

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #11 - SUMMER 2018

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #11 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

This is a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, connections ...

We send copies into all Women & Youth prisons in Canada.

Send your art, poems, short stories, comments, articles, etc, to Women's Prison Network if you would like to be a part of the next Issue. – Thanks!

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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Contents:

News 3-7, 10-12
Poems 3, 8-9
Pen pals..... 13
Resources..... 13-16

Cover Artwork:

Unknown (*Effect Added: Diffused Reflection*)

Artists:

Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation. Thank you so much for your work!
Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.
Please note: this magazine is for women, trans and youth from all cultures, so please do not send religious imagery.
Thank you for your art!

Writers:

One column is only 300 words, so do choose your words carefully.
It must be short & to the point.
Poems that are tight & give space for others are the first in.
Thank you for your words!

We were very impoverished because our history was denied to us. So you can imagine all the work that we have to do still.
That every community, every child that's growing, should know its history and, as much as possible, its language.
- Alanis Obomsawin

My silences have not protected me.
Your silence will not protect you.
- Audre Lorde

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change.
I am changing the things I cannot accept.
- Angela Davis

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

Needle exchanges coming to 2 Canadian prisons

Inmates at two federal prisons who use injection drugs will have access to clean syringes beginning in June, with the Correctional Service of Canada planning to roll out the service at other institutions next year.

The correctional service has previously made needles available for inmates with diabetes who require insulin and for people needing EpiPens, but this is the first time drug users in Canadian prisons will have access to clean needles.

"Correctional Service Canada's prison needle exchange program is an initiative that will strengthen ongoing efforts to address infectious diseases in federal penitentiaries and in our communities," said interim commissioner Anne Kelly in a written statement on Monday.

Phase 1 of the needle exchange program will begin with one men's institution, the Atlantic Institution in Renous, N.B., as well as one women's facility, the Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener, Ont.

A correctional service spokesperson said the prisons were selected because they have the highest rates of injection drug use and needle sharing, based on routinely gathered health information.

According to the service, HIV rates in prison are 200 times higher than in the general population, and hepatitis C rates are 260 times higher. For both diseases, the rate within prisons has decreased considerably in the past 10 years.

Long overdue, advocate says

According to Chu, prisoners who use injection drugs go to great lengths to create and share makeshift syringes, sometimes made out of things like pens..

"It's quite terrible," she said. "I've heard stories from prisoners using one needle that's been used by 30 or 40, up to 50 people, just shared because there's so little access."

Chu said she's concerned about the needle exchange model the correctional service is planning to use, which requires inmates to return a needle to get a new one. She said there should be a diversity of needle distribution models, and making prisoners hand in a syringe to obtain a clean one reduces overall access.

Prison guards object

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers said in a written statement that it is concerned about the launch of the needle exchange programs in two prisons, which it claims are being implemented without new training or safety measures for correctional officers.

"This program represents a dangerous turning point. Correctional Service Canada has decided to close its eyes to drug trafficking in our institutions. It has chosen to encourage criminal activity inside the walls instead of investing in the care and treatment of inmates who are drug addicts or carriers of infectious disease," union president Jason Godin said.

"We are also wondering what's happening with CSC's zero-tolerance policy on drugs?"

Godin expressed confusion about the role of correctional officers who witness inmates using the needles to inject contraband drugs, and whether they're expected to intervene, or permit drug use.

He also claimed the new program will be a threat to officers and put inmates' lives at risk with the risk of overdose, and that the correctional service's role should be to continue to reduce the supply of drugs.

According to the correctional service, "The safety and security of staff, the public and inmates are of utmost importance when making decisions about CSC programs and policy."

Rafferty Baker
CBC News
May 14, 2018

Freedom is ...

Freedom is not just word, or an action

It's a feeling

To be so completely unhindered, uninhibited, independent

In what you think & say & sense

Freedom is Independence, Release

Freedom is emancipation

Freedom is immunity, & impunity

Freedom is deliverance from all your worries

Freedom is openness & spontaneity

Freedom is awesome, amazing, brilliant, intense

Freedom is Beautiful

- Shauna Allison

A bedtime story from prison: Rebooted program closes gap for incarcerated mothers

A program that lets incarcerated mothers record bedtime stories for their children, has restarted after a three-year hiatus to the delight of a former prisoner who used the service.

When Jodi-Lynn Joseph was released from federal prison, it had been about 18 months since she saw her young daughter. The few chances they had to speak while she was incarcerated in 2012 were as brief and limited as conversations with toddlers go.

Upon her release, Joseph was apprehensive about their reunion and how her absence affected their relationship.

"My biggest fear was that she would think that I just left her," the Saint John woman said.

The anxiety melted away when they first saw each other again at a halfway house. Joseph remembered her daughter running and jumping into her arms.

But another surprise awaited her at home.

"When I got out after 18 months of being inside and went into her room, all my pictures in the photo album were out of the photo album and all over the room," she said with a smile.

The bond remained strong, and Joseph has a group of women from Saint John to thank for preserving that connection — a connection sustained in part by a cassette.

Read Aloud program

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Saint John has rebooted the Mother/Child Read Aloud program, a service Joseph said is vital for incarcerated mothers. The service attempts to maintain some of the closeness found in reading a bedtime story. A group of volunteers load up a van with books, cassettes and recording equipment and travel to the Nova Institution for Women, a federal corrections centre in Truro, N.S.

Incarcerated mothers, grandmothers and godmothers are then encouraged to record three children's books at no cost. Books and audio are also sent to the child.

The books are new and offered at varying reading levels and for francophone and Indigenous children as well.

"This is an amazing program for their children," said Denise Durette, past president of the society.

"When you cannot read a story to your child present, this program [makes] a connection."

In the early morning of Jan. 27, Durette and Judy Murphy, the society's executive director, loaded a dozen bins filled with about 50 books each into a rental van.

They were headed to Truro for their second trip since restarting the program in November 2017.

Another trip is scheduled for March, where mothers at the prison will be given the equipment and privacy to record their voices.

Joseph said they're able to record a brief message as well — the only communication some mothers have with their children for the duration of their sentence, she said.

"It was one of the few things that people had to look forward to in there," Joseph said, adding the interruption in service would have cut off communication altogether for some mothers.

On Jan. 29 at the society's office in Waterloo Village, volunteers prepared dozens of packages to be sent to families that week. Packages have been sent across Canada and even to the United States and Europe.

It only takes a few days to create and ship the recordings, but Joseph said the audiobook can be a child's keepsake for years.

Program halted

The Read Aloud program was founded by the late Marianna Stack, a former president of the Saint John Elizabeth Fry chapter, in 2000 at the provincial correctional centre in Saint John before moving to the federal institute.

In 2014, the Correctional Service of Canada application process changed, which slowed the program's renewal. The change was followed by Stack's unexpected death in 2015, which setback the process again.

Once they completed the application, the prison had already re-allocated funds for the program elsewhere.

"We were back to square one," Murphy said.

The society eventually re-applied and Nova approved funding for three sessions between last November and this March. Murphy said they plan to continue the program, if the outside funding is available.

The bulk of their supplies is gathered through donations.

Ensuring the program continues is key to helping the roughly 26,000 Canadian children whose mothers are incarcerated, Murphy said.

Seventy per cent of women in prisons are mothers of children 18 years and younger, she said.

"We know there's a divide between children who are read to and children who are not in terms of literacy development. I think anything we can do to increase that connection is for the better," Murphy said.

"What brings women very often to prison is a way for them to look after themselves and their family. That's their only choice. By committing an offence then they end up in prison."

Joseph said her troubles with drugs landed her in prison on two separate occasions — once in 2002 and again in 2012.

Her past transgressions haven't gone away, either. She's due back in court in March for charges from years past, she said.

If she ends up back behind bars, Joseph said she hopes the program will be there for her and her now eight-year-old daughter.

"For her to hear my voice reassured her that I'm not gone," Joseph said.

The society hopes to see continued growth in similar programs across the country. They also hope to expand their regional service to offer more resources to caregivers looking after the children.

Colin McPhail
CBC News
Feb 20, 2018

#JusticeForColten and Anti-Indigenous Racism on Canadian Juries

In August 2016, Colten Boushie was murdered by Gerald Stanley, a 56-year old white farmer, in Saskatchewan. Boushie was a young, 22-year old Indigenous man from Red Pheasant First Nation.

On the evening of February 9th, Gerald Stanley's fatal shooting of Boushie was outrageously justified as an "accident", and Stanley was acquitted of all charges. Stanley was found not guilty by an all-white jury. The defence rejected a number of Indigenous people during jury selection with "peremptory challenges". Peremptory challenges are essentially a set number of people that the defence can reject from jury selection without having to provide a reason—and are an obvious avenue for discrimination in the legal system.

The jury's under-representation (read: absence) of Indigenous people is not unique to the Stanley case—it is symptomatic of the institutionalized anti-Indigenous racism embedded in Canada's justice system. It is another enraging example of how power is distributed among racial and colonial lines in this country; it is yet another mechanism allowing state sanctioned violence against Indigenous people in Canada to thrive.

In 2011-2012, former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci conducted an independent review of the representation of First Nations persons living on reserves on the jury roll in Ontario. He released a 166-page report compiling his findings in 2013, which includes a historical analysis of the jury system and a review of the many barriers put in place that have prevented—and continue to exclude—Indigenous people from participating on juries.

He writes that, historically:

"...criminal jury trials in Canada were used at times as a tool to punish, what the British viewed as disloyal behavior on the part of Aboriginal people, and to persecute the customary practices of First Nations on the grounds that they constituted criminal behaviour."

Although the report focuses on Ontario, it includes a discussion of broader systemic trends across Canadian provinces and territories.

If you have the financial means, please donate to this Justice for Colten fundraiser organized by Erica Violet Lee to support the Boushie family. Please also consider writing an email to the Attorney General of Saskatchewan Don Morgan and Attorney General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould to demand an appeal of the verdict of Gerald Stanley.

www.intersectionalanalyst.com

Feb 16, 2018

With a library you are free, not confined by temporary political climates.

It is the most democratic of institutions because no one - but no one at all - can tell you what to read and when and how.

- Doris Lessing

Being a woman is hard work.

- Maya Angelou

If we truly want to rehabilitate incarcerated youth, we must stop putting them in solitary confinement

A couple of weeks ago, a jury looking into the suicide of Yousef Mohamed Hussein, an inmate who took his own life in segregation in an Ottawa detention centre back in 2016, came out with 29 recommendations for dealing with inmates with mental health issues. Among them was the suggestion that unless there was "clear and obvious" misconduct, inmates should still be allowed some interaction and communication with others.

Earlier this year, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal issued a consent order to end segregation for the mentally ill, identified as a vulnerable population group. The province has signed on and agreed to end the practice in those cases, but it is still being used on another vulnerable population: youth aged 12 to 17.

In Ontario youth corrections, this practice is currently called "secure isolation." According to Ontario law, secure isolation refers to when a youth is locked in a specifically designated room to isolate him or her from others. Other provinces have similar practices.

There are some differences between secure isolation for youth and segregation for adults — for example, in the case of youth, segregation cannot be used solely as a punishment tool. However, they both meet the UN definition for solitary confinement when used for over 22 hours. And, according to the UN Mandela Rules, solitary confinement should be prohibited for youth.

Youth in isolation can spend up to 23 hours a day locked in a cell. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth of Ontario reported that in 2014, nearly a quarter of all secure isolation placements lasted for 24 hours or more. In 2013, one youth was held in isolation for 17 days. Currently, the Child and Family Services Act states that secure isolation should only be used as a last resort. By law, these youth should be released as soon as any "threats" are no longer a concern.

However, isolation can sometimes be used as an insidious tool for disciplining youth deemed to be "troublesome" by guards. The Residential Services Review Panel assembled by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) suggests

that "the legacy of the adult correctional system's approach to managing youth in conflict with the law and the inability for some to shift to a less authoritarian, youth-centred culture" may affect guards' relationships with youth. Thus, some guards may be using isolation when it is not appropriate or necessary.

Proponents of secure isolation argue that its use is a necessary evil to deal with deviant youth, preventing them from hurting themselves and/or others. There are also claims that time in isolation is time to reflect on wrongdoing and reconsider one's behaviour.

However, these arguments are misguided. According to criminology professor Kelly Hannah-Moffat from the University of Toronto, "there is little empirical evidence to show that [isolation] actually increases the safety of a facility."

Results from Larocque's 2017 research (some of it from the U.S.) indicate that neither the use of segregation, nor its duration, had any effect on institutional violence. Additionally, in *Bacon v. Surrey Pretrial Services*, the court stated that "inhumane treatment cannot be justified on the basis of a choice between physical safety and psychological integrity."

Evidence shows that time in isolation actually contributes to psychological harm for youth, leading to things like anxiety, depression and even hallucinations. For a population that is still developing mentally and physically, these effects are particularly harmful.

Historically, Canada made no distinction between youth and adults who came into contact with the justice system. Today, our criminal law has evolved to acknowledge that children have different needs and can benefit from less punitive interventions. In particular, the Youth Criminal Justice Act emphasizes rehabilitation and alternatives to incarceration in sentencing.

However, secure isolation runs contrary to these principles; incarcerated youth are doubly punished when subjected to incarceration and isolation. Indeed, research suggests that individuals who have been placed in solitary confinement may experience long-term or even permanent negative effects, which runs contrary to the stated objective of preparing these youths for reintegration into the community.

Beginning this week, new legislation will address the isolation of youth in Ontario custody centres. Although there have been some commendable

efforts to improve the practice, such as the potential for increased monitoring of youth in isolation, these changes don't go far enough. The new *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* still allows for the indefinite isolation of youth aged 16 or older with the provincial director's approval. This unfettered discretion opens the door for misuse.

In 2011, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture recommended a complete ban on isolation for youth. We agree. Ontario has taken necessary steps to eliminate the use of solitary confinement for one vulnerable population. It should do so for another.

Cristina Tucciarone, Ferdouse Asefi &
Sebastian di Domenico
CBC News - Apr 30, 2018

There's nothing 'illegal' about asylum seekers

Amid a global refugee crisis, the misuse of the term 'illegal' carries a real cost.

We are concerned about a recent spike in the use of the term "illegal" to characterize asylum seekers crossing the Canada-U.S. border.

One newspaper speaks of "illegal migrants" while others focus on "illegal border crossers." An editorial from a prominent national paper asks Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to "yield to Tory measures" by tightening the border. Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen recently said that he has "no qualms about using the term [illegal]." As MPs Jenny Kwan and Gary Anandasangaree have both argued, word choice is important and the term "illegal" is harmful.

"Irregular" is used by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada to describe border crossings "between ports of entry." This is not about people trying to sneak across the border undetected, but about the right to seek asylum from persecution. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects this right. Importantly, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, to which Canada is a signatory and which are incorporated into Canadian law, both recognize that refugee claimants should not be penalized for irregular entry to seek refuge.

Many news pieces that talk about "illegal migrants" or "illegal border crossing" fail to mention an important context - the Safe Third

Country Agreement (STCA) with the United States. The agreement, which came into effect in 2004, requires Canada to send refugees back to the U.S. if they come to an official port of entry in all but a few circumstances. This agreement only applies to refugee claims made at official border points, and is premised on the assumption that the U.S. is a country that protects the rights of refugee claimants. Given the current Trump administration's anti-refugee and anti-Muslim policies, there is good reason to think the U.S. is not currently a safe place of return.

Applying the term "illegal border crossing" to refugees is based on a misconception. Irregular entry is not an offence in the Criminal Code, and should not be labelled as such. The language of illegality also tends to violate the presumption of innocence. This is a principle that should inform ethical journalism.

We should recognize that many so-called "illegal border crossers" will become long-term and integral members of Canadian society. If people come without a well-founded fear of persecution, they will be sent home. But if they do have legitimate grounds for refugee protection and are legally entitled to remain, there is a strong public interest in their eventual integration. Using criminalizing language makes this transition more difficult. As refugee law scholar Harold Bauder writes, the language we choose "can also shape the way civic society, employers, and communities engage refugees and immigrants in everyday life."

Refugees often lack access to the press and to podiums, so their public image and identity tends to be defined by others. Stigmatizing labels embolden a populist politics that positions refugees as outsiders, burdens, and potential criminals. These labels in turn support problematic policies by making it easier to scapegoat refugees for social ills they are not responsible for.

We stand against a term that divides refugee claimants into "good" and "bad", "deserving" and "undeserving", and that removes the dignity of those exercising their fundamental rights to claim asylum and start a new life. There is a great responsibility for those with elevated voices to not prejudge and malign refugee claimants as "illegal."

Jesse Beatson, Kylie Sier
Toronto Star - Apr 9, 2018

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

EMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOE

Untitled

*Cryin' children, they're all crazy kids
 Blotches of black dots in their brains
 The criminally insane is what it is ...
 So it says, the system, get rid of 'em kids
 Foster them, a get rich quick
 Feed 'em to the pigs
 Kiss me loverboy, be my first, I love you
 He kissed me, I fucked him & forgot his name
 It's a new day again
 LSD, weed, rails of speed
 Spinning in a sparkly spiral
 I 3 years old, so full of greed
 The need to feed the need
 I hate black liquorish
 It leaves a nasty seed in my teeth
 Here I am, in a 8x10 at 27
 No reverend can save me
 2 for 1, serving a 10, Club Fed
 7 left to my wed
 I'm just a girl in the world
 Sophisticatedly twisted is what I is
 I ain't missin' a thing, my mind is free
 I don't walk, I can see
 Don't speak, can't sing
 An unsolved mystery, intrigued
 I fancy him indeed, muah!*

- Chantel Patterson

Untitled

*Freedom lost, freedom gained
 A world of chaos, who's to blame
 Them against us, who do we trust
 Silence endures, day after day ...
 Secrets withheld ...
 Darkness takes over, a life of shame
 Is it them who put it to us!
 It doesn't seem fair, liars everywhere
 Another time, another place
 Only time will tell
 If I'll finally be rid of the hell ...*

- Amanda Stewart

Addict

*I am the one that you can trust
 Never fair, always just
 Just turn your life over to me
 I'll take good care, wait and see
 That's what you said when we first met
 It's like a game, I lost the bet
 You were the best friend I had
 But left me empty, scared, and sad
 I gave up everything for you
 My life, my pride, my family too
 You took everything I had away
 Left me alone, too scared to pray
 Now I'm alone and empty too
 And all because I trusted you
 I'll never be the same inside
 It's like a part of me has died
 So my life's over thanks to you
 I hope you're proud of what you do*

- Lindsay Dubblestyne

Alone

*Sometimes I sit alone
 I absorb into the darkness
 It drowns my voices
 It makes them silent
 Sometimes I sit alone
 Just to think in peace
 I love to be in silence
 I love to be with me
 Sometimes I sit alone
 To think on what I've done
 I begin to cry aloud
 I scream, with nowhere to run
 Sometimes I feel alone
 With him lying beside me
 But he'd never know I cry
 Because my tears are hiding*

- Kayla B.

I finally figured out the only reason to be alive
 is to enjoy it.

- Rita Mae Brown

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

EMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOE

'Hard Time' – Burnside Blues

Hickory dickory dock
 Hard Time is wasted gawking at the clock
 Offisewer! Offisewer!
 What did I do? Never mind ...
 I know this game is rigged against me & never
 you ...

Kitchen workers! Kitchen workers!
 Muffled cracks in the air ...
 Cheap labour ... in the line ...
 Crusty pots ... nets in our hair

Blue pants, blue shirts
 Orange sporks, orange shoes
 I ain't in the mood for your whiney shit
 I gots ma own jailhouse sore-back blues

The nice one ... the mean one ... the sneaky
 C.O.
 Eeny meeny miny moe
 Some of you ... gots to go

You claim the SODDI defence ...
 For your pages of crime ...
 The judge ... the jury ... didn't believe you
 You're doing prison time

Body shackles ... ankle shackles
 Keep me in chained bind ...
 Yeah ... you gots my body on loan
 But you will never incarcerate my mind

Hickory dickory dock
 Hard Time wasted ... gawking at the clock

- Gaidheal McIntyre

Why do writers and artists create?
 Their reasons vary, of course.
 I write partly out of an irresistible impulse to
 hold forth -- for the sheer pleasure of
 expressing and communicating ideas.
 - Wendy Kaminer

Write what should not be forgotten.
 - Isabel Allende

My Life

Jails & Institutions
 That all I know
 Wards of the courts
 At 10 years old

Struggling to survive
 Being fed nothing but lies
 Neglected & abused
 Growing up, I was confused

They say pain is temporary
 And pride is forever
 I'll get that tatted on my back
 And that, this is all just an act
 But it's not, it's life

So I focus on what's real
 My children
 So they don't have to feel
 What I feel

So they don't have to live
 The life I did
 So they can grow up
 To be good kids

Not like me, Jail these days
 Has become home to me!

- Rebecka Saunders

Tonight

As boredom sets in
 The feeling of loneliness creeps by
 The light in my mind starts to dim
 And a tear drops from my eye
 I've been there before
 But this time it's not the same
 I should've settled the score
 But I promised to quit the game
 When I walked down the path
 I went left instead of right
 Some people felt my wrath
 That's why I'm sitting in Seg tonight

- Julie Dolliver

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Prison notes: my time in suicide watch and solitary confinement

Every time I see a cattle transport truck on the highway I say a little prayer. I was once one of those animals.

Only I was being transported from the local police station in a van with no windows, shackled to strangers. I struggled to look out the small holes in the side of the van, and had no idea where I was or where I was going.

When I got to Vanier Centre for Women, a medium and maximum security facility in Milton, I was put on "suicide watch." That meant 20 hours a day in a cell roughly five by seven feet.

You don't get much on suicide watch. No mattress – just a hard metal bed. No sheets, no cooked food, no magazines, no underwear. Showers are rare.

I once went to court dirty, my naked body visible through the large armholes in the prison-issue nightgown I was given. Stains from menstrual blood covered my legs.

Suicide watch is one of the many paradoxes of prison life. You go in wanting to kill yourself and the conditions just make you want to kill yourself more.

People ask me why I was incarcerated. The answer is for nothing.

Like the majority of people behind bars in Canada, I was serving pretrial time. When all was said and done, I served 90 days and was never found guilty of anything.

Jails are places where the innocent mingle with the guilty. And the wrongfully imprisoned with murderers and rapists. Everyone goes to the same nowhere place where lawlessness prevails.

After spending 14 days on suicide watch, I was transferred to solitary confinement, a definite step up.

In solitary I got clothes, a thin, hard mattress, cooked food and an hour outside my cell each day – except when a guard called in sick or if there was a fight in the yard. Then we were locked down in our cell for 24 hours. Few books were available – Twilight and the Bible, both their own versions of cruel and unusual punishment.

People have all kinds of ideas about what goes on in jail.

Many people awaiting trial are incarcerated for long periods of time in jails like Vanier. Also known as remand facilities, they were originally designed to hold people for much shorter periods.

There is no library, gym or internet at Vanier. You cannot take a university-level course.

When I was inside, I saw street-involved people cycle in and out, often committing petty crimes to get back in. For these people, jail meant a roof over your head, three meals a day and a place to detox.

In Canada, we use places like Vanier to detain immigrants as well. In November, a 50-year-old immigrant woman died there.

The food inside is forgettable. I literally can't remember what I ate there. It's like everything else, a way to get the prisoners to ingest nothingness.

One inmate collected kernels of corn to construct fragile yellow flowers. They were truly beautiful. She hid them from the guards.

It took me 90 days to get out of Vanier. The difference between me and all the other inmates who remained? The ability to make bail.

Without bail, you're in until your trial comes up and by the time you get your day in court you're typically weary and depressed. People take immediate release in exchange for guilty pleas.

The prison system in Canada is really a large scale travesty of justice.

It incarcerates more mentally ill people than all psychiatric hospitals combined. It is a modern-day asylum.

It is a modern residential school, too. The prison system in Canada incarcerates a vastly disproportionate number of Indigenous people.

People often ask me if there truly is a better way. There is and there has been for some time. Indigenous tribal courts have operated on principles of restorative justice – for perpetrators and survivors of crime and their communities – for centuries.

Ultimately, we as a society need to acknowledge the failure of the prison system. It is a place that, at best, does nothing to reduce crime and, at worst, is where innocent people go to die.

Annu Saini
Now Magazine
Mar 7, 2018

A tough-on-drugs stance in the Canadian prison system harms prisoners

A new pilot program in two Canadian prisons is a sign that our prisons can change.

The department responsible for our federal prison system, Correctional Service Canada, announced this week that it will launch a pilot program for needle exchanges. A wider program is set to launch in January 2019.

Groups like the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network applauded the move. On the other side, the union representing correctional officers decried the program. They said in a statement, "Correctional Service Canada has decided to close its eyes to drug trafficking in our institutions."

In fact, it is the opposite. A tough-on-drugs stance in the prison system harms prisoners and any other rehabilitative efforts.

A Correctional Service memo obtained by The Canadian Press in February told the Liberal government that "a program to provide clean drug-injection needles to prisoners could reduce the spread of hepatitis C by 18 per cent a year." The memo also noted that a safe tattooing program that ran for two years was viewed positively by both inmates and staff alike. That program was cut by the Conservative government in 2007.

That government's hostile approach to drug users led to the creation of Bill C-12, the "Drug-Free Prisons" act. At the time, Howard Sapers, then-correction investigator, described the proposed act as "not about making federal prisons drug-free or treating substance abuse. It is about punishing illicit drug use in prison."

When it comes to drug use, experts have largely concluded that a public-health approach is the best way to go. This type of thinking is behind the push to decriminalize marijuana and to provide safe injection sites. By serving the needs of drug users in an open way, we can not only lower the use of drugs but also crime rates related to drugs. Our societies become healthier by treating, not punishing people for their problems.

"I think that everyone, whether you're inside or outside of a prison, should have access to very basic health," said Dr. Emily van der Meulen, an expert in needle exchange programs.

The rates of Hepatitis C and HIV in prisons have dropped over the last decade. Nonetheless, HIV rates in the prison population are six times those of the wider population.

In 2016, Dr. van der Meulen was part of a team that studied the issues and came up with several recommendations.

Centring the experience and advice of prisoners themselves, they found, was necessary for any needle exchange program to work. Says Dr. van der Meulen: "If you don't consult prisoners, if you don't work with prisoners, if you don't actually include them in the development of these programs, you're going to have all sorts of problems with the program."

One key lesson their study came away with "across the board," she said, was that confidentiality is paramount.

I also spoke to Rebecca Jesseman, policy director at the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, who cautioned that if prisoners have to apply to access the pilot program, they might not. A lot of inmates, she said, don't want to be stigmatized for being a drug user, especially by prison staff.

People held in prisons are right to be concerned about the impact of admitting drug use to prison staff. Former corrections guards have described harassment and abuse towards one another and toward inmates themselves.

Clearly, there is an immense power imbalance that puts drug users at a massive disadvantage.

We have allowed our prisons to become storehouses for the problems we choose not to fix: poverty, violence against women, mental health and drug addictions. The people behind bars are also a reflection of who is left out: Black people, Indigenous people, people with mental health and drug issues.

A needle exchange program can't fix that. But it should be read as the start of a change in our prisons, one that doesn't punish drug users for needing drugs. It is a change needed outside the prison walls and well within them.

Vicky Mochama
Toronto Star
May 16, 2018

If I don't speak, this silence is also going to kill me.

- Rehana Hashmi

We must end discrimination in jury selection

The peremptory challenge – the unfettered ability of lawyers to exclude a limited number of otherwise qualified jurors from serving – has come under intense scrutiny over the last 35 years.

In 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court placed peremptory challenges under the control of its Equal Protection Clause in the famous *Batson v Kentucky* case. In 1988, they were abolished in England. In 1991, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (Manitoba) recommended that they be abolished in Canada. Other jurisdictions, including in Australia, have reduced the number. In New Zealand, lawyers only have four challenges. In Tasmania, six challenges are available but only to the accused.

This is a wealth of experiences, perspectives and research that the federal government could rely on in deciding what path to chart for Canada. It used Bill C-75 to abolish peremptory challenges. The reaction has largely focused on the impact of abolition on jury representativeness and the ability of the defence to remove a juror where there is lingering concern about bias or disinterest.

However, as Professor Kent Roach has observed, the peremptory challenge is a poor tool to address these important concerns. Bill C-75 has increased a trial judge's jurisdiction during jury selection. This is a good first step. Removing many of the barriers to eligibility, incentivizing service and expanding the process we use to screen jurors for bias (known as challenges for cause) will more effectively enhance representativeness, impartiality and confidence in the process. There is much more work here for the government to do.

The real issue is that peremptory challenges are an open invitation for discrimination.

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry found that "it is common practice for some Crown attorneys and defence counsel to exclude Aboriginal jurors" and expressed grave concern for a "system that permits Aboriginal people to be so often and so easily excluded from sitting on a jury." We saw this in the *Gerald Stanley* case.

In the United States, there is a long history of peremptory challenges being used by the prosecution to exclude black jurors. In 2012, a

Michigan State study revealed that over a 20-year period in North Carolina, prosecutors in death-penalty cases struck black jurors at a rate of 2.5 times the rate for non-black jurors.

What is often overlooked in the discussion in Canada is the impact of discriminatory challenges on the excluded juror. We tell citizens that it is their civic duty to serve on the jury. We make it an offence to ignore a jury summons, something we do not do with any other aspect of democratic participation. The right of citizens to sit on a jury and act as the conscience of the community in a process of collective fact-finding has been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada and a number of provincial Jury Acts.

Denying an individual a fundamental democratic right on the basis of race or other prohibited ground creates a profound harm to them, the community and the administration of justice. It is certainly not going to engender trust in excluded communities and increase their willingness to participate in the criminal justice system.

In *JEB v Alabama*, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that a discriminatory challenge "re-invokes a history of exclusion from political participation" and sends the "message" that certain individuals are presumptively "unqualified" to participate. Indeed, the unstated and troubling assumption in many of the cases is that a black or Indigenous juror is incapable of being impartial in an interracial case as compared to a white juror.

The harm is compounded by the lack of any meaningful redress, as our courts have held that an accused does not have standing to vindicate an excluded juror's equality rights.

Is repeal the only solution? The only other viable option is the *Batson* regime which attempts to control discriminatory use. This is a time-consuming and challenging three-step process requiring evidence, rebuttal and a judicial determination of purpose. It would appear that the general consensus from judges and academics in the United States is that the *Batson* process has failed miserably.

That is precisely why Justice Thurgood Marshall predicted in *Batson* that "only by banning peremptories entirely can such discrimination be ended."

David Tanovich
Globe and Mail - Apr 9, 2018



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This magazine is only sent into women's prisons. (ads are not on web version)

NOT
AVAILABLE
ONLINE !

End Immigrant Detention Network

We are an organization of volunteers working towards justice for those incarcerated. Many of us are women and trans people of colour. Our main focus has been on immigration detainees. However, we want build relationships with ALL inmates.

We run two phone lines in Ontario:

- If you are in a facility with a 705 area code, call us collect at 705-340-4432 on Wed, Thurs, Fri, or Sun from 2-4.
- If you are in a facility with a 905 or 416 area code, call us collect at 416-775-0242 any day.
- If we do not pick up the first time, keep trying - sometimes we can't answer.

Not in Ontario? Need a listener or pen pal?
Write us here:

The Centre for Women & Trans People
U of T, North Borden Bldg
563 Spadina Ave, Room 100
Toronto, ON, M5S 2J7

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support.

We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.

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**

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.



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 at:

info@featforchildren.org
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*

featforchildren.org ~ 416-505-5333

Prison Radio

- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 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.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

☞ In Remembrance ☞

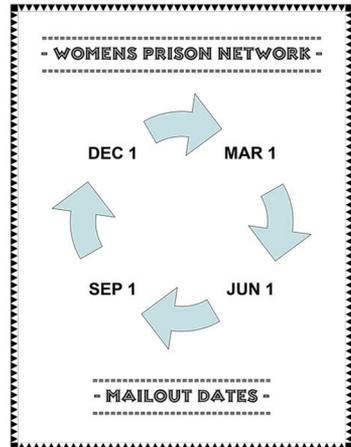
- August 10 -

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



Women's Prison Network Summer 2018 - Issue #11

PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download, print, donate!
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send in your work
before Aug 1, 2018
Fall Issue #12 is sent
out Sep 1, 2018

Women, trans & youth prisoners:
Wish to receive 'Women's Prison Network'?
Contact us & we will add you to the mailing list!
Please let us know if you move.
This magazine is by and for you.
Thank you for sharing!
