

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



Issue 5 Winter 2016-7

WOMEN'S PRISON
NETWORK

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #5 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

Its purpose is to be a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, and connections. We strive to send copies into all women's prisons in Canada.

This magazine is sent into women's prisons only!

Please send in your art, poems, short stories and articles to Women's Prison Network if you would like your voice to be part of the next issue.

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women's Prisons in Canada.

If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

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All Cover Art featured will receive a \$25.00 donation.

Thank you for your work!

Please note that since this magazine is about respecting women, trans and youth from all backgrounds, any religious imagery may not be published.

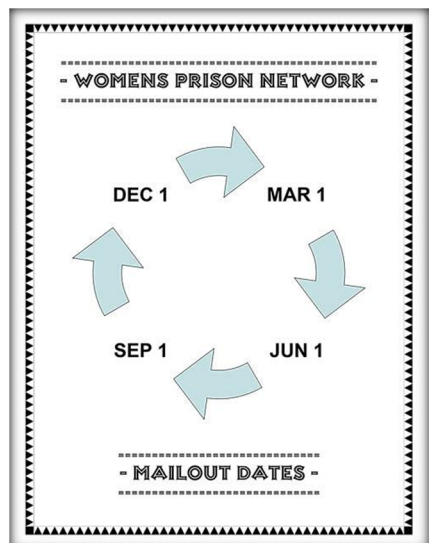
Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.

Thanks!

Cover Art: Anngela Valentino
Dedicated to all women who have died in prison: Ashley Smith, Terry Baker, Camille Strickland-Murphy, Veronica Park, Kinew James, & ...

Page 4 Art: Amelia Ramsey-Lefevre

Back Cover Art: Denise Bougie



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No GST Rebate, Over-Charging ...

Folks in prison are not entitled to GST Rebate but we get charged GST on everything we buy. We are charged Room & Board. When we buy a 19" tv they get away with charging us over \$200.

- Anonymous

Hep C Success ...

I would like to bring attention to the doctor at Vancouver Infectious Disease Centre (VIDC) and tell of the thanks I owe him and staff for giving me my life back.

Ten+ years of living with Hepatitis C Virus, genotype 3a, the hardest and longest to cure.

Doctor after doctor put me off from getting treatment even after sitting in custody for two years.

Within 5 months of meeting the doctor at VIDC, I was cured of this disease with new up-to-date medications that have very little or no side effects. VIDC helps people with little or no money in the downtown area of Vancouver by offering state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment of chronic infectious diseases.

The doctor and staff give hope and help to all who ask for it, even to people in custody. I now have new hope for getting my life back together. Thank you again for all the help and the respect shown to me each time I went there.

- Anonymous

Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.

- Helen Keller

Just because everything's different, doesn't mean anything's changed.

- Irene Porter

Enemies are so stimulating.

- Katharine Hepburn

CSC Secrets

In Feb 2014 I took CSC to the Human Rights Tribunal in BC and was successful in suing CSC. But I was given a 'gag order' not to disclose any info to the general public or they would take back my Monetary Settlement (which was substantial) and also face a possible prison term for Breach of Confidential Agreement.

I am a 'Hermaphrodite' or the correct term now, 'Intersex' person. It's got to do with a person being born with an extra chromosome eg: xx female, xy male, xxy female-identified intersex, yxy male-identified intersex. What this means is Intersex persons are born with both sex organs, one or both functional, or only one fully functional, or neither one functional. We are all very different from each other and one as rare as the next.

I was born in 1961 with both sex organs and was the first Intersex child to be allowed to be taken home by my parents. Prior to that we were put in Asylums (Mental Inst.) or sold to circus 'Freak Shows'.

I had a horrible life of secrecy as you can imagine in order to cover-up my birth difference. Back then if you were born disfigured you were and still are shunned by society.

Anyway, my life was not so good and at 17 I ended up in Canada's worst prison, Collins Bay. Yes, I was a female with a fully functional vagina and breasts placed into the General Pop. of a male inst. because I also had a very tiny phallic penis-like structure that was non-functional.

You can only imagine what I went through for those 3 years: rapes, beatings, sodomy, degraded, passed around for every man to use me. I tried to kill myself many times by cutting my arm to the bone, hoping to bleed out. I was to endure this cycle for 32 years in prisons.

I was also sent to the old Prison for Women (P4W) twice. That was how the coin tossed in Kingston, Heads - I went to Kingston Pen, Tails - I went across the street to P4W.

I now have cancer and will die soon and feel my story should be told. CSC has gone to great lengths to cover it up and hide their shame. The Human Rights Commission said my Case was the worst atrocity ever committed by CSC.

- Anonymous

Governments must restrict use of prison 'segregation'

It's amazing what shining a spotlight on a problem can achieve.

In December 2014 Canada's prison service flatly rejected recommendations from a coroner's jury into the death of Ashley Smith that it curb its use of solitary confinement, saying it would hobble the "safe management" of the system.

But under constant scrutiny from human rights organizations, an ombudsman and even a judge, that's exactly what Correctional Service Canada (CSC) has done.

First, over the past two years it cut in half the use of indefinite solitary confinement. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, 247 federal prisoners spent more than 120 days in "segregation," down from 505 in 2013-14.

Second, according to new information released by the CSC, it halved the numbers held in solitary confinement on a daily basis. On August 14, 2016, there were 361 offenders held in segregation, down from 775 on April 13, 2014.

And, contrary to its own predictions, CSC did not lose control of its prisons, demonstrating that the critics were right: the prison service can curb the excessive use of solitary confinement.

Still, as federal prisons ombudsman Howard Sapers warned the Star, that could change if the current spotlight on solitary confinement dims. That's why the federal, provincial and territorial governments should legislate changes to ensure that segregation is, indeed, a limited, last resort at prisons across the country and that no one like Ashley Smith is placed in solitary again.

Appallingly, Smith choked herself to death in 2007 at the age of 19 as guards watched. In the final year of her life, she had been on "segregation status" for more than 300 days and was forcibly restrained and injected with drugs. She should have been in psychiatric care.

The prison service admits that recent reductions came about partly by "looking more closely at alternatives" to solitary confinement, including sending some prisoners to mental health services and ensuring inmates admitted to segregation are released at the earliest and safest time.

Still, prisoners continue to be forced unjustifiably into segregation cells. Just last August an Alberta judge freed three inmates from solitary confinement at a federal prison, ruling that the

decision to send them there was "not reasonable."

What's clear is that every day that goes by without government action is another day that prisoners across the country are thrown into segregation cells when other alternatives might be just as safe — and more humane — for them and their fellow inmates.

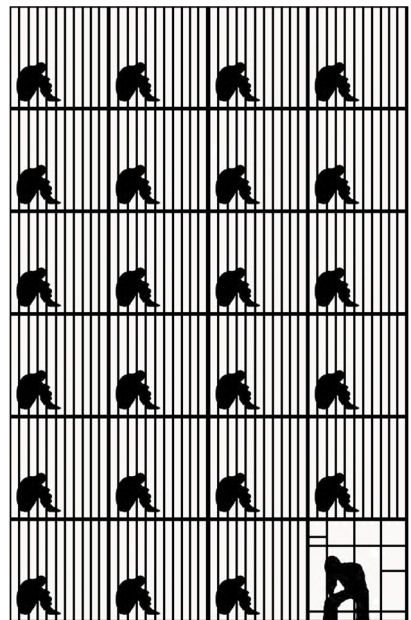
And for that there is hope. In Ontario, then-correctional services minister Yasir Naqvi announced a review of the province's policies on segregation for inmates back in March 2015. It's due out shortly. And in Ottawa, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau directed Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould last November to implement recommendations stemming from the death of Smith. Trudeau added that solitary should not be used to control mentally ill inmates.

Now it's time for governments to stop pondering and start acting. There is only so much that public pressure, alone, can achieve.

Editorial

Toronto Star

Oct 13, 2016



Ontario finally gets serious about restricting solitary confinement

The Wynne government has hired respected prison ombudsman Howard Sapers to find ways to reduce the number of inmates held in solitary confinement and the time they spend there.

For years the Ontario government has turned a blind eye to the mental and emotional torment that inmates in its 26 prisons were subjected to by being held in solitary confinement for weeks, months and even years at a time.

Nothing appeared to move the province's various ministers of correctional services to implement controls on this cruel practice. Not a United Nations report stating that anything longer than 15 days in segregation amounted to torture. Not a study from provincial ombudsman Paul Dubé recommending a 15-day limit. Not a demand from Ontario's Human Rights Commission for an end to any length of solitary confinement, period. Indeed, it emerged recently that one provincial prisoner, Adam Capay, had been kept in solitary under 24-hour-a-day lighting for more than four years while he awaited trial.

In fact, he was locked up under those inhumane circumstances last month even as Correctional Services Minister David Oraziotti was hypocritically announcing a 15-day limit on the number of consecutive days prisoners can spend in segregation. So much for that promise.

Now, at last, there's a positive sign that the province is serious about restricting the use of solitary confinement.

Oraziotti has smartly named respected federal prisons watchdog and ombudsman Howard Sapers to review the use of segregation in prisons and deliver an interim report with recommendations within 60 days, with a final one due next spring.

Sapers, who begins work Jan. 1 when his 12-year term with the federal government is up, is primarily tasked with finding ways the government can reduce the number of people held in segregation and the length of time they spend there.

He will also look at alternatives to segregation for prisoners with acute mental health issues, ways to ensure solitary confinement is used only in rare circumstances, and how to improve training and recruitment processes for prison staff.

Importantly, he will also advise the government on how to update legislation, regulations, policies and procedures. Hopefully that will ensure recommended changes are actually implemented and followed by prison managers.

All this is good news for the roughly 7 per cent of Ontario's 8,000 inmates who are held in segregation at any given time, and the human rights experts who have been fighting on their behalf.

It's been a long time coming, but the Wynne government is finally on track to reduce the inhumane overuse of solitary confinement in Ontario's prisons. For that it should be commended.

Editorial
Toronto Star
Nov 11, 2016

Segregation Statistics - Oct-Dec 2015:

4,178 or 19.2 per cent of inmates spent at least a day in segregation across Ontario in Provincial prisons

Of the 4,178:

1,889 served multiple terms in segregation

3,674 (87.9%) were male

454 (10.9%) were female (1.2% unknown)

38.2% had a mental health alert

56.9% identified as white

13.3% identified as black

13.1% identified as aboriginal

16.2 days: Average time spent in segregation

If the System doesn't make you angry,
you haven't been paying attention!

- Unknown

Federal prisons are still relying on solitary confinement too often

The news that Canada's federal prisons have cut back on their gluttonous appetite for sticking inmates in solitary confinement should be greeted with scepticism.

Yes, it is a good thing that fewer mentally ill prisoners are being warehoused in tiny, under-monitored cells for hundreds of days at a time, and yes, it is nice to see that the hidebound Correctional Service Canada is capable of change.

But it should not be forgotten that CSC insisted for years that change was impossible. It was only after the high-profile suicide deaths of two inmates, and subsequent investigations by the federal prisons ombudsman, by this newspaper and by others, that CSC found the will to fix a badly broken system.

In August, there was an average of about 370 inmates in solitary confinement every day, according to CSC director-general of security Nick Fabiano. That is a notable decrease from a typical average of 700 to 800 in previous years.

As well, Mr. Fabiano says only 247 inmates released from solitary in the last fiscal year were in there for more than 120 days, a drop from 498 the year before.

But this positive news should be read in the context of the fact that the prisons ombudsman has long called for a maximum 15-day stay in solitary. It should also be seen in light of the fact that the United Nations considers solitary to be torture when it lasts more than 15 days or is used on youths or the mentally ill.

And let's not forget that four inmates in a federal prison in Edmonton were placed in solitary confinement on spurious grounds for 44 days this summer and were only freed after a judge ordered their release. The prison had ignored proper procedure, the judge ruled.

Prisons are tough places, and the people in them are criminals. But federal and provincial prison officials far too often use solitary confinement as a solution of first resort to deal with troublesome or troubled inmates.

So let's not celebrate the fact that federal prisons have begun to cut back on something considered to be torture. It's good to see the CSC tacitly admit that change is possible. But Ottawa has promised to bring in strict limits on the use of

solitary – and it should do just that. Canadian prisons must meet international norms for the treatment of prisoners. Anything else remains unacceptable.

Editorial
Globe and Mail
Oct 13, 2016

PEN PALS

Send in your ad: 30 Words or Less

We use Code #'s for Personal Safety.

When mail contact has been made, it is up to you to exchange your name & address, ... but only, if that is what you decide to do.

Please Print Your Name & Address on
All Letters and Photos.

All Envelopes are Destroyed !!!

Participants agree that by using this service, it is at their own risk, and by accessing this service all users agree that WPN is not to be held liable in any way for harms suffered as a result of this service.

This newsletter is sent into women's prisons only.

Not
Available
Online !

P4W – Women's Prison Memorial

A memorial to honour women who have died inside prison.

The women who died behind the walls were mothers, sisters, daughters, wives and aunts. They were so much more than their crime.

Some of these women died many years ago in P4W. Some of the bodies were never claimed.

They may be buried in a 'pauper's field' somewhere near Kingston. Their families never knew what happened to them. There is no headstone or marker there or on the old prison grounds to tell their story.

As time passes, more and more people are beginning to recognize that many women in prison are scapegoats for unjust social conditions and economic inequality. These are strong women but sometimes the burden of suffering is just too much.

Canada is just waking up to the injustice of residential schools. Are Canadians ready to make the connection to prisons? In 1998 the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that colonization in the form of Residential Schools and Reserves has contributed to the criminalization of a disproportionately high percentage of Native peoples. Did you know that Native peoples make up only 4% of the general population, but they make up 23% of the total prison population? Native women make up 33% of the population in federal women's prisons. Between 2002 and 2012 the number of Native women imprisoned in Canada increased by 109%. This injustice is not a thing of the past. It's happening now. It's getting worse.

The walls of the 'Prison for Women' in Kingston have come down but women are still jailed in federal institutions across the country. Women are still dying in prison. Let's not forget the women who lived and died inside P4W and the women in jail today. Let's not forget these women, and let their memories guide us to build a world where there are no more prisons.

This is a project of the P4W Memorial Collective. Donations can be made to:

<https://www.gofundme.com/vfqk2yb8>

This account is managed by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston.

POEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMS

Hold On

The days are getting longer, the nights are too
I just want this to be over so I can be with you
When I look out my window at night
I see the stars, they are so bright
A warm feeling comes over me
How much I love you, can't you see?

Soon we'll be together again
Never to let our love to end
My love for you is so strong
Loving you is not wrong

When I dream, it's you I that see
I can feel your kiss & your touch like it's meant to be
I hold on to my dreams of you
Cause those dreams are what help me get through
So my love, I'll see you soon
Never again to be alone

- Kathy Polchies-Roberts

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

∞ In Remembrance ∞

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.
- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance'
page on our website for Prisoners who have
died in Federal and Provincial Prisons,
Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.
If you wish to have someone remembered
there, send us a note or email and we will
honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

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Untitled

Visions of tomorrow
 Helped your memory fade away
 Jonesin' for a toke
 You smoked your life away
 A real hustler would have never
 Dipped into his sack
 I never thought my best friend
 Would sell his soul for crack
 When you started robbing
 Just to get your dirty dope
 Once you were on top
 But now your pocket's broke
 The substance then consumed you
 You no longer had control
 It took away your everything
 Half your life it stole
 Your mom would call me asking
 Where the hell you went
 Your son was getting hungry
 And you didn't pay the rent
 Eventually your habit
 Was always coming first
 I didn't want to see you
 When you were at your worst
 You never listened to me
 When i tried to help you quit
 The scars are up & down your arm
 From every vein you hit

- Lindsay Dubblestyne

Untitled

I almost over-dosed
 And took my own light out
 Cause I thought it was over
 And I had tons of doubt
 If you can't think of why
 You're here or why you've been spared
 It's more than your life's journey
 So you always must be prepared!

- Donna Brown

Love or Hate?

Lost & confused
 Torn & abused
 Wasted & used
 Hit by your hate
 When you said you'd
 Love & appreciate
 Can't think straight
 Stuck in a debate
 Between your
 Love & hate

Got to let you go
 Now that you're gone
 Can't let the pain show
 What went wrong?
 Thought it was real
 But you showed
 It was fake
 Was it really love?
 Or was it hate?

- Diamond Princess

An Endless Tale

We once pierced the limitless depths
 Of space & stars behind the moon
 Spending countless hours dreaming
 In the bluest skies all afternoon
 These delicate thoughts of warmth & softness
 Quickens the blood in my veins
 As does the faint hope that balances
 On the edge of your promise that remains
 My burning heart is glowing
 In desires immersed in thought
 Lost in fantasies of my prince
 And the fairy tale I've sought

- Sandra Kerfont

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Untitled

I'm lookin' for the man
Who stole my youth
He lives with a lie
Time to face the truth

He acts like a player
But this ain't no game
He took my innocence
And I was never the same

"Say good night to your mom,
Close your eyes, go to sleep"
But when the lights went out
To my bedroom he'd creep

Now I'm all grown up
I ain't a baby no more
On a mission of vengeance
Gonna settle the score

Put a gun to his head
Pull the trigger, nuthin' to it
Forgive & forget? Fuck that!
This is how I do it, Bang!

- Tracie Cheesman

This Home

This home of loneliness & pain
A place of steel & stone
An iron cell, a home in hell
Is where I sit alone
For the crime I pay with time
Where lights glare night & day
It sometimes seems that all my dreams
Must wait for a new tomorrow
But don't be sad, it's not that bad
Though I hide it well within
No trace outside, it's deep inside
What my trip through hell has been

- Melanie Daniels

Cell Block Heart

My heart is caged in a cellblock
Cold & isolated
Guarded by thick walls
Unable to break easily
My heart's cry echoes thru the air
Silent cries everywhere
I ask for serenity
My request is not made
I count each cement block
My heart counts it's pain
The razor-wired fence cuts deep
Cuts that made my heart bleed
I cry in the night, no one can hear
My demons sitting around me
Laughing at their success
My guardian angel patiently waiting
With her arm extended
My heart won't overcome the fear
Use the sledge hammer
For the cement around my heart
My heart wants to see
Who's on the other side
It sheds tears for freedom
Yet trapped by the mind
A fierce competitor against the heart
My heart is caged in a cellblock
Cold & isolated
Guarded by thick walls
Unable to break easily
My serenity will come
As freedom will open those steel doors
We will know who won the fight
Mind over heart or heart over mind

- Christina Asp

Don't be afraid your life will end,
be afraid that it will never begin.
- Grace Hansen

Halifax radio show gives inmates outlet on the airwaves

Prisoners perform poetry and rap on the Black Power Hour, a CKDU show co-hosted by former Halifax poet laureate El Jones.

Call in shows on Dalhousie University's campus radio station have become a creative outlet for an unlikely audience – prisoners.

Inmates are taking to the airwaves to perform poetry and rap on the Black Power Hour, an educational program on CKDU co-hosted by former Halifax poet laureate El Jones. The show focuses on social and cultural issues relevant to black people, but is open all listeners, including those behind bars.

"I think what they have really connected to is the idea that they can have a voice beyond themselves," says Jones. "They have this role in creating something and they take that very seriously."

The poetic platform came about "organically," says Jones, and was largely driven by the prisoners themselves. She says Black Power Hour was spun off of another program on CKDU, Youth Now, at an inmate's request for more historical black content.

One of the first prisoners to call into CKDU was Aiden Cromwell, who is currently awaiting a new trial after his second-degree murder conviction was overturned.

"That concrete jungle is never safe," Cromwell recently rapped on-air. "Gotta know when to pull it – Don't hesitate."

Soon after other inmates heard his performance, Jones says, the phones started lighting up.

In some jails, Jones says, prisoners have formed poetry collectives to prepare their best material for the show. Some pay up to \$7 to call into the program, and Jones says inmates have written into her saying they stay on their best behaviour to preserve their radio privileges.

Free expression can be therapeutic for prisoners, Jones says, who use the show to work out issues related to race, gender, love, family, being in prison and the actions that brought them there. Some of her favourite calls came from female prisoners who re-appropriated the machismo of hip-hop to tell men "we're not interested."

The process of sending someone to prison can be silencing, Jones says. She says in court, your

lawyer speaks for you, but on the radio, you don't "have" to say anything.

"When you do say something, it's because you're making a choice to say what you're saying," Jones says. "I think that can be a really important part of returning people's voices to them,"

Some object to giving criminals a platform, says Jones, and while she is especially sensitive to concerns about respecting crime victims, she says convicts can be victims as well.

"There's a false division that you're either a criminal or a victim, and once you become a criminal, you have no right to healing," she says. "We don't allow space in between that for working out ... trauma and problematic things."

The radio transmission goes both ways: It allows inmates to speak to the world beyond the prison walls, and gives people outside the opportunity to listen.

"I think that's a voice we're not hearing," Jones says. "Unless we expect people to be away forever, we're going to have to find ways to connect to them and I think this is one small step."

Adina Bresge
Metro News (Halifax)
Oct 24 2016

CKDU 88.1 Studio Line: 902-494-2487

Fri 1-3pm – Black Power Hour blends conscious hip hop with discussions of political, cultural, and social issues relevant to Black people.

Mon 5-6pm – Youth Now! Open panel for youth at risk, to help foster growth and understanding.

Artists do not experiment.

Experiment is what scientists do; they initiate an operation of unknown factors to be instructed by its results.

An artist puts down what he knows and at every moment it is what he knows at that moment.

- Gertrude Stein

A well-adjusted person is one who makes the same mistake twice without getting nervous.

- Jane Heard

Indigenous prisoners, segregation, top priorities for new Ottawa senator Kim Pate

An Ottawa-based advocate for marginalized Canadian prisoners named Monday to the Canadian Senate says she'll be working to reduce the number of Indigenous people who end up in the country's penal system.

Kim Pate, the executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS), is one of six appointees that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will be putting forward to fill Senate vacancies in Ontario.

"I very much see - as already part of the mandate of this government - [the desire] to reduce the numbers of people in prison, particularly Indigenous people. That's something I feel I can contribute to," Pate told CBC Ottawa's 'All In A Day' Monday afternoon.

"I must confess, I'm a bit daunted by [my new responsibilities]. But if in the end I can't effect change there, then I wouldn't stay."

Since 1992, Pate has worked with and on behalf of women in prison and provided support toward their reintegration into society as part of her work at Elizabeth Fry.

Pate has also shed light on the special needs of Indigenous women, who are overrepresented in Canadian federal prisons, and those with mental health issues. Prior to joining the CAEFS, Pate also worked for several years with the John Howard Societies.

She said Monday that the non-partisan nature of the Senate appealed to her way of thinking.

"I like to look at the evidence. I like to know what's happening. And I like to be able to apply the law and policy in a way that is fair to all people," Pate told 'All In A Day'.

"If we're making decisions that are not appropriate, we should be able to challenge them."

Merit-based process

In January 2014, Trudeau expelled all senators from the national Liberal caucus and vowed to appoint independent members to the Senate if elected.

The six new appointments were selected using the government's new merit-based process, as were last week's nine appointments.

Pate, who also teaches part time with the University of Ottawa's faculty of law, said she would also focus on eliminating the use of segregation for female and Indigenous prisoners, as well as those with mental health issues, during her time in Canada's upper chamber.

She also said she had an "abiding interest" in contributing to the discussion about national standards for health care, social services and education.

"I know from the calls I've been getting from women in prison, from women in psychiatric hospitals, from activists on the ground, from allies, from colleagues, that my feet will be held to the fire," said Pate.

"And I value and welcome that. Because I think I need to be held accountable in any decision I make - whether it's in the Senate, or any position."

CBC News
Oct 31, 2016

Ottawa must fund Innocence Canada

The organization's important work freeing the wrongly convicted is worthy of core funding from the Department of Justice.

It's hard to believe that in Canada innocent people can spend years, even decades, behind bars for crimes they did not commit. But, sadly, it happens all too often.

Think of David Milgaard, who spent 23 years in prison for a rape and murder he did not commit. Or Guy Paul Morin, wrongly convicted of the killing of Christine Jessop. He spent 10 years trying to clear his name. Or Steven Truscott, who fought for 50 years before he was acquitted of the murder of Lynne Harper.

Then think about where they might be if it wasn't for the help of Innocence Canada (formerly known as the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted), an organization that worked tirelessly for the exoneration of each.

As the Star's Wendy Gillis reported, since 1993 the non-profit organization has helped obtain 21 of the 26 exonerations in Canada's history, freeing individuals who together spent more than 190 years in prison for crimes they did not commit. Among them were seven victims of disgraced Ontario pathologist Charles Smith, including William Mullins-Johnson who spent 12

years in prison after being wrongfully convicted of the murder of his 4-year-old niece.

With a track record like that, one would think the organization would be considered a vital part of Canada's justice system, worthy of federal funding. Sadly, that seems not to be the case.

Last month, the organization was denied funding by the federal department of justice. As a result, it now finds itself in dire financial difficulty. It recently stopped accepting new cases and issued layoff notices to some members of its staff. That means not only will it cease taking new wrongful conviction cases, but its ability to tackle its current 85-case backlog will be greatly diminished. That should worry all Canadians. Included in that backlog are 16 cases where the organization is convinced the person is innocent.

Asked by the *Star* why it denied Innocence Canada's request for funding, a government spokesperson would say only that the organization's application did not meet its criteria for funding programs. But given the profound contribution it has made to Canadian justice, Innocence Canada's demise should be seen as an unacceptable outcome. The organization should be expanding its important work, not cutting back.

Wrongly taking the liberty of a citizen is among the most tragic errors the state can make. Innocence Canada has proven to be the country's most effective watchdog against such injustice. Ottawa mustn't let it fade away.

Editorial
Toronto Star
Oct 24, 2016

Freedom is fragile and must be protected. To sacrifice it, even as a temporary measure, is to betray it.

- Germaine Greer

The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends on large measure upon how our children grow up today.

- Margaret Mead

Fascism should more properly be called corporatism, since it is the merger of state and corporate power.

- Benito Mussolini

Families of Alberta prison inmates meet with Correctional Investigator in Edmonton

Deborah Watson wanted to check on her oldest son, who was coming out of surgery.

But when she called Bowden Institution, where her son is an inmate, Watson says staff told her they could neither confirm nor deny that he was there. She says they cited privacy rules.

"I got really upset," she says.

Watson had visited her 33-year-old son at Bowden days earlier, she told staff on the phone. She knew he was there. She just wanted to check on him.

Again, she says, nobody would give her any information.

On Saturday, for the first time, Watson shared her story. She joined a support group in Edmonton to hear their stories and talk about her life as the mother of an inmate.

"It was the first time I could speak to someone who knew what I was feeling," she says. "I just wanted to come and feel the support and that you could freely talk in a room and cry and feel all your emotions."

Watson joined more than 20 other men and women in the basement of a library. Some hadn't seen their loved ones in weeks - others hadn't been allowed to touch them in months, or even years.

They formed a closed circle of bodies, swaddled in jackets and sweaters, soft denim and yoga pants. Their arms and legs crossed protectively.

One man stands out.

Howard Sapers, Canada's Correctional Investigator, adjusts the collar of his blue suit. He bends over a notebook and the scratching of his pen mixes with quiet sobs in the room.

"This is my work," he tells the group. "But it's your life and I respect that."

"There is nothing pleasant about being in prison. They are harsh environments expressly designed to disallow human contact."

Last month, Sapers released a report criticizing how Canada's correctional service communicates with the families of inmates who die in custody.

He's meeting with inmates' families across Canada to hear more of their stories. Sapers says it's crucial to his work as a prison watchdog.

"I learn from every one of these discussions," he says. "I heard for the first time about some

personal experiences that people had that really refocused my own efforts and my own energies.

"This is supposed to be a human process and what we heard a little bit about was some of the lack of humanity in how people do their work, and we just can't allow that to happen."

Better communication with families

Sapers is calling for better communication between federal prisons and the families of inmates. He says there is not enough information for people with a loved one behind bars.

Families often don't have experience with the criminal justice system. This inexperience, Sapers says, makes them "naive and very frightened" of its processes.

In more than a decade as Canada's correctional investigator, Sapers says he's witnessed gradual changes in the country's prison system.

"I always feel that it moves too slowly but it's far from stagnant," he says. "There's a lot of positive change. We also have some recovery work to do. There was a lot of change that I wouldn't call positive over the last decade."

Sapers says he wants to continue talking to Canadians about their experiences inside and outside of prison walls.

"You can't solve these problems in the dark," he says. "Yes it's frustrating and yes it's challenging, but you have to be an optimist."

"I've been working around corrections for most of my adult life and if you don't believe in the potential for positive change, both in individuals and in the system, you couldn't do this work."

Zoe Todd
CBC News
Sep 18, 2016

Rules are for people who don't know how to get around them.

- Tori Harrison

Lead me not into temptation;

I can find the way myself.

- Rita Mae Brown

Happiness is good health and bad memory.

- Ingrid Bergman

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Harvoni: \$60,000 for 8 weeks (Genotype 1, low viral load, never-treated)

Harvoni: \$90,000 for 12 weeks (Genotype 1)

Sovaldi: \$55,000+ perhaps with other drugs for Genotypes other than Genotype 1

Federal Prison: you may be able to start your treatment while inside.

Provincial Prisons: Depending on the province, you may have to wait till you get out.

When released, get right on welfare or disability. Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.

Go to a Clinic and get your blood work done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

Important: most prisons, provincial drug plans, and private plans restrict the new drugs to people who have chronic hep C plus scarring of the liver (stage F2 or higher fibrosis). Both never-treated & people for whom Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin did not work are eligible for the newer treatments. For people with hep C and no liver scarring or light scarring (less than F2 fibrosis), it's still Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,
- anything in contact with blood! -

BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C

Hep C & Eating Well Inside

Your liver is your body's processing and power plant - everything you consume filters through it. If you have hep C, eating well can slow its progression in your liver.

We have some general tips on healthy eating for hep C inside. A diet low in fat, sugar, cholesterol, and sodium, but high in complex carbohydrates and sufficient protein is recommended.

- If you can, talk to health care and see if you qualify for a low-fat, low-cholesterol, or high-protein diet.
- Order peanut butter or protein bars from canteen. Watch your protein bar intake as they often contain lots of processed sugar.
- Eat protein like meats, peanut butter, beans, nuts, and cheese. Your body needs protein to fight infection and heal damaged liver cells. Protein helps you build and maintain muscle. Eat high-fat protein sources like meat, peanut butter and cheese in moderation.
- Eat carbohydrates. You need carbs to give you energy. Try to avoid high-sugar foods like candy, and go for complex carbs like pasta, potatoes, bread, fruits & vegetables.
- Eat all your vegetables - whatever you can get. You get vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables. Drink water. Coffee and cola can dehydrate you. Flush your system with some water.
- Cut back on fatty and salty foods if you can, including deep-fried foods. They make your liver work overtime.
- Cut down or stop drinking. Alcohol is very hard on your liver.
- Try to exercise a bit every day. Walk or jog around the yard. Lift weights to keep your muscles strong or get the blood flowing with push-ups and sit-ups.
- Watch your health. Put in a health care request if you get swelling or pain in the right side of your torso.
- Educate yourself about hepatitis C.

* If you have advanced liver disease or another condition like diabetes that requires a special diet, try to talk to a health professional before making changes to your diet.



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

F.E.A.T.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones. During our trips, F.E.A.T provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies. Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders. Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at info@featforchildren.org or by phone at 416-505-5333.

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration
- Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent.

Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

Prison Radio

- Halifax - CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour - Fri 1-3 pm
Youth Now! - Mon 5-6pm
- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver - CO-OP 100.5 FM
Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net

Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

Innocence Canada (Formerly AIDWYC)

Innocence Canada is a non-profit, primarily volunteer organization that looks into claims of innocence. If you would like to contact Innocence Canada to discuss whether your case meets their strict criteria, please contact:

1-800-249-1329
win@aidwyc.org

111 Peter St, Suite 408
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 2H1



If you are a woman, trans or youth prisoner and would like to receive a copy of 'Women's Prison Network', write to us and we will put you on our mailing list.

Please let us know if you relocate.

This magazine is by and for you,
Thank you for your contributions!

Women's Prison Network Winter 2016-7 - Issue #5

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view, download, print:
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send your work
before Feb 1, 2017

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