

WOMENS PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #41
WINTER 2025/26

< *Editor's Note* >

Welcome to Issue #41 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 (½ 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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Cover: 'My Heart Flutters' by Unknown

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Very special thanks out to: 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 ~

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

Bringing science education to the incarcerated

In a world filled with misinformation, geophysicist Philip Heron is on a mission to share the benefits of critical thinking.

He is founder of a program called Think Like a Scientist, which he pioneered in the U.K., and has now brought to Canada.

It's a brief course - only seven weeks long - that he's taught in schools, but more surprisingly in prisons.

And for some of those who've experienced the program, it's been life-changing.

Dalton Harrison, a former participant who attended the first program session offered in a prison, is now completing a masters degree in criminology.

"When I got out, [Phil] contacted me to do a talk at Durham University ... and that was my first ever talk," said Harrison. "That moment changed my life. Standing in the front of that lecture hall, in a life I never dreamed was possible ... that made me want to keep going in academia."

As a day job, Heron teaches in the department of physical and environmental Sciences at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, and runs this program in the summer, including at a number of Canadian prisons.

He says he designed the Think Like a Scientist to teach the scientific method to those who don't necessarily see themselves as students of science, including people who have been incarcerated.

The importance of failure

Heron says one of his aims is to help people understand that failure - in life, as in science - can be a pathway to success.

Heron says that many people in prison have had negative experiences with traditional education methods for a variety of reasons, including learning differences, race, gender, class or neurodiversity. So he avoids structuring his program like a traditional classroom, and instead encourages conversation about the topic he is presenting.

Some of the topics explored are climate change, earthquakes, robotics, space mission and the science of sleep. One of the key points in this course is the idea of embracing failure. Heron says this is a fundamental part of the scientific process.

"Behind the scenes, scientists fail so often that it's just commonplace," Heron told Quirks & Quarks host Bob McDonald. "And really what I want to teach the students in prison, as well as to students at the University of Toronto, [is] that failure is part of the process and it's something that should be accepted."

"We don't just fail and stop, we fail and move forward."

In part of his curriculum about space exploration, Heron shares a quote from Canadian astronaut David Saint-Jacques about managing mental health in space, given that when conflict arises, there's nowhere to go and you're far away from the people you love.

"After I finish ...the whole room is like, 'that's prison! Throw in terrible food and you've got prison. I could be an astronaut!'"

Opening new possibilities for the incarcerated

Some of Heron's former students in the U.K., such as Phoenix Griffin, say they were so inspired by the course they have gone to pursue academic careers of their own.

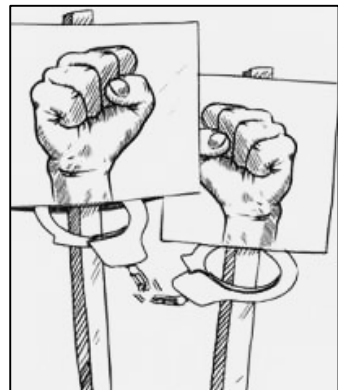
"The biggest thing I took away from it was the confidence to try new things," said Griffin, who is now out of prison and in her third year of university.

"It just gave me a new way of thinking. You learn from your mistakes so if you get it wrong it's fine. So that was really big for me."

Rosie Fernandez

CBC Radio

Sep 19, 2025



Class-action trial in Manitoba to challenge province's use of segregation jail cells on children

Manitoba's practice of putting incarcerated children in segregation jail cells - including some who are as young as 12 and 13 years old - will be challenged this fall when a landmark class-action lawsuit goes to trial.

The case, which has been about seven years in the making, will be the first major piece of litigation dealing with youth inmate segregation to go to trial in Canada. It follows several recent lawsuits against governments in the country that have successfully challenged aspects of how solitary confinement is used in adult prisons.

But despite these cases - and multiple public watchdog reports within Manitoba that have raised concerns about the use of youth segregation in the province - the province has persisted with the practice, the lawsuit alleges.

In Manitoba, the segregation of children in youth detention centres is permitted in certain circumstances, but it is to be used as a last resort and not as a punishment.

However, the class action alleges that the provincial government is not following its own policies and that youth are being regularly sent to what it describes as "solitary confinement" for weeks and even months at a time - which the lawsuit argues is a violation of their Charter rights.

The statement of claim, which has not been tested in court, describes Manitoba's segregation cells for children as small rooms - sometimes tinier than a parking space - that regularly lack windows.

"Inmates often sleep on mats on the floor. The cells are often covered in filth, blood, and excrement," the claim alleges, calling the practice of segregation rooms "a dungeon inside a prison" that "imposes conditions of torture" on inmates. A spokesperson for the province declined to comment as the matter is before the courts. But in Manitoba's statement of defence, the government has argued that its practices around segregation do not "amount to Solitary Confinement." (Solitary confinement is generally defined as segregation in a room or area without meaningful human contact in which the duration lasts at least 22 hours a day.)

In the government's statement of defence, it noted that youth who are placed in segregation cells are under observation. This observation by a supervisor provides the youth inmate with "daily meaningful contact," the defence reads.

The lawsuit alleges that this is not sufficient.

Lawyer James Sayce, the class action's lead counsel, said that the impact of such confinement on an adult's health has been well documented.

"Those impacts are amplified for children," said Mr. Sayce, a partner with Koskie Minsky LLP.

In 2019, the Manitoba Ombudsman released a report on the practice of youth segregation. It noted that Canada is a signatory to numerous international agreements that prohibit the use of segregation for youth, including the Mandela Rules and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

That same year, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth released its own [report](#) concluding that "solitary confinement, for longer than 24 hours per day, must be prohibited for youth in Manitoba custody facilities."

But provincial data produced through the class action, which were obtained by The Globe and Mail, show that even after these reports, the use of segregation cells with children has continued. The dataset, which spans from 2006 to 2022, documents more than 34,000 incidents. The identities of the inmates are not included in the data, but each inmate is given a unique offender number, which has been partly redacted. An analysis of those numbers, birthdays, gender and Indigenous status suggests that these incidents appear to involve around 6,000 different youth between the ages of 12 and 17.

The duration of each incident ranges from about one minute to 307 consecutive days, and the average stay in segregation was about 13 days. But in reality, these figures could be even higher.

The data suggest that some continuous placements were recorded over multiple entries, meaning the consecutive stays are likely longer. This could significantly affect the averages.

The data also suggest that after the Ombudsman's warning, more than 600 children were sent to segregation units in Manitoba - about 50 of whom were 12 or 13 years old at the time.

The Globe shared its findings with the Manitoba government, but the province declined to comment.

Devon Daniels was 14 years old the first time he was put in a segregation cell. In one incident, he remembers spending more than two weeks in a room that was essentially a small, white, windowless box with a concrete bed. There were obvious signs of mould on the walls, he said, and it was apparent that staff had been trying to paint over it. The room smelled of decay and urine, the now 27-year-old said.

"The boredom eats at you. You just sit there. You have to try to figure out how to escape somewhere in your mind, or your present just eats you up," he said.

Mr. Daniels, who is a class member in the Manitoba litigation, says that by his count, he was put in segregation cells about 15 times as a youth.

The experience was deeply traumatizing, he said, and left him contemplating suicide.

One of his earliest memories as a child was being locked in a basement, he said. Mr. Daniels grew up in Winnipeg. He is mixed race - Black and Indigenous - and was raised by his grandmother, who was a residential-schools survivor. There was trauma, abuse and poverty in his childhood, he said.

One of the first times he was arrested was for stealing a chocolate bar. Mr. Daniels - who left prison in 2020 and says he has since turned his life around - says the memories of being in segregation still haunt him.

"A piece of me is still in that place," he said.

Craig Haney, a psychology professor with the University of California, Santa Cruz, is among three academics to provide expert reports as part of the lawsuit. Prof. Haney - who was one of the principal researchers in the famous Stanford Prison Experiment, in which regular students were assigned a role of either a prisoner or a guard in a simulated jail environment - toured some of the segregation sites in Manitoba.

"In terms of harshness and the risk of harm to which they subjected prisoners, they rivalled anything I have observed in some of the worst solitary confinement units in the United States," he wrote.

"The conditions of confinement I encountered were stark and depriving - ranging from very bad to outright egregious - and the segregation

practices the prisoners described being exposed to were truly severe and isolating," he said.

"I know of no legitimate penological purpose that can possibly justify their continued use in their present form."

The trial is scheduled for Nov. 17 in Winnipeg.

Robyn Doolittle, Chen Wang
Globe and Mail
Sep 2, 2025

Sue CSC

To begin with a reference to our archives, back in 2010, an inmate in a medium-security institution in BC, asked permission to buy a thesaurus. He was taking a course ... in the day when that was not such a challenge ... and wanted a copy in his cell. The thesaurus cost \$9.

Request denied.

There was a thesaurus in the prison library, and he could go through the process of having it delivered to his cell for a specific period. Not exactly a suitable alternative, and what was the big deal about using his own money to buy a reference book? He went through the entire grievance/complaint exercise.

Denied. Denied. Denied.

This over a book!

Ken sued.

He was represented by another inmate who was a paralegal and a well-practiced litigator against the federal prison industry. They won. The judge did not hold back in disparaging the arguments of the two government lawyers. The paralegal pointed out too that the inmate was awarded \$200 for costs, and CSC incurred about \$3,000 in expenses to process the inmate's grievances.

We submitted an Access to Information & Privacy request to Ottawa's Ministry of Justice. How much did Canada spend to defend CSC in this action? The response was speedy. Taxpayers spent \$9,028.45. Details of the costs were redacted for 'privacy concerns.'

TurnOveraRockToday.com
Oct 31, 2025

Your brain has a mind of its own.
- Kathryn Barrett

Understanding the Silos Among the Youth Justice and Youth Homelessness Sectors

Youth homelessness and youth justice don't just overlap - they collide with one another and create repeat patterns in both systems. We don't talk much about what happens to unhoused youth who become justice-involved, or what happens to youth who go through the youth justice system and need housing supports. These young people are arguably some of our country's most vulnerable, and we have a responsibility to create more positive pathways to safe, healthy lives that are free from involvement in either system.

As a team of academic and sector researchers, and guided by our youth advisory group, we worked with the National Youth Justice Network (NYJN) to explore the intersection of the youth homelessness and youth justice sectors through a solutions-oriented framework, seeking to improve our understanding of:

1. How the youth justice system can reduce young people being discharged into homelessness, and,
2. How the youth homelessness sector can support rapid and sustainable exits from homelessness to prevent youth from (further) involvement in the justice system.

We spoke with key actors in the youth justice and youth homelessness sectors to better understand the challenges youth are facing, and most importantly, what we can do about it. We've published the results of this work, which provides findings related to the project's 3 strategic problem areas:

- Service Eligibility and Access
- Funding and Policy Alignment
- Coordinated Service Delivery and Engagement

The challenges for youth experiencing both homelessness and justice system involvement stem from structural inequities, system failures, and power imbalances that directly lead to the marginalization and discrimination of young people in Canada. Clear guiding principles emerged that first need to be engaged with before addressing solutions.

Through our solutions-oriented exercises, we identified 14 overarching solutions to address the intersection of youth homelessness and youth justice involvement:

1. Service Eligibility & Access

- Enable early and comprehensive discharge planning from youth justice systems.
- Empower service providers to respond with urgency when youth are at risk.
- Establish a consistent definition of youth across sectors to streamline support.
- Enhance or create services specifically for rural and remote communities.

II. Funding & Policy Alignment

- Increase flexibility in funding, including discretionary funds and eligibility criteria.
- Improve compensation and training for frontline staff.
- Foster cross-sectoral collaboration at the community level.
- Design funding frameworks that assess access from a youth-centered perspective.
- Promote cross-jurisdictional collaboration between provincial/ territorial and federal ministries.
- Ensure Indigenous equity and autonomy in funding decisions and delivery.

III. Coordinated Service Delivery & Engagement

- Offer culturally appropriate services tailored to youth needs.
- Simplify system navigation by streamlining policies and practices.
- Strengthen youth attachment to their community and natural support networks.
- Prioritize individualized service plans - because one size does not fit all.
- Each of these solutions contains multiple 'Pathways for Changemakers' to initiate or advance progress that can serve as a roadmap for those who are looking to implement them. In total, 120 pathways were identified by the stakeholders of this project, directed at federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments, and community-based agencies.

The pathways for the federal government are promising because Canada already has access to legislative tools like the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Housing Strategy Act to address gaps in preventing youth homelessness and youth justice involvement. These Acts can be bolstered by other initiatives (i.e., Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Canada's Black Justice Strategy, Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism). As the gatekeepers for policy implementation and investment, pathways for provincial and territorial

governments must engage with their federal and municipal counterparts while also actively collaborating with community-based agencies to understand unique regional contexts and implement local solutions.

At a more local level, pathways for municipal governments offer inspiration to take on a more significant role to having community-informed approaches that will help municipalities advocate with their government counterparts, and to make more informed investments in safe, affordable housing options for youth aging out of these systems. Finally, community-based agencies are at the heart of the connection between youth justice involvement and youth homelessness. The pathways for them are grounded in enhancing/implementing processes that prioritize person-centred approaches, collaborating across sectors, and engaging with multiple levels of government to communicate the needs of the youth accessing their services and the staff who support them. Collectively, the Pursuing Justice project's findings, and particularly the 120 'Pathways for Changemakers', strive to empower decision-makers across the youth justice and youth homelessness systems to actively pursue steps towards meaningful change.

Anita Desai, Erin Dej, Jessica Braimoh
Homeless Hub
Jun 30, 2025

Federal prison service is 'ill-equipped' for long-term mental health care

The federal prison ombudsman says weak policies, insufficient training and a lack of specialized treatment are hindering the Correctional Service of Canada's efforts to deliver mental health care.

In his latest annual report, correctional investigator Ivan Zinger says it's "abundantly clear" the prison service is fundamentally ill-equipped to provide long-term mental health care to people experiencing acute psychiatric distress, suicidal thoughts or chronic self-injury.

In cases involving such serious mental illnesses, transfers to external, secure, community-based psychiatric hospitals are necessary, Zinger says in the report.

The Correctional Service of Canada routinely transfers individuals requiring complex physical care - such as chemotherapy or heart surgery - to external hospitals, Zinger notes.

"It would be unthinkable to attempt such procedures in-house," he writes. "Yet, when it comes to mental health, CSC continues to operate under the misguided belief that it can provide specialized psychiatric care internally."

Zinger, who says he plans to retire at the end of January, is set to discuss the report today at an Ottawa news conference.

The report draws on the findings from six national investigations that Zinger's office conducted on mental health care for federally sentenced individuals.

The office carried out 425 interviews with people in custody and on community release, made site visits and met with institutional and community staff, community-based stakeholders, Indigenous organizations and provincial correctional authorities.

Zinger's office found weak, vague, outdated or non-existent national policies have led to ineffective, confusing and inconsistent direction and implementation of mental health services.

Insufficient training for staff on how to work effectively and humanely with individuals with mental health issues has contributed to poor quality of care in corrections, the report says.

An absence of effective screening and assessment of mental health issues has created "a domino effect" of poor identification and access to services, excluding many who need enhanced care, the report adds.

Zinger also found a lack of specialized options for programming, treatment or opportunities to acquire skills that would support the successful release of offenders.

One of the investigations focused on the prison service's five Regional Treatment Centres.

Treatment centres present "a unique dynamic" in that they are hybrid facilities - psychiatric hospitals guided in part by provincial health legislation, operating within a federal penitentiary setting subject to federal legislation, the report says.

All of the treatment centres, except for the Regional Psychiatric Centre in the Prairie region, are located within larger penitentiary sites.

Zinger found the centres can be best described as intermediate and geriatric care facilities, with

limited emergency mental health capacity for acute cases.

"They should therefore be reprofiled and recognized as such," he writes.

Individuals with acute and long-term psychiatric needs should be transferred, under section 29 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, to specialized, external facilities capable of delivering the appropriate care, the report says.

Continuing to house these individuals in treatment centres operated by the Correctional Service is ineffective, inappropriate and a clear violation of human rights, it adds.

Zinger calls the federal announcement of a \$1.3-billion replacement facility for the Atlantic region "a profound misallocation of resources."

Rather than investing in another in-house facility, the government should have directed the prison service to partner with provincial health systems to expand access to secure psychiatric beds in the community, the report says.

In a response included in Zinger's report, the Correctional Service rejects the recommendations.

The prison service says it has a health system and delivery model "to provide services that are matched to level of need."

The Correctional Service says its health services, including the Regional Treatment Centres, are accredited by Accreditation Canada, the same organization that accredits hospitals and other service providers in communities across the country.

The prison service notes it also has a partnership with the Institut Philippe-Pinel de Montréal for provision of in-patient psychiatric care to men and women offenders, subject to meeting Pinel's admission criteria.

The prison service says it will continue to engage with provincial psychiatric hospitals to supplement existing capacity.

"This engagement is done in acknowledgment of the limited capacity of provincial health care facilities to provide care to federal inmates, particularly in relation to their ability to admit federal inmates with complex mental health and security needs," the response says.

The prison service says it is also conducting "a comprehensive review" of its Regional Treatment Centres to provide a standardized baseline of service provision.

The review will focus on ensuring that services align with needs and reflect an appropriate mix of psychiatric hospital care, intermediate mental health care and short-term medical care, the Correctional Service says.

The planned new facility in Dorchester, N.B., will be "a modern, bilingual, purpose-built health care facility" that will support the prison service in advancing its patient-centred health care model, the service adds.

Jim Bronskill

The Canadian Press

Nov 12, 2025

Senator tries again to put limits on prisons' use of solitary confinement

Sen. Kim Pate has been fighting against prisons' use of solitary confinement since 2018, when the federal government committed to curbing the practice.

She told The Canadian Press the situation has only worsened since.

Public Safety Canada reports a 36% increase in solitary confinement stays of 61 days or more between 2021 and 2024.

"We've seen the proliferation, the increased use of isolation with prisoners, especially Indigenous prisoners, especially those with mental health issues," Pate said.

Pate is a driving force behind Bill S-205, also known as Tona's Law. The legislation proposes to "ensure oversight, remedies and alternatives to isolation in federal prisons."

The bill - a previous version of which died when the spring election was called - is now before a Senate committee.

Tona's Law would limit prisoner stays in solitary confinement - what Correctional Service Canada calls structured intervention units, or SIUs - to a maximum of 48 hours. It would ensure prisoners in solitary would be sent to hospital after being diagnosed with disabling mental health issues. It also would encourage the reintegration of prisoners from disadvantaged or minority populations leaving solitary through community groups and similar services.

The bill would allow prisoners to apply for a reduced sentence if there's been unfairness in the administration of their sentence.

Tona's Law is named after Tona Mills, an Indigenous woman who, after spending over a decade in SIUs, was diagnosed with isolation-induced schizophrenia because of her time in isolation.

Pate said she's pleased the bill is finally moving forward after a long delay.

"Part of the difficulty of implementation is CSC has operated with virtually no accountability" since the original bill was introduced, she said.

In 2019, the federal government gave Correctional Service Canada \$74 million to boost essential health services like psychiatric care, 24-hour nursing and patient advocacy for inmates in solitary.

Pate said she's dismayed that CSC has spent that money without curbing the rise in solitary confinement, noting she is not the only one who thinks that is a problem.

"This is not the world according to Kim Pate, or lawyers who are bringing court cases. This is the ombuds office appointed by the Government of Canada to look at these issues," she said. "Year after year after year, they're pointing out these same issues and they're being ignored."

The bill is running into opposition in the Senate already.

"The parliamentary budget officer said it could cost \$2 billion. So that's a problem," said Conservative Sen. Claude Carignan, a vocal critic of Tona's Law. Carignan said the bill would impose major new burdens on already-stressed public health and justice systems. "I don't think if we multiply the process and put the proceedings in front of the judge, and we create more traffic in court, that it will help the system," he said.

He argues the task of finding targeted options to isolation for certain prisoners should be left to the federal government, not a senator with a private member's bill.

"I think it's a bill that has to come from the government with all the tools that they have, to package a new system that they can implement," said Carignan. "I don't think it's a good idea for a senator to take this type of bill."

Emilie Coyle is the co-executive director at the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, an organization that provides support to women and gender diverse people in the prison system. She tours prisons as part of her work and doesn't see solitary confinement cells as places to rehabilitate inmates.

"People think about SIUs as this place where you're getting extra therapy and support. That's what the name suggests. But in fact, it is used to punish people," she said.

Coyle said Indigenous women, Black women, the gender-diverse and others from marginalized communities are subjected to SIU stays more often than other inmates.

Coyle said that by law, SIU prisoners are supposed to receive a minimum of four hours of out-of-cell time every day. Two of those hours are supposed to involve "meaningful human contact" - a term she said isn't properly defined in the law.

"People end up staying in these really small, confined spaces, people watching them all the time, and they don't have opportunities to talk to people that are actually going to be caring about them," said Coyle.

"They may be in a place of extreme mental health crisis, and being in these spaces is just going to make that worse, because we know mental health crises should have ... interventions from caring therapeutic people, and that's just not what happens in the SIUs."

Pate said what happens to Tona's Law will reflect back on Canada itself.

"Canada has a good reputation, historically, of being a human rights protector, defender, and promoter internationally," she said. "And if we're not taking care of people in places like our prisons, as Nelson Mandela often said, then we're not deserving of our reputation."

Justin Escoto

The Canadian Press

Oct 30, 2025

B.C. prisoners with complex mental illness aren't getting necessary treatment

B.C. prisoners with complex mental illnesses aren't getting the psychiatric treatment they need, and are being kept in jail longer than required, because the province has only one 190-bed hospital for these high-risk patients, according to a scathing new report.

The British Columbia Review Board, which is in charge of assessing the condition of these patients, released its annual report for the 2024 fiscal year Wednesday. The opening message of

chair Brenda Edwards outlined how chronic underfunding has brought the forensic health care system to a breaking point.

"In my view, these shortages put the safety of the public and the rights of individuals at risk," she wrote in the report, which was shared with provincial Attorney-General Niki Sharma last week.

After a person in B.C. is found not criminally responsible or unfit for trial, decisions about their care, including whether they can be released from care, are made by a three-person panel of from the B.C. Review Board.

Over the past year, Ms. Edwards wrote, B.C.'s already-inadequate supply of forensic psychiatric hospital beds has dwindled further, along with a "dearth of adequately staffed and supported residences available to accommodate those patients who no longer require hospital care but require close oversight and supportive services."

Plus, she noted, since the Baldy Hughes centre in Prince George closed, there are no facilities for forensic patients who want to go on leave from the high-security hospital to engage in residential addictions treatment.

A lack of supervised housing, Ms. Edwards wrote, is making it much more difficult for the authorities to release these people back into the community through incremental steps, "which is often the only safe and viable option."

This spring, the board noted that Ontario has 11 forensic hospitals to serve its population of 15.9 million, while B.C.'s 5.6 million people have access to only one facility.

A spokesperson for Ms. Sharma did not respond to The Globe and Mail's request for comment Wednesday.

The B.C. NDP narrowly formed government again last fall, with Leader David Eby campaigning to build more secure facilities to forcibly treat the many people trying to survive while battling complex mental illness, long-standing addictions and an extremely unaffordable housing market.

Earlier this year, the province touted the creation of 28 new beds to treat people against their will.

Still, the board noted this week, the forensic psychiatric hospital, located in the Vancouver suburb of Coquitlam near the Red Fish Healing Centre for Mental Health and Addiction, had to turn away patients throughout the past fiscal year because all of its beds were full.

"As I am sure you will appreciate, it is a matter of simple mathematics that when more forensic patients are admitted into the system than are being discharged, a tension begins to build," Ms. Edwards wrote to the Attorney-General.

"If that pressure is not alleviated by a significant injection of resources, the board will be unduly hampered in its ability to meet its mandate (primarily protecting the public), and the administration of justice risks being brought into disrepute."

The board is also hamstrung, its chair noted, by being prohibited by the Canadian Criminal Code from holding virtual hearings if the accused don't agree, and most don't.

That means the board incurs significant expense bringing its members from across the province to Metro Vancouver or the community of the patient to do in-person hearings, Ms. Edwards wrote.

Plus, she added, the board is not served by the provincial sheriff service so it must continue to hire private security to ensure everyone is safe when the accused is mentally unstable, addicted and charged with violent offences.

Ms. Edwards, in her report, formally requested that the Attorney-General lobby her federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to amend the Criminal Code to allow the board to do video hearings when it wants.

During the 2024 fiscal year, the board had 35 people accused of 92 total charges deferred to it by the courts, with the majority being white men between the ages of 20 and 59, the report noted.

In total, the board was responsible for 265 people during the fiscal year, some of whom have been detained for decades despite each of the accused being mandated a review of their condition by the tribunal each year.

Mike Hager
Globe and Mail
Oct 9, 2025

Better to write it out than to punch it out.

- She

Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it.

- Tori Amos

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

Prison Radio

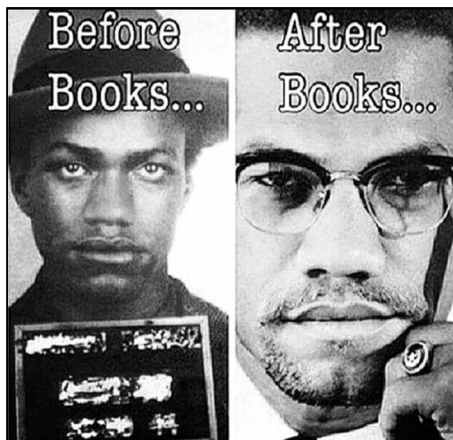
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Wed 9 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven – 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM
CPR – Wed 7-8 pm

The CPR 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.

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

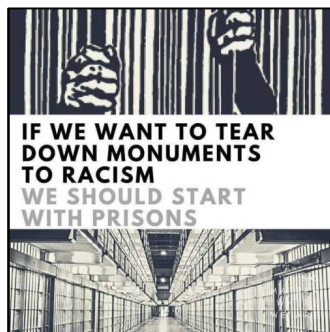
Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-417-3359 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.



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



You can't use up creativity.
The more you use, the more you have.
- Maya Angelou

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

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 & VCV

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

NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC

Mon - Wed - Fri - Sat

9-11am & 2-4pm

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎

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

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

*Nothing is impossible,
the word itself says 'I'm possible'!*
- Audrey Hepburn

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

Yet all we could do was sit there, thinking back over the past and trying once again to beat that old prisoner's game of determining at just what point we made our big mistake.

- Donn Pearce

'Cool Hand Luke'

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) 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 Prisons 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

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

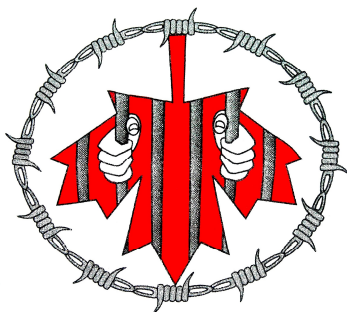
The Impact

- 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 ~ 416-505-5333



Women's Prison Network
Winter 2025/26 - Issue #41

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

visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

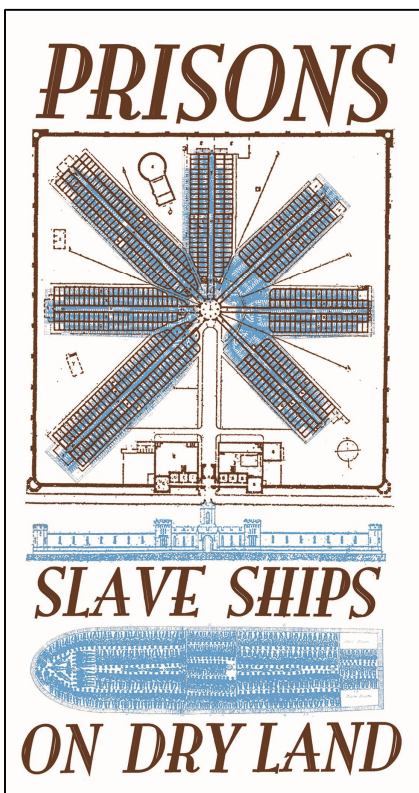
> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Spring Issue #42 is mailed out:

Mar 1, 2026

Send in your work before:

Feb 1, 2026



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