less deserving of being heard. Today I ask that we broaden our understanding of prison justice. Justice is not only about conditions of confinement. It is also about ensuring that every person—regardless of disability, poverty, race, education, or social status—has a genuine opportunity to test the evidence used to take away their liberty. No Canadian should lose their freedom simply because they could not afford to understand the technology used against them. If there is one message I hope you leave with today, it is this: Technology must never become a substitute for justice. Justice requires transparency. Justice requires accountability. Justice requires equality. And justice requires that the poorest, the sickest, the most marginalized, and the most forgotten among us are given the same opportunity to defend themselves as those with unlimited resources. If justice depends upon understanding technology, then justice must also ensure that every Canadian has a meaningful opportunity to understand, challenge, and independently verify that technology. Otherwise, access to justice becomes access determined by education, money, and privilege—not by truth. That is the Canada I still believe is worth fighting for. Thank you.



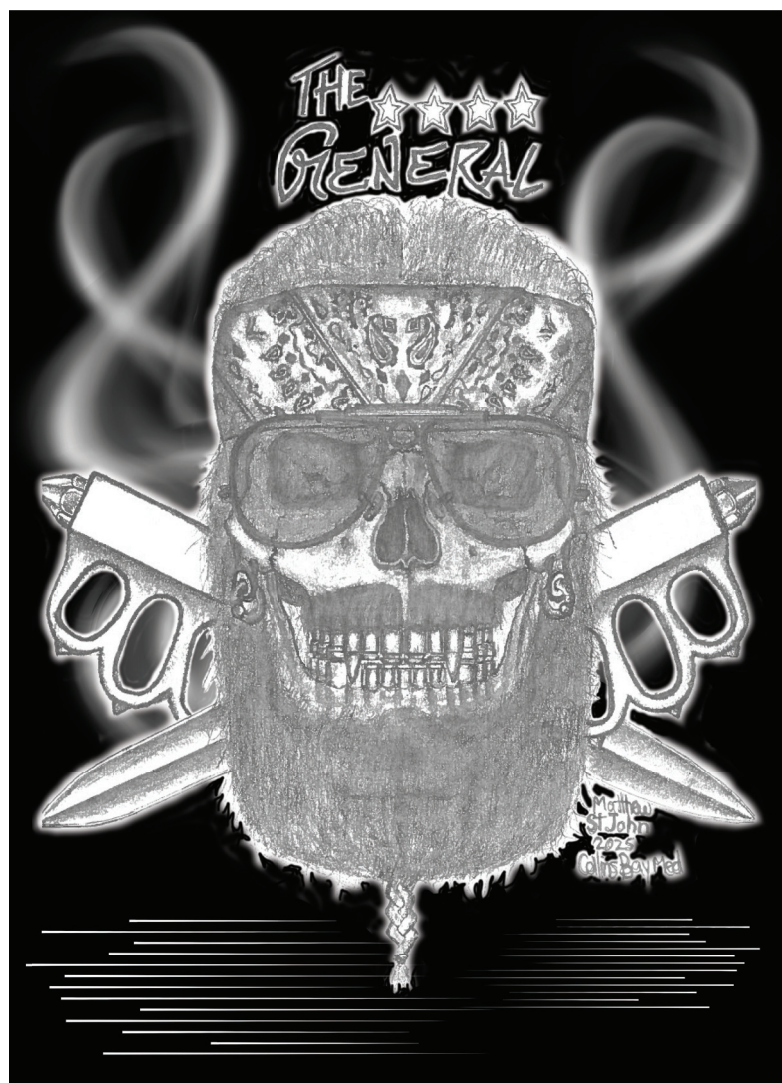
PUPS (PRISONERS UNITED PEN-PAL SERVICE)

ASK SOMEONE TO EMAIL PUPSPENPALS@GMAIL.COM WITH: YOUR NAME & INSTITUTION, DESCRIPTION OF YOU AND YOUR INTERESTS & DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN A PEN PAL

EMAIL US FOR YOUR WELCOME LETTER AND WE'LL GET TO WORK TO MATCH YOU WITH YOUR PEN PAL!



STAY STRONG. STAY UNITED.



Matthew St. John

Oleesia



Brian Kerr

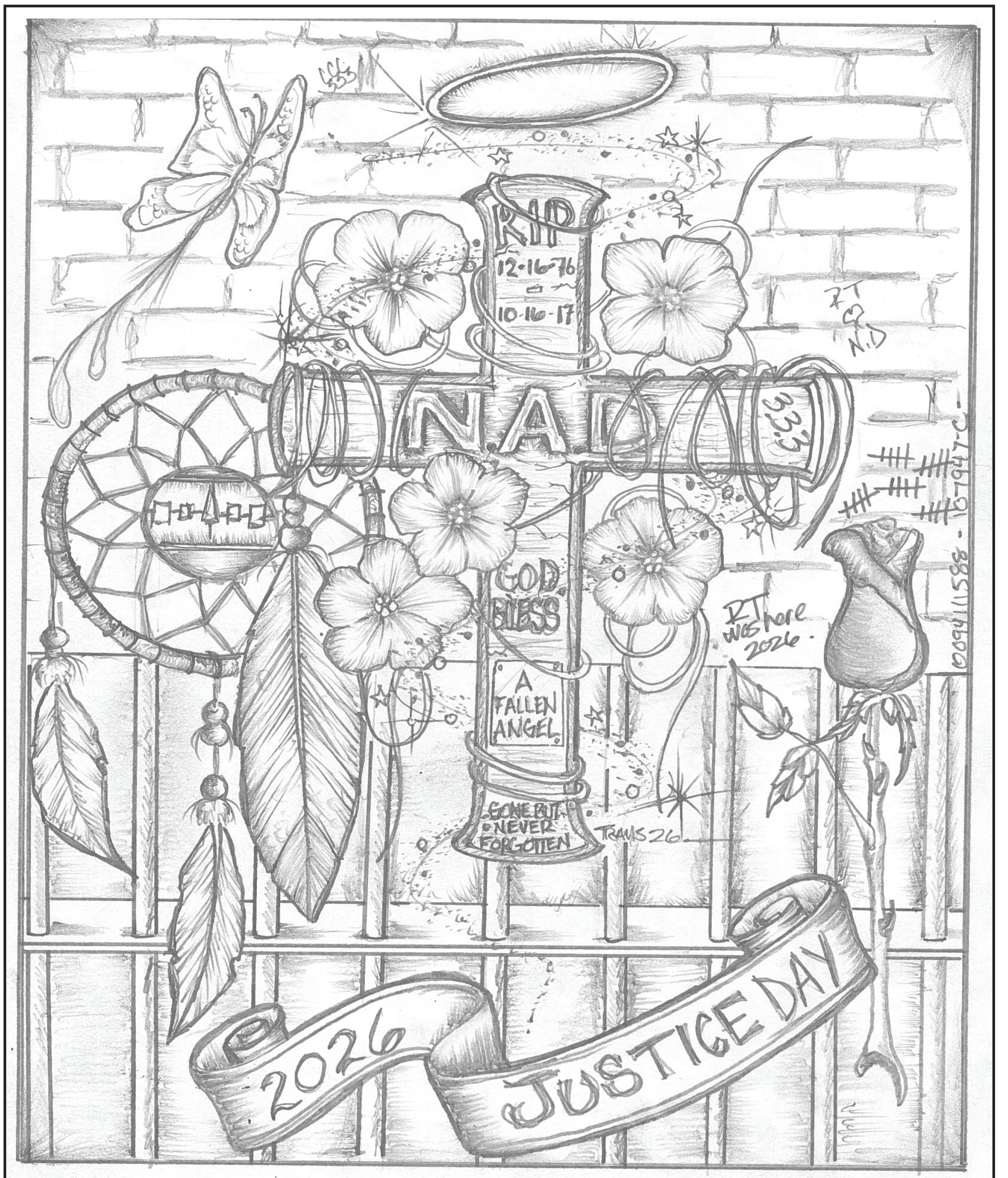
Human Zoo

I am Human he screamed,
Coming out of his dream
Wide-eyed and breathing hard.

"Be Quiet!"

Snarled the hardened voice of an invisible prison guard

He dreamt he was a prisoner
In a man-made Human Zoo.
But what scared him the most
Was to awaken and find it true!





UNTITLED

By Roy Wilson

They make me work as if I am a slave
I feel like I have crawled in a hole and
I have nothing to gain. This is the
path I choose so I have to live with
the pain of abused but I am confused
because the pay has never changed
from 15 years it's been five dollars
and some change. Now I am walking
around Joyceville ground working as
if I am a clown or a slave locked in
a cage this should be on the front
page so we can have a better wage
for when we get out we have better
chances to a live a better way. I have
so much more to say but my days are
gloomy and gray so I get down on my
knees and pray asking God to forgive
me for living this way.

GUILTY

By Tara Turk

Guilty,
One word I dreaded to hear
Guilty,
One word I secretly began to fear
Guilty,
One word directed at me
Guilty,
One word now that's all people see
Guilty,
I made a mistake, an obvious bad choice
Guilty,
Now that I'm labelled,
they refuse to hear my voice
Guilty,
I don't deny it, I know I was wrong
Guilty,
But here in this place, I just don't belong
Guilty,
Everyone in here is innocent,
didn't you know
Guilty,
If that's the case,
then where do all the guilty go

I THINK ABOUT YOU

By Jacob Brode

Hey babe, I think about you
When the sky is gray
I think about you in every way
I think about you as we are soulmates
You are the icing on my cake
You're all I think about each and every
day
When I lay awake
I think about you in a romantic way
I wish I could grab you and shake your
pain away
I think about you day and night
They say love is blind
But I have sight
You're my world, baby
You are so bright
You're my shining light
You're going to be Jacob Brode's wife

UNENDING EXISTENCE

By Philly Eh!

Days melding into weeks
Pages of life ever turning
Time perpetually bending
One must develop patience
Waiting... Always pausing
This is my world
Solid steel doors and bar cages
Reality slipping
My mind creating its own safe haven
Memories packed into boxes
Thoughts ever running
Doors never opening
What to do... Where to go
A ruined life
Someone must live it
My soul unfortunate to be
Good day – Good night
Goodbye.

OPEN POSSIBILITIES

By Philly Eh!

MY SPIRITS ARE HIGH
THE NIGHT IS BRIGHT
LOVE IS STRONG
EMOTION IS WIDE
SHOWING BRIGHT SMILES
CASTING NO SHADOWS
THE FUTURE IS OPEN
MY PATH ALIT
WHEREVER I GO
ONLY THE CREATOR KNOWS
FAMILY & FRIENDS
TEEMING FULL
OPEN THE DOOR
ONWARDS I GO

UNTITLED

By Aaron Fairfield

I grew a tree inside my cell, just to pass
the time away
An apple tree came from a seed
So I can see a little life, that's pure and
free far away
From in these walls I dream
And as my dream goes by, I watch it
grow and wait
For it to become big and strong
Will it give me apple's fruit, that I can
eat or will it crack the stone beneath my
fucking feet
I lay beneath my apple tree, my dream I
bask in sun
All lazy day away from keys, locks, and
all the politics
Orange and blue and orange and blue
Don't change the way we feel, and see,
and think
Locked away, behind the bars that are
there to hide the truth
You need us here
To keep a broken system working
smooth

MY BUTTERFLY PRINCESS

By Kayla Rose

My beautiful butterfly
Butterfly princess
Fluttering as you fly
As free as you can be
Full of peace and happiness
Sprinkling love like fairy dust
A tiara adorns your head
You wear it with honour and pride
You add wonder and grace
To the world
By being your best self
With every powerful stride,
You spread your wings
And soar upon the wind
Letting your beauty shine
As you glow from within
A true beauty, you sparkle;
A rare gem, you shine
Everything you do
You're my butterfly princess
Forever and always,
I will love you!

MIRRORS

By Kayla Rose

Starcrossed lovers
Known to each other
Since the beginning of time
Always running; forever chasing
Round and round
In circles we go
Meant to be; are we really?
Or are we mirrors?
Sharing lessons to be learned.
We grow up, we evolve
We level up;
Together and apart
Learn the lessons
Time to move on
Heartbreak is part of the journey
Actors on a shared stage
Souls with a purpose to play
Love that will never go away
Destined to cross paths
In my heart you will stay...
Until we meet again.
DIAMOND
By Gordie Soyee Lemaigre
I want to become a diamond when I die.
Burn my body to ashes, make a diamond
out of my ash.
I am a carbon, time, heat, and pressure
are all I need to become a diamond.
I will be adorn, no more rejection.
I will be cherished, no more abandon-
ment.
I will put a smile on countless female
faces.
I won't be forgotten about, I'll always be
on a lady's mind
I will be a conversation piece, I'll dazzle,
I'll glitter, I'll sparkle.

From a tragedy to an aspiration.

A transformation of a fragile state to a
solid to infinity.

I'm a priceless necklace on a princess's
neck, I dazzle, I glitter, I sparkle.

I'm valuable; I was valued zero in life, a
major flip.

I'm rare, I'll be put on a display for bil-
lions to want.

I become a diamond, I'm worth a for-
tune, I'm a paradise.

MY CHILD

By Brenden Groskopf

- Dedicated to my daughter -

My love is undefinable for my
child

I've made mistakes and lost
years of time

Stuck between these four con-
crete walls

All these letters written and
phone calls shared

For you, my child, I'm sorry
for all your tears.

My child is the best, even
when I'm at my lowest

She brightens my day and gives
me hope for a better day

I can't make up for the past,
but for you my child

I will never cast, not a doubt
or a shadow

That I'll fight these powers
that are holding me...

And change who I am and who
you want me to be...

I may be a parent, but you are
my child

My reasons for change and rea-
sons to be...

I was with your mom who I al-
ways want my queen to be...

Without EM, the math of (Em) +
B = S.I would never had hap-
pened...

Without her, you, my child,
never would have been...

You, my child, are so much
more than your father in this
jail...

You're strong and kind and
never leave anyone behind

You're beautiful and smart and
always inspire to be more

With good grades and all the
sports you play...

You, my child, I will always
be proud of in your inspira-
tion to be more.

So, from these four concrete
walls and your pictures on my
wall...

I send you this poem and all
the love in the world...

My time may seem long, but
it's only for a little while

But now and forever

You will always be

My Child.



MAKING PAYROLL

By Mark “Southside” Zammit

For many a decade I’ve pondered the concrete
For an abundance of years my sweat dripped
over and over on dried cement sidewalks
My life, a war against organizations and
church
My life, a war against sex traffickers and
pedophiles
I, employed by crimes of my own passion
Decimated invasion into my own mind and
trauma
I, never asked for all my cherished to be
destroyed
For, I the robber, I the thief
I the filth of society by today’s standards and
conservatives
BUT!!
Never once have they asked why or cared, but
only judged
For I...
Am only a paycheckue

SIGNS

By Abdul Jabbar

*If you really look.
There are signs.
Signs in your life.
Signs in the lives of others.
Signs in history.
Signs in nature.
If you really look.
There are signs.
The world is not random.
The universe is not random.
Your life is not random.
It is carefully planned.
In detail.
Every atom.
Every molecule.
Every cell.
Every second.
Every minute.
Every hour.
Carefully planned.
By the best of planners.
By the best one.
To take care of everything.
The best guardian.
The best friend.
Allah.
You are not alone.
In your cell.
You are not alone.
In seg.
Allah is with you.*

INDIAN PRINCESS

By Anonymous

Indian Princess, you look beautiful in your jingle
dress,
You take me back to the good old days,
When we listened to our elders and followed our
way.
We pounded our drums to Mother Earth’s heart-
beat,
Instead of losing our people to life on the streets.
Before the system failed us and we fell between
the cracks.
Before they took our language and never gave
it back.
When our kids were kids, not gangsters and
thugs.
When being a man meant protecting the tribe,
not beating his wife
And getting drunk and high.
Indian Princess we are meant for more than this.
More than just dying off from AIDS and Hep-
atitis.
More than being just a number and a statistic.
Indian Princess, it’s not too late to save our chil-
dren and change our fate,
But first we must let go of the pain and let go
of the hate.
We must move on and forgive the wrongs and
teach our children that being tough does not
mean being strong.
Teach them that strength comes from the good
inside and
That good must be used to protect the tribe.



EPIPHANIES OF A PRISONER

By DJ Arctic

**FREEDOM IS A CHOICE AND NOT JUST A
CIRCUMSTANCE**
**ONLY THOSE WHO LOVE YOU WILL STAY BY
YOUR SIDE**
**ACCEPTANCE BECOMES A FRIEND RATHER
THAN AN ENEMY**
**THE SPEED OF TIME IS A PRODUCT OF YOUR
ACHIEVEMENTS**
**SIMPLE PLEASURES ARE AMPLIFIED TRE-
MENDOUSLY**
**YOU BECOME WHAT YOUR PERCEPTION OF
REALITY IS**
**THERE IS A LOT TO GAIN FROM LOSING
EVERYTHING**
**LIMITED CHOICES BECOME EXPANDED
OPPORTUNITIES**
**CHANGE IS A SELF-REALIZATION THAT CAN-
NOT BE IMPOSED**

**BAD DECISIONS CAN BECOME GREAT IM-
PROVEMENTS**
PATIENCE CAN TAKE FOREVER
**THE MIND CANNOT BE CONTAINED BY
WALLS**
WRONG ANSWERS CAN SHOW THE RIGHT WAY
FREEDOM CAN BE A WASTE OF TIME
**MISTAKES MADE TWICE SHOULD TEACH
TWICE AS MUCH**
**NOTHING TO PROVE HAS THE SMALLEST
REWARDS**
**YOU CAN BE RELEASED FROM THE PRISON
OF YOUR MIND**
CREATIVITY IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTAIN
**IMAGINATION IS THE GREATEST TYPE OF
FREEDOM**
**THERE’S NO WRONG WAY TO DO THE RIGHT
THING**
PEOPLE WILL FORGET TO REMEMBER YOU

PLEA DEAL

by Missed Konnections

Dear your Honourable Judge, I’ve made endless mistakes. I’ve caused an eternity of pain.
I’ve tried time and time to change, but change never came. I’ve built these solitary fortress walls brick by brick with soundless echoing heartaches and sweet bitter salty ocean tears.
These habits are strong. Completely lost. Confused. Dazed. Hopeless. In despair. Please be patient with me.
On bent knees shattered into a million pieces, I reach out for help. With no hands in sight to hold on for support, I crash tumbling down like a house built from a deck of cards.
Stuck to these chains that bind me. Screaming silently, loud within. I’m plead- ing to free my mind. To liberate my soul. And find a place to call home.
A room full of many YET no one to turn to. A room full of --chatter, BUT no one to talk to. ALONE except these four walls surrounding me.
Stripped of everything in A&D. Lost my respect, integrity, and dignity; while standing their naked being told to touch my toes and my knees.
Dear your Honourable Judge, do not deprive me because of my sins. Do not reject me because of my faults. Do not abandon me because of some of my evil character, evil deeds, and evil desire ~ overlook my shortcomings. I turn to you for Mercy and Grace.
Dear your Honourable Judge, awaken me to set right the remainder of my life. Do not entrust me to myself for the twinkling of an eye. Rectify all my affairs for me.
Dear God, make me among those who rely upon you and you suffice them. Seek guidance from you and you guide them. Seek assistance from you and you assist them.
Forgive me. Forgive my parents and all the human beings. I PLEAD to you to deal with us with your forgiveness and favour us with your Grace, Mercy, and Love.
This is my plea deal God, I’m willing to do a life sentence with a possibility of no parole with you. Please hear my call.
Please answer my prayers.

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): _____

18 BULLETIN BOARD

ISSUE #113: PJD 2026



PASAN IN-REACH SCHEDULE

TSDC: Weekly on Mondays
TEDC: Most Wednesdays
Contact **Eveline** at **ext. 238** to schedule group program for your unit or one-to-one meeting

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

HEPATITIS C PROGRAM / WORKSHOPS
TSDC: 3rd Tuesday of the month
CNCC: 4th Tuesday & Wednesday of the month
****CURRENTLY ON HOLD****

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 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 use 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 !!

**ISSUE #114 SPECIAL HEP-C ISSUE:
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT = SEPT 01**

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO SEPT 15!!

Art, stories, accounts, poetry, recommendations, information sharing, harm reduction tips, and more on the topic of Hep-C, stigma, access to care, treatment, testing, and whatever else!

**ISSUE #115 DUE OUT LATE DECEMBER
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT = NOV 01**

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 TRANSFERED? 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 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 interest-

ed! 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



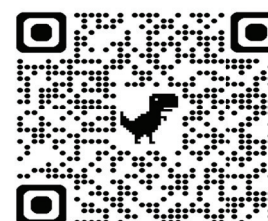
**YOUTH AGES
18-29**



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



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



19 SUPPORT RESOURCES

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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 NEWFOUND- LAND & 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
Robie 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 ORGANISMESCOM- MUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de LUT- TECONTRE 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 & 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, Thun- der 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 T.O.
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 recom- mend 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)
Once team is out in community, contact 416-417-6135

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

PRAIRIES

AIDS SASKATOON
1143 Ave F N, Saskatoon SK, S7L 1X1 / 306-242-5005

KIMAMOW ATOSKANOW FOUNDATION
Accepts collect calls
R.R. 1 Site 1 Comp 111, Onoway AB, T0E 1V0 / 780-967-2997

HIV COMMUNITY LINK: CALGARY
Accepts collect calls
1944 10 Ave SW, Calgary AB, T3C 0J8 / 403-508-2500

HIV COMMUNITY LINK: MED HAT
Accepts collect calls
419 N Railway St., Medicine Hat AB, T1A 2Z3 / 403-527-5882

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

TURNING POINT SOCIETY OF CEN- TRAL ALBERTA
No collect calls
4611 50th Ave, Red Deer AB, T4N 3Z9 / 403-346-8858

NINE CIRCLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
705 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0X2 / 204-940-6000

OUT SASKATOON
245 3 Ave S #201, Saskatoon SK, S7K 1M4 / 306-665-1224

PLWA NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN
Toll-free (SK only) / No collect calls
127C Avenue D N, Saskatoon, SK S7L

1M5 / 1-800-226-0944 (SK), 306-373-7766

PRINCE ALBERT METIS WOMEN'S 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 ELIZA- BETH 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, Hal- ifax 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
Aftercare support: prairie provinces who collaborate and organize together on issues of prison and police abolition

WEST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SOCI- ETY/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 PRIS- ONS c/o Justin Piché, PhD
Dept of Criminology University of Otta-

wa, 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, Mid- town AB, T5J 0B7
Available in Edmonton Institution for Wom- en, Edmonton Institution, and Edmonton Remand Centre

OPEN DOOR BOOKS (ODB)
c/o QPIRG Concordia
Accepts collect calls
Concordia University, 1455 de Mai- sonneuve 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 PUNISH- MENT EDUCATION PROJECT (CPEP)
University of Ottawa, Dept of Criminol- ogy, 120 University Private, room 14002, Ottawa ON K1N 6N5

DISABILITY NETWORK OF ONTAR- IO'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' LEGAL SERVICES
Toll-free: 1-866-577-5245
Closed Weds. Phones open 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. on weekdays
310-625 Agnes Street, New Westmin- ster, BC, V3M 5Y4

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



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 or visit our our website at saatoronto.org/prison-outreach

Inmates can write to us at:

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



Prisoner Support Lines

ENABLING JUSTICE

call collect from any jail/prison in Ontario

- access resources
- get support
- receive printed materials
- report prison conditions

*Beaver Creek = Penetanguishene *GVI = Hamilton *Bath/Millhaven/Joyceville = Kingston

CELL COUNT PJD 2026



"THERE IS NO NATURAL DEATH IN PRISON" - PETER COLLINS

In memory to all those who have died behind the walls (2025-2026)

**This list was collected from the Tracking (In)Justice Project and does not include reported deaths with names as "Unknown". It is very likely that this is not a complete collection of names.*

[2025] BOWDEN INSTITUTION, AB: Michael Lee Hobbs (50), 02/01/2025 | Gilbert Robinson (69), 30/05/2025 | Richard Bishop (58), 21/07/2025 | Erick Reid (34), 29/07/2025 | DRUMHELLER INSTITUTION, AB: Donald Pepper (49), 04/07/2025 | Wynden Bremner (22), 01/10/2025 | EDMONTON INSTITUTION, AB: Evan Foureyes (35), 21/02/2025 | Latto Sesay (40), 23/02/2025 | KENT INSTITUTION, BC: John Wendell Keyler (40), 23/10/2025 | MATSQUI INSTITUTION, BC: Michael Wallwork (34), 02/08/2025 | MISSION INSTITUTION, BC: Ryan Brady (59), 27/07/2025 | PACIFIC INSTITUTION, BC: Johathon Reginald Taylor (92), 27/01/2025 | Garcia Riberio Dias (85), 15/03/2025 | Darwin Heilman (81), 27/04/2025 | Abraham Froesse-Friessen (66), 14/06/2025 | James Talbot (82), 23/07/2025 | Nelson Tayongtong (52), 10/08/2025 | Thomas Anthony McDonald (74), 19/09/2025 | STONY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTION, MB: Michael McKay (54), 21/01/2025 | Shane Kruchak (50), 23/01/2025 | Gordon Kornelson (80), 07/06/2025 | Tyson Harding (44), 09/07/2025 | Kyle Harper (27), 01/10/2025 | SHEPODY HEALING CENTRE, NB: Joseph Turple (64), 24/04/2025 | SPRINGHILL INSTITUTION, NS: Blair Chrisholm (62), 06/07/2025 | BATH INSTITUTION, ON: Dennis Uhrig (84), 23/03/2025 | Zafar Ullah (59), 21/05/2025 | Dennis Stewart (70), 22/05/2025 | Robert Edgar (89), 27/05/2025 | Sofyan Boalag (46), 01/11/2025 | Jarreh Grant (35), 04/11/2025 | Jan Vanderplaet (72), 11/11/2025 | BEAVER CREEK INSTITUTION: Richard Shearer (45), 05/03/2025 | CENTRAL EAST CORRECTIONAL CENTRE, ON: Cory Keers (40), 20/11/2025 | JOYCEVILLE INSTITUTION, ON: Orlando Ashby (42), 26/04/2025 | Richard Pawley (73), 09/05/2025 | Yohanna Chol (39), 10/10/2025 | MILLHAVEN INSTITUTION, ON: Joseph Pauze (68), 05/03/2025 | Donald Hurrie (63), 13/03/2025 | Everton Biddersingh (69), 21/03/2025 | Mohamed Mohamud (28), 05/05/2025 | Sheridon Drennan (67), 23/06/2025 | Nicholas Shipman (43), 02/10/2025 | Patrick Tara Pearsall (60), 13/11/2025 | Daniel LaLonde (71), 07/12/2025 | SARNIA JAIL, ON: Douglas Cutbush (51), 08/01/2025 | TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CENTRE, ON: Mangok Akol (27), 27/03/2025 | WARKWORTH INSTITUTION, ON: James Gallant (30), 12/01/2025 | ARCHAMBAULT INSTITUTION, QC: Guy Tousignant (69), 09/04/2025 | Jean-Claude Doiron (82), 10/04/2025 | Jean Beland (53), 02/08/2025 | Alain Charest (68), 05/10/2025 | Gerard Lavoie (75), 24/11/2025 | Roger Murray (79), 16/12/2025 | DONNACONA INSTITUTION, QC: Adam Williams (47), 13/06/2025 | Sylvain Kabbouchi (26), 20/07/2025 | DRUMMOND INSTITUTION, QB: Danny McIlwaine (62), 02/01/2025 | Mathieu Langlois (45), 07/08/2025 | Gilles Dubois (73), 20/12/2025 | FEDERAL TRAINING CENTRE, QC: Marcel Boucher (71), 17/09/2025 | Michel Lambert (73), 01/10/2025 | PORT-CARTIER INSTITUTION, QC: Gabriel Marion (24), 05/10/2025 | Ghyslaine Malette (33), 10/11/2025 | Sylvain Loisele (59), 14/12/2025 | REGIONAL RECEPTION CENTRE, QC: Dominic Poirier (29), 22/03/2025 | Tyler Hunter (33), 05/12/2025 | Robert Grimm (77), 07/12/2025 | RCMP (REMAND), SK: Gerald Straighnose (61), 05/06/2025 | REGIONAL PSYCHIATRIC CENTRE, SK: Rob Wapuchakoos (69), 27/04/2025 | Barry Nygren (78), 02/06/2025 | Maryellen Young (44), 18/07/2025 | William Gossen (29), 15/08/2025 | Randy Cardinal, 29/12/2025 | SASKATCHEWAN PENITENTIARY, SK: Matthew Scoville (42), 11/07/2025 | Craig Papequash (36), 25/10/2025 | [2026: Jan 01-Aug 08] BOWDEN INSTITUTION, AB: Albert Bellegarde (47), 20/03/2026 | EDMONTON INSTITUTION, AB: Allan Legere (78), 09/03/2026 | EDMONTON INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN, AB: Catherine Lecht (66), 11/05/2026 | Kiara Mooswa (24), 06/08/2026 | MATSQUI INSTITUTION, BC: Charles Wheeliker (59), 17/03/2026 | MISSION INSTITUTION, BC: Daniel Dow (68), 22/06/2026 | PACIFIC INSTITUTION, BC: William Jacques Louis McNichol (75), 04/01/2026 | Ralph Shaw (65), 24/06/2026 | WILLIAM HEAD INSTITUTION, BC: Christopher Tyler (63), 04/03/2026 | Ernest Jensen (69), 29/06/2026 | STONY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTION, MB: Craig Flett (32), 10/02/2026 | WINNIPEG REMAND CENTRE, MB: Kiana Everett (25), 01/07/2026 | ATLANTIC INSTITUTION, NB: Calvin Lewis (55), 02/03/2026 | Ryan Richard (27), 17/06/2026 | DORCHESTER INSTITUTION, NB: Melvin Stanton (70), 31/03/2026 | MADAWASKA REGIONAL CORRECTIONAL CENTRE, NB: Corey Bartlett, 22/01/2026 | SPRINGHILL INSTITUTION, NS: Steven Wilson (41), 23/01/2026 | Darren Bonenfant (43), 05/05/2026 | Dominique Tremblay (65), 26/06/2026 | BATH INSTITUTION, ON: Patrick Conway (49), 31/01/2026 | Davide Thomas (63), 07/02/2026 | Thomas Reid (70), 14/02/2026 | Cecil Gillis (77), 04/03/2026 | Jean-Francois Savoie (67), 11/04/2026 | Marcelo Aravena (50), 28/06/2026 | BEAVER CREEK INSTITUTION, ON: Jason Hubler (51), 17/02/2026 | Russell Thomas (48), 30/04/2026 | MILLHAVEN INSTITUTION, ON: Kenneth Irwin (69), 07/04/2026 | Darian Daignault (28), 05/05/2026 | Michael Clairoux (52), 29/05/2026 | ARCHAMBAULT INSTITUTION, QC: Claude Fournier (86), 10/01/2026 | Gilles Gilbert (83), 15/02/2026 | Valery Fabrikant (86), 27/06/2026 | DONNACONA INSTITUTION, QC: Tyreek Angus (26), 02/03/2026 | Amine Derradji (25), 24/03/2026 | Tarek Baydoun (30), 03/06/2026 | Allan Potter (63), 08/07/2026 | REGIONAL RECEPTION CENTRE, QC: Taghe Savojipour (57), 16/02/2026 | REGIONAL PSYCHIATRIC CENTRE, SK: Dexter Burns (67), 31/03/2026 | William Maheux (78), 28/04/2026 | Andrew Ian (74), 13/05/2026 | SASKATCHEWAN PENITENTIARY, SK: Jason McKay (54), 11/03/2026 | Horace Bear, 21/04/2026