

# WOMENS PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE 36 ~ FALL 2024

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #36 of Women's Prison Network, a zine by & for women, trans & youth prisoners on Treaty Lands with Canada.



In every Issue we strive to provide a safe space for creative expression, informative news & support resources. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything of sincere value to share. Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please. Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best. Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation. Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 300 words max). For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous' unless requested.

'Women's Prison Network' is published 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women, Trans & Youth in Prisons in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

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You!

Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms

- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

< Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment >

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which Prison Free Press operates is the Traditional Territory of the Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

~ Dish With One Spoon' Wampum ~

When you are doing time, you have the time to realize how art can keep you free.  
- Welmon Sharlhome

A drawing - whether it becomes a window, a mirror, a weapon, or a tool - is always also a lifeline.  
- Andrea K. Scott

This Kitchener high school student collects books to donate to prisons and jails across Ontario

Most high schoolers are bracing for another grueling school year, but a Kitchener, Ont., teenager has a different thing on his mind: Getting books into the hands of inmates.

Feiyang Luo, who is set to go into Grade 12 at Cameron Heights Collegiate in September, has collected hundreds of books to help more than 500 inmates across the country.

"There is an unfortunate strong correlation with a lower socio-economic status and lack of access to education and in turn, high offense rate in these areas," he said in an interview on CBC Kitchener-Waterloo's The Morning Edition with guest host Josette Lafleur.

Luo said he hopes to address that by making it easier for inmates to access educational resources like books.

"We want to allocate books that just collect dust on people's bookshelves and then make it more utile within these correctional systems and allow these inmates to have access to these literature," he said.

The mission began through Bright Pages, a project he started with a friend over the past year, to ensure prisoners could get access to books in libraries across Ontario.

As student trustee at Waterloo Region District School Board, the importance of education is a big factor behind Luo's motivation for providing inmates with better books to read.

"I've always seen education as one of my main priorities — as something I see as crucial importance for students," he said.

"So through debate tournaments, I met a friend of mine called Anthony," he said. "And we started discussing ways in which we can integrate education more into this world and places where education was perhaps lacking a bit."

Discussions around wealth disparities and different socio-economic classes led them to the idea of providing more literature to correction facilities.

'Means a lot' to inmates

Collecting and donating books to prisoners is not a new idea. Jane Crosby, co-chair of Books 2 Prisoners Ottawa, has been doing similar work for about a decade.

Although it can be a challenge to run the program, Crosby says it's worth it. She works full-time at a halfway house and her dad once worked in prisons when she was growing up, so she feels like helping people has always been her vocation.

"It's just the fact that a complete stranger cares enough to send you a book," Crosby said. "That means a lot."

She says isolation is a huge part of being incarcerated, and "reading takes up a large part of a person's day."

Crosby says inmates often have to re-read the same books due to budget restrictions by Corrections Canada.

"We try to keep the selection of books available a variety," she said. "The funding isn't there for the books. And they're reading the same books they've been reading for 20 years or 30 years."

A diverse range of books

Through Bright Pages, Luo has amassed a wide array of literature. But what kind of books are being sent out?

Depending on preference, different jails recommend different book donations, Luo says.

"It's a very big range," he said. "For the Stratford Jail, they gave us recommendations of books that their inmates requested, like Percy Jackson, NYPD Blue. And then if we were to go over to the North Bay Jail, they would request things like textbooks, self-help and rehabilitation books."

Perhaps the most rewarding part of his involvement is hearing how inmates have benefited from the influx of books from Bright Pages.

Luo has received messages and thank you notes from inmates. One note that said: "The books take our minds beyond where we are," and another said: "Our days become easier because of you."

"The feedback has been nothing but wonderful," Lou said.

"It moves my heart when I see the messages from the inmates who have received these books," Lou added. "This gets me up in the morning. This is what I do this for."

Keena Alwahaidi  
CBC News  
Aug 17, 2024

## Lawsuit challenges internet ban in Canadian prisons

The federal government's refusal to allow prisoners to use the internet effectively blocks access to postsecondary education behind bars, a new lawsuit alleges.

Noting how colleges and universities that once offered paper correspondence programs have shifted almost entirely online, the lawsuit by the John Howard Society and a prisoner serving a life sentence argues that the Correctional Service of Canada's internet ban - and "woefully inadequate" access to computers in general - infringes prisoners' "fundamental right to freedom of expression," which includes the right to receive information.

It also argues that the internet ban and overall technological deprivation behind bars undermines the correctional service's mandate to prepare prisoners to successfully reintegrate in society.

"In 2024, if we want people to find work, to find housing, to lead stable and positive lives, they need internet access and basic digital skills," said lawyer Paul Quick, who is representing the John Howard Society and the prisoner. "If we take these things away, we take away opportunities for a law-abiding life."

The lawsuit, which is not seeking any monetary compensation, asks the court to declare the current policy unconstitutional.

A Star investigation this year showed how the lack of internet access in Canadian prisons has made it nearly impossible for prisoners to pursue college or university programs behind bars, despite significant evidence that taking post-secondary courses while incarcerated dramatically reduces the likelihood that a prisoner will reoffend.

A CSC spokesperson said they could not address specific allegations in the lawsuit, but the agency is "committed to helping offenders acquire the skills and education needed for successful reintegration, including access to technology."

Inmates are not allowed access to the internet "for security reasons," the spokesperson said, adding that CSC is "currently evaluating digital education opportunities."

Four years ago the agency launched a digital education pilot project that offers some inmates in some institutions access to limited digital education material, including high school courses,

workplace certifications and a handful of college courses.

The lawsuit, which is supported by affidavits from current and former prisoners, as well as information technology and corrections experts, notes how several other countries provide varying degrees of controlled internet access in prison, citing specific examples in Belgium, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

"CSC emerges as a clear outlier," the lawsuit states, arguing that existing technology is "readily available" to provide restricted internet access for educational, vocational and cultural purposes without jeopardizing security.

The lawsuit also notes how the internet ban is particularly harmful to inmates with disabilities, especially deaf inmates who are unable to access on-demand American Sign Language interpretation services available for free online. Deaf prisoners are unable to even make telephone calls as a result, according to the lawsuit.

"CSC makes no exception for people in this situation," said Quick, who works for Queen's University's Prison Law Clinic. "Deaf prisoners are left deeply isolated, cut off from their families and communities, and with little way to connect with others in prison or even communicate with staff."

Canadian prison authorities have been criticized about the lack of technology behind bars for more than a decade. Canada's Correctional Investigator, Ivan Zinger, has repeatedly highlighted the issue in his annual reports. In 2019-20, as part of an investigation into educational programming in federal prisons, Zinger wrote that the technology available to inmates is "so far behind the community standard that it seriously puts into question (CSC's) legal obligation to prepare and assist offenders for release."

Quick said CSC has had years to address the issue and "just hasn't bothered," adding that the federal agency is "highly focused on minor risks, but generally blind to opportunities for success."

The CSC declined to make Commissioner Anne Kelly available for an interview and did not respond to questions about Quick's comments.

The prisoner who filed the lawsuit alongside the John Howard Society is Ghassan Salah, who is serving a life sentence at Bath Institution, near

Kingston, for his role in the 2004 deaths of two children in Ottawa. Salah was found to have acted as a lookout for another man who firebombed a home, intending to kill the children's mother, who escaped the home.

Salah has been trying to take university courses in computer science, math or physics since 2017, to no avail, according to the lawsuit. He says in court filings that no such programs are available by paper correspondence, and all of his requests for access to a computer or internet strictly for educational purposes have been denied by prison officials. The lawsuit also includes affidavits from other prisoners who have faced similar roadblocks.

Quick said CSC's internet ban has, in some ways, made a prison sentence harsher today than it was even 20 or 30 years ago, when prisoners were able to - at their own expense - work toward and complete a university degree or college diploma while serving their sentence.

A recent Star investigation showed how the lack of internet access in Canadian prisons has made it nearly impossible for prisoners to pursue college or university programs behind bars, despite significant evidence that taking these kinds of courses while incarcerated dramatically reduces the likelihood that a prisoner will reoffend.

Brendan Kennedy  
Toronto Star  
Jul 1, 2024

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Housing shortage an added challenge for people transitioning out of prison, agency says

An organization that advocates for people impacted by the criminal justice system says northern Ontario needs housing, treatment, and harm reduction programs that are tailored to the needs of the north.

Representatives of the John Howard Society of Ontario recently toured the north after its new report, *Locked Up Locked Out* - examining the impact of criminal justice system involvement on housing access - identified a number of themes that were particularly prevalent in the region.

They met with both service providers and people with lived experience of the system, said Safiyah Husein, the director of policy for the society.

"We talked a lot about the drug toxicity crisis and how ... it's hitting northern communities harder than some of the rest of Canada," Husein said.

"And some of the challenges with accessing services - things like transportation and ... people coming to hub cities from the far remote areas."

*Locked Up Locked Out* documents the relationship between criminal justice system involvement and homelessness, concluding that each can be a cause of the other.

People who are released on bail but don't have housing can end up back in jail because they struggle to follow their release conditions, Husein said.

People can also find themselves homeless after they've been released from prison, she said.

"We hear from folks in northern Ontario ... some people who are experiencing chronic homelessness commit small crimes when the weather starts to get cold just so they have some place to go," Husein said.

"The list for any sort of shelter is extremely long. ... So people are sort of pushed to have some form of survival ... And then when people come out, they have a criminal record. In some cases ... it's much harder to find housing with a criminal record."

Trouble getting a second chance

The executive director of Thunder Bay's largest low-barrier shelter for people experiencing homelessness said he hears from clients all the time about the struggles they face looking for housing after leaving incarceration.

"They say, you know, they face barriers and discrimination when they try and rent a house," Brendan Carlin said.

"And some of these people are not, you know, dangerous to society or anything like that. ... They've done their time, and they're looking for a second chance, so it's really hard."

Improving housing options for people involved in the criminal justice system actually saves taxpayers money, Husein said.

CBC News  
Aug 10, 2024

## Ontario court approves class-action by immigration detainees against federal government

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice has certified a class-action lawsuit against the federal government regarding the use of provincial jails for immigration detainees.

The suit represents 8,360 people who were detained in 87 provincial and territorial jails by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) between 2016 and 2023.

In the decision issued Friday, the court rejected each of the 15 objections raised by the federal government's lawyers who were trying to stop the action from proceeding.

"Immigration detainees were incarcerated in provincial prisons and encountered the same conditions as criminal inmates, including co-mingling with violent offenders, use of restraints such as shackles and handcuffs, strip searches, and severe restrictions on contact and movement," wrote Justice Benjamin Glustein.

Foreign nationals and permanent residents detained by CBSA under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act are not accused of a crime.

"According to Canadian and international law, immigration detention is administrative in nature and cannot be punitive," according to the class action.

"Nonetheless, the CBSA has a longstanding practice of detaining thousands of immigration detainees in provincial prisons through arrangements with provinces and territories. This practice violates the Charter rights of the detainees."

The federal government has not indicated if it will appeal the court's decision.

### 'Dozens of strip searches'

One of the plaintiffs representing the immigration detainees is Tyron Richard, originally from Grenada.

Richard spent 18 months in three different maximum security jails in Ontario from January 2015 to July 2016, even though he was not considered a danger. He was being held as a flight risk.

He said while in jail, he was subjected to dozens of strip searches.

"I was required to strip off my clothes, turn around, bend over, spread my buttocks, and undergo an inspection of my anus by a guard with a flashlight, and to undergo a visual inspection under and next to my genitals," Richard swore in his affidavit. "I would describe my life in prison as a living hell, where I cried almost every day."

Nor was he afforded any privacy from his cellmate or guards, Richard said.

"The toilet was open in the room right next to the door."

Communication with friends and family was extremely difficult.

"Visits were no-touch and were conducted in booths through glass, using a telephone, and limited to only 15-20 minutes," Richard said.

He has since regained his permanent resident status and is currently applying to become a Canadian citizen.

"I am proud that I am now able to stand up and fight back against this inhumane practice on behalf of the class to help make sure that it does not happen to anyone else," Richard said in a statement provided by his lawyers.

### Most deemed a flight risk

CBSA can detain foreign nationals including asylum seekers if their identity hasn't been well enough established, if they're deemed a danger to the public, or if they're considered a flight risk, meaning the border agency believes they won't appear for immigration processes including removal.

Over the years, more than 80 per cent of the detainees were held for flight risk.

CBSA can choose to hold an immigration detainee either in one of its three immigration holding centres or in jails used under agreements with provincial governments.

Since 2022, most of the provinces have pulled out of these agreements, with some saying the practice is contrary to Canada's human rights obligations.

"It is difficult to imagine living in a place where the government can incarcerate people who have been charged with no crime, in maximum security prisons where they are subjected to cruel conditions including solitary confinement and strip searches," said immigration lawyer Subodh Bharati, one of the lawyers leading the class action.

"Yet this is what the CBSA does to immigration detainees - some of the most vulnerable people in our country."

For those Bharati represents, the battle is far from over.

Certification means the court believes there's enough evidence to justify the lawsuit, but only a future trial will determine whether the group of immigration detainees or the federal government wins the case.

The claim seeks \$100 million dollars in damages, to be divided among the complainants if they win.

Radio-Canada reached out to the offices of Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, who is responsible for CBSA, and to Justice Minister Arif Virani. Neither has provided any comments regarding the Ontario court's decision.

Brigitte Bureau  
CBC News  
Jul 09, 2024



If you want to know how many prison cells to build, look at the number of third graders who can't read.

- Mary Landrieu

New database tracks more than 2,100 deaths in custody across Canada since 2000

A new database from a project monitoring law enforcement and corrections in Canada lists more than 2,100 deaths in custody over the past 24 years.

Alexander McClelland, associate criminology professor at Carleton University and lead researcher with the Tracking (In)Justice project, says the database was compiled using media reports, provincial data and more than 20 freedom of information requests.

The searchable data set includes people who have died in custody in provincial jails and federal prisons, as well as correctional facilities for youth. McClelland and his team found that the average age of deaths in these institutions is 44, compared with an average Canadian life expectancy of 81 as of 2022, according to Statistics Canada.

He says the project compiled the information because it's far too difficult to find data about deaths in custody, particularly those in provincial correctional facilities.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator acts an independent oversight agency for the federal prison system, but there is rarely any independent oversight of provincial jails.

Data assembled by The Canadian Press show there were 91 deaths in provincial jails across the country in 2023.

The Tracking (In)Justice project also compiles figures about police-involved deaths in Canada.

The Canadian Press  
Aug 9, 2024

The nature of the criminal justice system has changed. It is no longer primarily concerned with the prevention and punishment of crime, but rather with the management and control of the dispossessed.

What does this system seem designed to do? As I see it, it seems designed to send people right back to prison, which is what happens about 70% of the time.

- Michelle Alexander

## The Four Seasons of Prison

Darkness never comes in prison,  
 At night we are all children  
 The CSC keeps a night-light on us,  
 While we sleep  
 Waking to the hourly shifts  
 From the military boots on concrete floors  
 Checking our bodies in our cages,  
 As if we were some precious cargo  
 The morning comes and the bright light  
 Floods our floors with artificial hope  
 We live in cages where in Winter,  
 The voices of our dead sisters  
 Warn us of the dishonour of suicide  
 And in Spring, the rains  
 That echo up from the concrete,  
 Cover our tears of desperation  
 When Summer comes, we burn our bodies –  
 Nude in the sun – in the prison yard,  
 Hoping to die by nature,  
 Than by our own hands  
 Then Autumn touches us and our spirits  
 Are deadened to the long winter ahead  
 Where we listen to the wind howl  
 In the barred windows as if our dead sisters  
 Want us to follow them,  
 Or fight for our lives while we are alive  
 Darkness never comes in prison,  
 Until they cut us down  
 And carefully lay us in a body bag  
 Then the CSC turns the night-light off

T. A. Glaremin

## Jail Time

They can lock the locks  
 But they can't stop the clocks  
 Do your own time  
 It's not your circus  
 And no prison purses allowed  
 Pick your poisons  
 Do the time, even if it's not yours  
 Don't sing, rat or whistle  
 No fights, misconducts or disrespect  
 Just programs, independent learning & reading  
 The one that outlives these days  
 Comes home safe, finally

Tina Flear

## Now, Not Forever

Never, is such a strong & powerful word  
 So powerfully said with really meaning it  
 Never, used negatively in a positive way  
 Can bring light in through the darkness

Only the strong can prevail,  
 Making hard times changed into  
 Something beautiful & worthwhile  
 If you allow & believe it can happen

Why things are the way they are  
 Is for us to seek out & understand  
 Everything sheds light right in front of your eyes  
 Just open & you will see

NOW is what is taking place at this very  
 moment  
 And requires all your focus  
 It is there as a learning point in life  
 Just remember though,  
 This is just for now, not forever

Lisa Boyd

## 45 Days

45 Days on the inside, surrounded by people,  
 with nowhere to hide  
 45 Days of little sleep, my mental health is  
 suffering, the price is steep  
 45 Days of added stress, my mind always  
 racing, I'm a broken mess  
 45 Days filled with tears, struggles with  
 loneliness & abandonment fears  
 45 Days with so much doubt, that my family  
 doesn't need me or is better without  
 45 Days & still a few more, my happiness will  
 return, once I walk out the door

Erica Coughlin

It must surely be a tribute to the resilience of  
 the human spirit that even a small number of  
 those men and women in the hell of the  
 prison system survive it and hold on to their  
 humanity.

- Howard Zinn



Bell got \$64M from jail calls at issue in lawsuit, gave \$39M commission to Ontario

Bell Canada made more than \$64 million in gross revenues from calls made by inmates at Ontario jails - at "exorbitant" rates, lawyers allege in a lawsuit - and gave nearly \$39 million of that to the province as commission, according to new disclosures from the telecom giant.

Bell charged \$1 per minute plus a \$2.50 connection fee for long-distance calls through the Offender Telephone Management System that it operated in Ontario jails from 2013 to 2021.

The phone system only allowed inmates to place collect calls, and lawyers are seeking compensation for the families who had to foot those bills. More than 80% of the people in Ontario's correctional facilities are awaiting trial and are presumptively innocent.

One of the representative plaintiffs in a proposed class-action lawsuit against Bell and Ontario is the father of Adam Capay, an Indigenous man who was largely held in solitary confinement while imprisoned in northern Ontario jails between June 2012 and Dec. 2016.

Ransome Capay frequently spoke with his son while he was in solitary, with the charges from the collect calls leading to phone bills between \$250 and \$500 - some over \$1,000, he wrote in an affidavit. He had to take on extra work such as chopping firewood to pay the bills, he wrote.

Both Bell and the province of Ontario have previously refused to disclose how much they benefitted from those calls, but Bell was recently ordered by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to reveal the amounts.

Lawyer David Sterns said the numbers are "shockingly high."

"This confirms what we knew to be the case all along, which shows that Bell was gouging the families of the inmates," he said in an interview.

"It was pure opportunism. These people were both figuratively and literally captives and Bell swooped in and took advantage of it and shared the spoils with the government of Ontario."

Bell says it complied with CRTC rules and offered the same collect call rates as for other phone services.

The rates were four times higher than those charged to inmates in other provinces, a lower court judge found.

The lawsuit claims have not been proven in court and last year the Court of Appeal for Ontario put a temporary stay on the case, telling the lawyers to go before the CRTC instead to assess "the reasonableness of the rates." The CRTC is set to decide whether it has jurisdiction in the matter, and if it decides it doesn't, the case could go back to the courts.

As part of the CRTC process, Bell argued that the revenues and percentage commission paid to the province should remain secret, but the CRTC ruled that public interest in disclosing those numbers outweighed any potential harm.

"It is unclear how disclosure of historical revenues from a 10-year-old contract and the percentage paid to Ontario as a commission over that time could result in a material financial loss for Bell, given that a new service provider has already replaced Bell to run the OTMS with significantly lower rates," the CRTC wrote.

Bell, in its contract with the province to operate the jail phone system for those eight years, agreed to give Ontario a 60% commission, the disclosure shows.

A spokesperson for Solicitor General Michael Kerzner had no comment since the CRTC and court cases are ongoing.

The new phone system now in place under a different company includes the ability to make prepaid calls, instead of just collect, and has long-distance rates of a few cents a minute.

Allison Jones  
The Canadian Press  
Aug 9, 2024

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## Recovery

To celebrate recovery

I didn't think I had the power 2 do so

Until a peace I never felt before, overtook me

Not a fulfillment that stayed,

But only 4 a moment

One that stayed within 4 eternity

Releasing the darkness from the prison

It transferred me into something new

Because of jail & what I learned inside

Not only in jail but inside myself

I've become a better woman

4 myself, my children, & 4 others

Tina Flear

## Lights Out

*It's a shame when your destiny  
Is determined by others  
You have no say in the manner  
And if someone lies, you suffer  
The consequences are on you  
No matter the outcome  
You have no choice  
You just have 2 deal with it  
Take it as it comes  
Take the punishment & time  
That doesn't belong 2 you  
Life throws hardballs atcha  
And some hurt real bad  
The longer the time  
The deeper the wound*

Tina Flear

## Untitled

*Everyone has a story, it's only theirs to tell  
Some will be how they rose,  
And some how they fell  
Just one mistake can ruin your life  
The pain that it causes, cuts like a knife  
Sixty-plus days, I've sat in this jail  
My family home suffering, to them I did fail  
My prayers for forgiveness & freedom consume  
my time  
But I know I caused this, I committed a crime  
Hopefully soon I will leave here & rejoin society  
But until that time my days  
Will be anything but happy*

*Dreaming of freedom,  
Looking beyond these concrete walls  
Away from our loved ones,  
Except for expensive quick calls  
Days go by slowly, the nights even more  
Trying to stay sane is a never-ending chore  
The gossip & rumours which echo the hall  
Takes me back to high school,  
Mean girls one & all  
Once I'm released, I will never return  
A costly life lesson, I had no doubt but to learn*

Erica Coughlin

## Trans+ People in Canadian Prisons Project

*In 2017, "gender identity or expression" was added to the Canadian Human Rights Act as prohibited grounds for discrimination.*

*There are two ways for people to get involved in this research:*

- (1) talk to us in a 1-hour private, confidential interview about their thoughts and experiences,*
- (2) answer similar questions in writing using the mail.*

*We are hoping to connect with:*

- (1) Current Trans+ prisoners in Canadian federal prisons, AND*
- (2) Current cisgender (non-Trans+) prisoners who have ever lived in a Canadian federal correctional institution with Trans+ prisoners.*

*If you chose to participate, no guards or administrators will be present or observing in any way. Each institution will have a CSC Staff person who can help arrange participation and has promised to keep your involvement confidential. We will use a pseudonym (fake name) when quoting people or mentioning the stories that are shared with us.*

*This project is being conducted by the University of Victoria with funding from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).*

*If people have questions, or would like to volunteer to be interviewed, or participate by mail, they can contact us at 1-800-516-3083 (on the common access list) or at:*

**Trans+ Prison Project  
Chair in Transgender Studies, UVic  
PO Box 3050 STN CSC  
Victoria BC V8W 3P5**

*Depression is a prison where you are both the suffering prisoner and the cruel jailer.*

- Dorothy Rowe

*The past does not have to be your prison.  
You have a voice in your destiny.  
You have a say in your life.  
You have a choice in the path you take.*

- Max Lucado

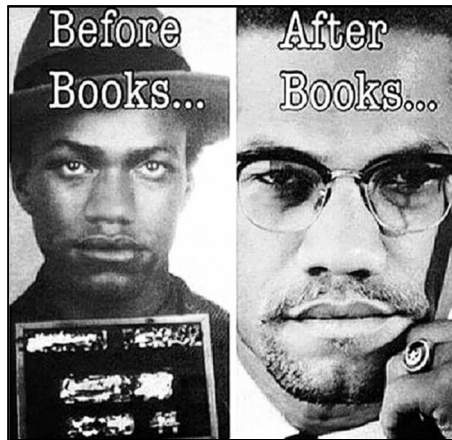
## Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

*Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.*

*BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10-18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction of literary merit.*

*Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.*

Book Clubs for Inmates  
720 Bathurst St.  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4



I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

## Prison Radio

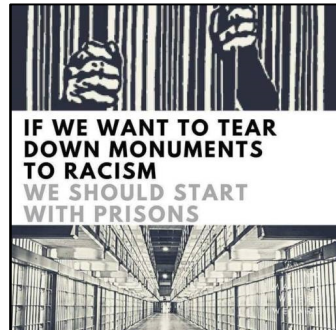
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM  
Black Power Hour – Wed 9 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM  
PRS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am  
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
Stark Raven – 1<sup>st</sup> Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – 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.*



Are the prisons overpopulated,  
or is the population over-imprisoned?

- Michel Foucault

### Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners

*For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.*

*Funds will be used to help inmates purchase call packages to keep them connected to their family, help out with canteen for necessary things & for transportation home. Maintained by prisoner advocacy groups Beyond Prison Walls Canada and Inmates for Humane Conditions.*

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

Phone Line for Disabled Prisoners who Experience Ableism and Racism in Ont.

[www.djno.ca](http://www.djno.ca)

OUT of PRISON: 905-973-4332

TRAPP Phone Numbers (Toll Free):

Hamilton - 905-631-4084

Kenora - 807-548-4312

London - 519-690-0836

Milton - 416-775-7938

Niagara - 905-227-5066

Ottawa - 613-768-9951

### Jail Hotline for MCC, OCI, TEDC, TSDC & VCW

*The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) provides prisoners with free links to advocacy, referrals, information, and support through the Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:*

Monday - Saturday  
9-11am & 2-4pm

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

#### Why a Jail Hotline?

*Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.*

#### Who Should Call This Hotline?

*Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.*

*If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:*

[TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com](mailto:TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com)

### Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

*The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.*

*If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact [barnone.wpg@gmail.com](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com)*

*Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869 (It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).*

### Incarcerated in Canada? Need Information?

*Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:*

*General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.*

*Write to us at:*

**Write ON!**

234-110 Cumberland St,  
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

### NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

Mon - Wed - Fri - Sat  
9-11am & 2-4pm

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

Imprisonment has become the response of first resort to far too many of our social problems.

- Angela Davis

### Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP)

*"Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning"*

*"Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school"*

BCFI's commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children's educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child.

This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent's voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents' choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

#### Book Clubs for Inmates

720 Bathurst St.

Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4

[www.BookClubsForInmates.com](http://www.BookClubsForInmates.com)

*We can't change prisons without changing society, we know that this is a long and dangerous struggle.*

*But the more who are involved in it, the less dangerous, and the more possible it will be.*

- Claire Culhane

### 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.*



### Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

*Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 375 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.*

*And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.*

## Prison Health is Public Health:

*The Right to Hepatitis C Prevention, Diagnosis, and Care in Canada's Correctional Settings*

### About Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a preventable and curable liver infection. It is the leading cause of liver disease and transplantation, and one of the most burdensome infectious diseases in Canada. HCV spreads through contact with infected blood, but symptoms may be delayed for years, so many people who are infected are unaware. The only way to confirm a chronic HCV infection is through a blood test.

### Hep C Elimination is Within Canada's Reach

Progress in treating HCV is one of the great medical breakthroughs of our time, making elimination possible. Direct Acting Antivirals (DAAs) are a new generation of medications for treating HCV infection. These new therapies are highly effective, curing HCV infection in more than 95% of people treated with daily pills in as little as 8-12 weeks, with minimal side effects.

### Canada's Promise

In May 2016, the first-ever Global Viral Hepatitis Strategy was endorsed by the 194 Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO), with the goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. As a Member State, Canada signed onto this strategy and endorsed the targets contained within it. The WHO strategy includes specific targets, and all countries were tasked with developing a National Action Plan to meet these targets. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) responded by publishing the Pan-Canadian framework for action to reduce the health impact of Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections (STBBIs) in 2018 and the Government of Canada five-year action plan on STBBIs in 2019.

### Why Focus on Correctional Settings?

People who are incarcerated (PWA/I) are 40 times more likely to be exposed to HCV than Canada's general population. In addition, people who are released from incarceration often face barriers to accessing health care in the community. The delivery of HCV care to people in correctional settings in Canada is essential to HCV elimination.

### Current State:

#### Federal - YES !!!

Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) could be well-positioned to achieve HCV elimination in people incarcerated within federal Canadian correctional institutions by 2030, with best practices such as universal HCV screening, universal access to treatment, and some harm reduction services available.

#### Provincial/ Territorial - NO !!!

The same standard of health care is not available to people in correctional centres as in the community in any province, and significant disparities in HCV care exist across provincial correctional centres. HCV elimination is unlikely to occur in the Canadian provincial/ territorial prison system by 2030.

[www.actionhepatitiscanada.ca/prisonhealth](http://www.actionhepatitiscanada.ca/prisonhealth)

### Doing 2yrs less? So, when 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 test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

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**



K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

*Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) 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.*

*K.I.P.'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, K.I.P. 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 K.I.P. to register today.*

*For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at:*

*info.kipcanada@gmail.com  
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

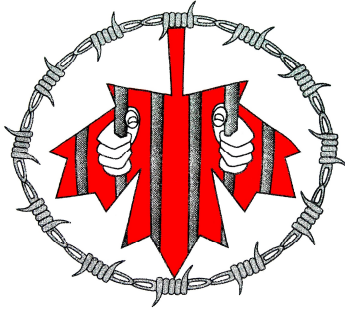
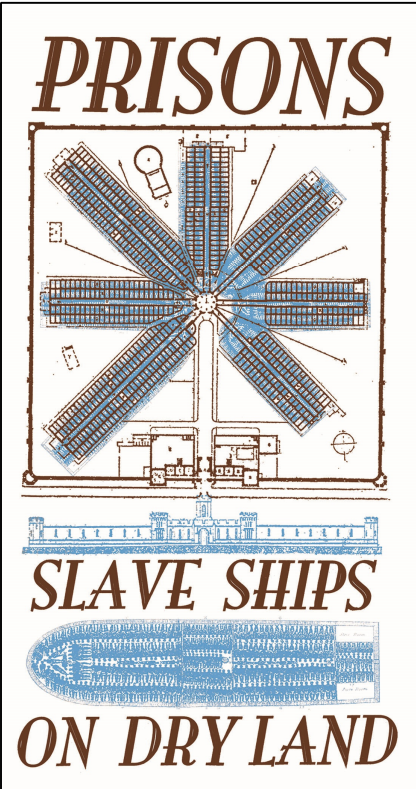
### The Impact

- 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

[www.kipcanada.org](http://www.kipcanada.org) ~ 416-505-5333



Women's Prison Network  
Fall 2024 - Issue #36

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

visit, download, print, donate:

[WomensPrisonNetwork.org](http://WomensPrisonNetwork.org)  
[info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org](mailto:info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org)

> [Mar](#) > [Jun](#) > [Sep](#) > [Dec](#) >

Winter Issue #37 is mailed out:  
Dec 1, 2024  
Send in your work before:  
Nov 1, 2024

**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](mailto:PJD@PrisonFreePress.org)