

# WOMENS PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE 43 - SUMMER 2026

< Editor's Note >

Welcome to Issue #43 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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Cover: Julie Goonan  
Page 9: Rocky Dobey



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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

How do I look up court cases in my province or territory?

The *Globe and Mail* is expanding its *Secret Canada* project for the first time since it launched three years ago, now offering a comprehensive guide on how to access court records in different jurisdictions across the country.

This new tool lays out the basics of what kinds of records Canadians are entitled to access, and the process to obtain documents such as lawsuits, small claims files, bankruptcy records and daily dockets.

The guide provides this information for each province, territory and federal jurisdiction - and can be found on [SecretCanada.com](http://SecretCanada.com) in the resources section.

Up until now, *Secret Canada* has focused on Canada's broken freedom of information (FOI) regime. FOI - which is also called access to information and right to information - is the process by which Canadians can obtain records from most publicly funded entities, including each level of government, police services, hospitals, universities, Crown corporations and transit agencies.

As part of the reporting, *The Globe* created [SecretCanada.com](http://SecretCanada.com), which features a database of hundreds of thousands of completed FOI requests as well as numerous guides for how to use, file and appeal FOIs.

Like FOI, there is no one Canadian court system. Each jurisdiction has its own rules and processes. *Secret Canada's* new guide on accessing court records builds off a previous one that lays out the different FOI regimes in each part of the country. The site also includes a letter generator with templates. In 2025, more than 5,200 people used the *Secret Canada* FOI generator.

Robyn Doolittle & Danielle Webb  
*Globe and Mail*  
 Jan 19, 2026

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### Prison Lawsuits in Canada (News Reports)

A collection of articles from 2003 to 2026:  
[PrisonFreePress.org/Prison\\_Lawsuits\\_in\\_Canada](http://PrisonFreePress.org/Prison_Lawsuits_in_Canada)

(let us know of any others to include!)

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### Anarchist Fictions, Issue 3: 'Burn the Prisons'

Send us your writings on the theme of:  
**BURN THE PRISONS**

**POETRY:** 5 pages max. \$20 CAD per poem if printed. Deadline: June 30, 2026.

**SHORT STORIES:** 5,000 words max. \$50 CAD if printed. Deadline: July 31, 2026.

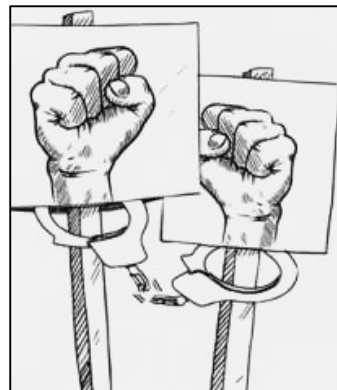
**MEMOIRS & CREATIVE NON-FICTION:** 2,500 words max. \$50 CAD if printed. Deadline: Sept 30, 2026.

Send your writing attached or in the body of an email with **ISSUE 3 SUBMISSION** as the subject line to: [anarchistfictions@proton.me](mailto:anarchistfictions@proton.me)

We aim to respond to all entries by Oct 31.

No matter how well meaning and astute the investigators are or how well-researched, witnessed and documented the incidents of cruelty are, a prison is a prison. The structure of authority that produces the oppressed and the oppressor alike is the key to understanding the problem. Contained within this structure is the authoritative power to agendize language, which is simply another control mechanism.

- Gayle K. Horii



Academics pan decision to cut CEGEP education in Quebec's federal prisons

Inmates in Quebec's federal prisons will soon be deprived of post-secondary studies that had been offered for 52 years after Correctional Service Canada (CSC) decided to slash funding.

At the Cowansville federal prison, about 100 kilometres east of Montreal, the news was received with profound disappointment.

"People were mourning. Several people were crying," professor Samuel Rochette said.

The psychology professor at Cégep Marie-Victorin, who also teaches in prisons, added that the most moving moment was when people stood up and explained how their studies had changed their lives.

As of June 30, CSC will suspend its funding for CEGEP education in federal prisons in Quebec.

Cégep Marie-Victorin was the last in the province to offer a pre-university program in social sciences to inmates at the Cowansville men's and Joliette women's institutions.

According to Rochette, around 60 inmates are enrolled in CEGEP courses at the Cowansville and Joliette facilities, but thousands have benefited from these educational services over the past few decades.

The program is so popular that some inmates are transferred to these two penitentiaries for the sole purpose of attending it.

There's even a waiting list.

"This training allows inmates to feel competent outside of prison. And it gives them the feeling that they can be something other than just a 'criminal,'" Rochette highlighted.

Louis Gendron, executive director of Cégep Marie-Victorin, said the decision makes no sense.

"It's shocking. We're completely shaken up," Gendron said. "It's in our DNA to serve and welcome populations of all kinds, with different needs."

Gendron and a group of professors are preparing a letter that they plan to send to the federal and provincial ministers of public safety. Their hope is to get the federal government to walk back its decision.

"We do not accept the situation," Gendron said.

The CEGEP's board of directors also unanimously adopted a resolution on Wednesday evening condemning the decision and requesting that it be reviewed.

In a letter by the CEGEP sent to its staff impacted by the federal move, the administration said this partnership between the school and federal prisons has enabled hundreds of inmates to "regain confidence" and "successfully reintegrate into society."

In an email to Radio-Canada, Correctional Service Canada confirmed that contracts to offer post-secondary education programs will not be renewed in line with their "responsibilities provided for by law and main correctional priorities."

This decision is part of a comprehensive review of expenses following \$132 million in cuts imposed on CSC in the latest federal budget.

"CSC will continue to focus its efforts on education-related components, as required by law, as well as training that meets labour market needs and supports employment outcomes," read the statement.

For Frédéric Armstrong, researcher and UNESCO Chair in applied research for education in prison, CSC's decision is "short-sighted," "disappointing," and will have negative consequences on several levels.

"If we do not prepare [inmates] with a range of services, including education, there is a risk that rehabilitation and social reintegration will be less successful," Armstrong said.

He added that engaging prisoners in education also contributes to the mission of safety in correctional facilities.

"Keeping people busy doing something constructive takes away from the time they have to do things that are not constructive," Armstrong explained.

Laurence Guénette, director of the Ligue des droits et libertés, an organization advocating for human rights, calls this move an "unacceptable new setback" for the rights of inmates and the continuation of a "process of dehumanization."

"Prison conditions are already appalling. People in detention are deprived of their freedom, but they should keep their other rights, including the right to education," said Guénette.

Armstrong and others are asking CSC to reconsider its decision to cut funds.

"The process by which an incarcerated individual comes to understand that they can be something different than a criminal or an offender, that they can be a citizen, a father, a friend, a student, is the key to hope," Armstrong said.

"And if the program is no longer there, hope is no longer there."

Fannie Bussi eres McNicoll  
CBC News  
Feb 08, 2026

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Bobby Landers Tonight

*In the Millhaven pen  
there's the greatest show on earth  
There's screaming, dying, crying,  
very little mirth  
Tonight the Bobby Landers  
show will start  
And will end in the morning  
with the beating of his heart  
Where did you go, what did you do?  
Organizing prisoners' rights,  
ain't the proper thing to do ...  
For organizing prisoner's rights  
you're going to the hole  
Although we just suspect you,  
we're the ones who have control  
Where's the doctor, where's the nurse,  
where's the panic button?  
Destroyed back in '71,  
a system long forgotten  
Where did you go, what did you do?  
Organizing prisoners' rights,  
ain't the proper thing to do ...  
Well now you want a doctor,  
well that's just too bad  
Maybe to-morrow that nurse  
will be so sad  
But to-night while you're calling,  
she's laughing with the guard  
Why doesn't she come over,  
the pain is really hard...  
Where did you go, what did you do?  
Organizing prisoners' rights,  
ain't the proper thing to do ...  
Then the other inmates  
start kicking solid steel  
Still there was no answer  
and the pain was very real  
You're being much too loud guys,  
we're going to close the door  
Bobby Landers, won't cause trouble anymore  
Where did you go, what did you do?  
Organizing prisoners' rights,*

*ain't the proper thing to do ...  
He wrote a note on the morning that he died  
Would like to see you regarding  
the pain on my inside  
The inquest said, why was this  
not delivered anywhere?  
At the thirty minute check,  
no guards were there  
You're being much too loud guys,  
we're going to close the door  
Bobby Landers, won't cause trouble anymore  
When they served him breakfast  
in the 6 x 11 cell  
In the cruel but not unusual punishment,  
he wasn't very well  
And one week short of his review  
they found him on the floor  
And Bobby Landers, won't cause trouble anymore  
You're being much too loud guys,  
we're going to close the door  
Bobby Landers, won't cause trouble anymore  
Well, you shout through a crack  
that's only half-inch wide  
And then you start to think  
of the last ten years inside  
Well the inquest made suggestions,  
but still there's no solution  
And the death of Bobby Landers  
did not start a revolution  
You're being much too loud guys,  
we're going to close the door  
Bobby Landers, won't cause trouble anymore  
Where did you go, what did you do?  
Organizing prisoners' rights,  
ain't the proper thing to do ...  
When the guards came by at 11,  
his eggs had not been eaten  
His face and his chest,  
looked like they'd been beaten  
His heart shot up and froth  
had filled up his breathing space  
And that morning down upon the floor  
Bobby Landers lost the race ...*

- Larry Ewashen  
www.larrysdesk.com  
Written for the Theatrical Show:  
Convicted But Not Convinced

(In 1976, inmates at Archambault Max began a 110-day work strike following the death of Bobby Landers in the hole at Millhaven.)



By threatening to get rid of prison librarians, Canada is not going by the book

*Nelson Mandela was wrongly imprisoned in a South African jail cell for 27 years. Once released, Mr. Mandela became the president of South Africa and a voice for fair treatment of the incarcerated. So he knew a thing or two about the prison system – and how the way we treat prisoners reflects the broader society. As he said: “No one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails.”*

*In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Nelson Mandela Rules, aimed at bringing humane principles to the system that governs the shunned and forgotten in our prisons. Canada’s federal and provincial governments apparently haven’t bothered to read these rules, since our prisons and jails frequently break them. Rule 12 calls for each cell to house just one prisoner overnight; in Canada, inmates are reportedly stacked three or four to a two-person cell. Rule 43 prohibits prolonged solitary confinement of more than 15 consecutive days; in Thunder Bay District Jail, where nearly all inmates are Indigenous, Adam Capay spent more than 1,500 days in solitary.*

*And now, Canada may be set to defy Rule 64: “Every prison shall have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners shall be encouraged to make full use of it.” Earlier this month, a decades-old program to allow incarcerated people in Quebec to pursue postsecondary education was slashed.*

*And after Ottawa announced a 15% operating budget cut in 2025 for Correctional Services Canada over the next three years, the CSC has told stakeholders that it is preparing to eliminate all librarian positions.*

*There are at least 31 CSC librarians working in 38 federal prison libraries, said Tom Best, executive director of the Book Club for Inmates, a national volunteer-run charity. Librarians are trained educators and information specialists whose work in ensuring equitable access to books is particularly important for prisoners, for whom books can represent a lifeline, and a way to better themselves in preparation for reintegration. In maximum-security institutions, librarians are the ones who push the book carts down the halls, and they also provide crucial structured support around literacy, because inmate literacy rates are lower than in the general population, some struggle with simply picking up a book.*

*Mr. Best accompanied me when I visited the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ont., last year as part of the Book Club program. About 30 women and support staff were in attendance that night, seated in a giant circle. All of them had received and read *The Knowing*, my third book about Indian Residential Schools and my hunt for my missing family members. We had a moving discussion about belonging, about where we come from, and about the strength of mothers.*

*In the past several years, the Book Club has donated around 200,000 books to federal prisons. A selection of Canadian authors have visited the clubs, such as Lawrence Hill, David Chariandy, Ian Williams, Carol Off and Linden MacIntyre. This is an amazing, volunteer-led effort to restock prisons’ barren library shelves; for context, most federal prison libraries have budgets of under \$1,000 a year, Mr. Best said.*

*The Book Club will persist. But eliminating the jobs of people who help rally others around the importance of reading will make things grimmer all the same.*

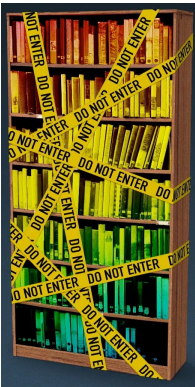
*What’s more, prison librarians are already among the lowest-paid workers in the federal system. So the government savings from cutting these positions will be marginal – but the damage to inmates’ potential rehabilitation, to institutional stability and to the mental health of those who may never see visitors will be huge.*

Librarians offer simple, human interactions that steer inmates toward healing, and that matters to all Canadians. After all, these inmates will one day be released into your cities and towns – they won't just disappear into crevices somewhere. "We want them to be productive. If we don't give them the tools to change their lives, they'll be back in prison and we'll blame the system," said Mr. Best.

Currently, "tough on crime" sentiments are popular, and bail reform efforts, such as the recently introduced Bill C-14, will lead to harsher punishments. In the context of these trends and the further diminishment of already paltry prison budgets, more inmates are likely to reoffend. "I just wish someone would ask: what did we do for that person when they were incarcerated?" said Mr. Best. "What did we do to make a difference so the crime wouldn't be committed again?"

Libraries without librarians are just rooms. And they aren't just a perk for prisoners: they benefit all of us.

Tanya Talaga  
Globe and Mail  
Feb 26, 2026



Ontario to expand jail capacity by 2,500 beds over 10 years at a cost of \$3 billion

Ontario will expand its vastly overcrowded jails by 2,500 beds over the next 10 years at a cost of \$3 billion to the taxpayers, the province's solicitor general said Thursday.

Michael Kerzner said the province will build new jails, expand current ones and reopen a few that

have closed in Walkerton, Ont., and Brampton, Ont.

It will add 255 beds by November 2026 as part of its "bed optimization project" and hire 700 new correctional officers, he said.

"We're building and we're modernizing facilities so correctional staff have the space, tools and resources they need to do their job safely and effectively, while making sure we have the capacity now and well into the future to take to keep dangerous criminals off our streets and behind bars where they belong," Kerzner said.

The province plans to use modular components to build some jails and will use tensile structures for others in an effort to keep costs down.

The news is part of the provincial government's grander plans to vastly increase jail capacity, first revealed by The Canadian Press last month. Internal government documents show the province aims to add nearly 6,000 jail beds by 2050, a move critics estimate will cost at least \$7 billion.

Meanwhile, recent data obtained through freedom-of-information laws show the average jail capacity for 2025 across all institutions is at 12%.

Government data show there were, on average, 11,058 inmates inside provincial jails in 2025, with an average jail capacity for 8,676 inmates.

Jails have become more crowded every year since 2020, when the system was at 80% capacity, the data show. Numbers increased even as institutions sought to balance public safety with efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19, which wreaked havoc in long-term care homes, jails and homeless shelters.

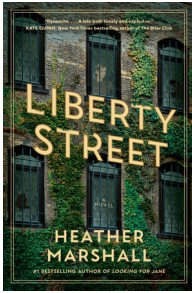
Average capacity across the jail system reached 100% in 2022, then 112% in 2023, followed by 122% in 2024, the data show.

A spokesman for Kerzner said that as of April 1, 81 per cent of the inmates in jails were awaiting trial and presumptively innocent.

Provincial institutions hold people who are accused of a crime but have not been released on bail, as well as those serving sentences of less than two years. Inmates with longer sentences are housed in the federal prison system.

Liam Casey  
The Canadian Press  
May 14, 2026

Heather Marshall's new historical fiction book is about the Toronto women's prison you've never heard of



Toronto's infamous all-women's prison, the Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women, once stood on King St. West, in the neighbourhood of Liberty Village.

Intended to rehabilitate "incorrigible" women, the prison's real history tells a darker story, one that Toronto author Heather Marshall set out to share in her latest historical fiction novel, *Liberty Street*.

In *Liberty Street*, an editorial assistant at *Chatelaine* magazine receives a tip from an inmate at a woman's prison alleging horrific conditions.

Hoping for her big break, she decides to go undercover to see what's really going on in those walls.

Decades later, a detective looking into remains discovered in an unmarked grave stumbles upon one of the institution's sinister mysteries, and these intertwining narratives tell a story of female resilience and strength.

On *Bookends* with Mattea Roach, Marshall divulges the history of the prison, the real journalists that inspired the story, and what it means to be an "incorrigible" woman.

Women were being sent to this prison for subjective misbehaviour, things that now would not be considered criminal. Can you give me a little bit more detail about what sorts of subjective misbehavior we're talking about?

Things like coming in late after curfew. So parents could bring anyone under the age of 35, and they would come before a judge and say,

"My daughter is incorrigible. She won't do what we tell her."

There's lots of examples of women who were in a relationship with someone not of the same race or who had gotten pregnant out of wedlock, all kinds of things that weren't criminal then and aren't criminal now. But before, for reasons of incorrigibility, they could be incarcerated for up to two years at this prison and others like it.

What was sending these women to prison supposed to accomplish then?

It's one of these types of institutions that may have had idealistic beginnings, but in practice were not.

It was to instill the preferred virtues of the era, which are mainly docility and obedience, and originally was intended to also provide some sort of skills training in things like laundry and cleaning so that when these women were released, they would have some skills available for a vocation. Not much training happened as the prison began to age and it became overcrowded.

One of your main characters in this novel, Emily Radcliffe, is a young journalist at *Chatelaine* magazine in 1961. Where did she come from for you?

The character of Emily was inspired by two different journalists, one of which was a woman named Nellie Bly, who was an incredible person. She went undercover at what was then called an asylum, on Blackwell's Island in New York around the turn of the previous century to break the story of the horrendous conditions there. I just thought it was such a story of incredible courage, and for a long time I've been wanting to find some way to fictionalize that.

Then, there was another journalist, a Canadian woman named Lotta Dempsey. She actually wrote a lot of the articles that ended up appearing in the *Toronto Star* when the news broke about the conditions in the Mercer Reformatory and when it was shut down. So Emily is, in some ways, a composite of those two real-life women. And then of course, there's a lot of fictional aspects to her that came out of my brain.

=>

What happened to the building that was Mercer Reformatory? Is there anything left denoting that there used to be an institution there?

*Hardly at all. They came in, shut down the prison, razed it, bulldozed it to the ground, I believe within a year or two, and then put up the Allan A. Lamport Stadium in its place. Just nothing to see here, which I thought was just so symbolic of, "We're just going to pretend this never happened."*

*I'm deeply curious about what would come up in an excavation of that site. But today there is a historic plaque that I think was hard won by a couple of members of the community that went up a couple of years ago denoting that this is where the Andrew Mercer Reformatory was.*

*There was one building still on the northwest corner of the property that was the superintendent's residence. And it's still there. I believe it's a private residence from the looks of it. But it's the only thing still remaining.*

Liberty Street begins with a quotation from the late primatologist Jane Goodall: "It actually doesn't take much to be considered a difficult woman. That's why there are so many of us." Why did you choose to start Liberty Street with that quote?

*I actually picked that quote about a year ago, too, before she passed.*

*I just loved it because to me it summed up incorrigibility, the concept of incorrigibility being so subjective. Jane Goodall saying "it doesn't take much to be considered a difficult woman, that's why there are so many of us," it almost sort of said we are all incorrigible. So getting into reading this book, you are probably incorrigible too.*

Mattea Roach  
CBC Books  
Mar 18, 2026

*I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change.*

*I am changing the things I cannot accept.*

- Angela Davis

Prisoners' Justice Day is ...

*... a solidarity movement that takes place every year on August 10.*

*The movement began in Canada in 1974 in support of prisoners' rights and to remember all the people who have died of unnatural deaths while incarcerated.*



- The right to meaningful work with fair wages
- The right to useful education and training
- The right to proper medical attention
- The right to freedom of speech and religion
- The right to adequate legal services



## Landmark Human Rights Tribunal Decision Advances Rights and Accessibility for Deaf & Hard of Hearing People in Federal Prisons

A landmark decision by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in *Timothy Lidkea v. Correctional Service Canada* (2026 CHRT 19) marks a major advancement in the recognition and protection of the rights of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals within Canada's federal prison system.

In 2020, Timothy Lidkea filed a human rights complaint alleging that Correctional Service Canada (CSC) was discriminating against him on the basis of his disability and Indigenous identity by refusing to provide a meaningful way for him to communicate while he was in custody, including with health providers, Indigenous Elders, prison staff, community supports and others, leading to profound isolation, exclusion and other harms. The Tribunal concluded that "CSC was unquestionably reckless in its treatment" of Mr. Lidkea, since "[i]t knew that he required accommodation to effectively communicate with CSC staff and others but neglected to provide those services to him."

Mr. Lidkea's experience is representative of many Deaf people in prison, who are prevented from accessing the programs and services available to hearing people or using their language – American Sign Language (ASL) or langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) – with any regularity. This intensifies the physical and psychological impacts of prison, including isolation, and limits opportunities for community release and reintegration. The extreme over-representation of Indigenous people in prison results in additional discrimination and harm for Deaf people who are Indigenous, like Mr. Lidkea. The Tribunal's decision affirms that Deaf people in custody are entitled to meaningful access to communication in ASL and LSQ. It also affirms the right to a telephone system that is reasonably comparable to the one used by hearing prisoners, and to opportunities for at least two hours per day of effective inter-personal communication. The ruling mandates broad, system-wide changes on the part of CSC.

In response to the decision, Mr. Lidkea stated: "I brought this case because my rights were being denied, but it was not just for me. Many other Deaf people have experienced discrimination by CSC and continue to be denied accommodation.

Now that the Tribunal has affirmed our rights, CSC must address past wrongs. We call on CSC to support Deaf incarcerated people who were denied support to have more opportunities for parole since the system has been failing them."

Organizations involved in the case say the decision represents a turning point for accessibility in Canada's federal prisons.

"Too often, prisons fail to respect the basic rights and dignity of people in custody, and resist calls for change from incarcerated people and civil society organizations," said Lisa Crossley, a Staff Lawyer with Prisoners' Legal Services ("PLS"), who represented Mr. Lidkea along with Jessica Magonet (formerly of PLS), Brodie Noga of JFK Law LLP and Katie Ussher of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP. "We are delighted that the Tribunal has directed CSC to make long-overdue changes to address the bias, exclusion and discrimination our Deaf clients continue to face. We are hopeful that provincial custody centres will take note of this decision and implement similar changes."

"Canadian Association of the Deaf / Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) has long recognized that the pattern of deprivation of sign language interpreters and services while incarcerated has led to a type of "solitary confinement" for Deaf individuals," said Richard Belzile, a Representative of CAD-ASC, which intervened in the case. "CAD-ASC encourages CSC to accept the Tribunal's decision and to begin the work that will establish programs and policies that will truly support the rehabilitation of Deaf and hard of hearing prisoners."

"The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) is very pleased with the remedy ordered by the Tribunal," said Heather Walkus, Chair of CCD, which also intervened in the case. "Not only does it address the individual discrimination experienced by Mr. Lidkea, it also requires the CSC to make comprehensive systemic changes to its policies and procedures regarding Deaf people in custody. It stands as a firm reminder that governments have a legal duty to accommodate people with disabilities when barriers are identified."

GlobeNewswire  
Mar 23, 2026

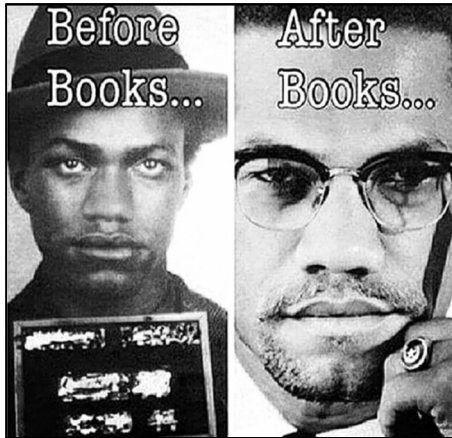
**Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)**

*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**

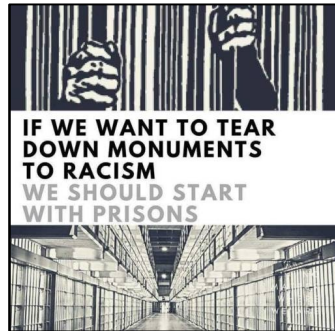
- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM  
Black Power Hour – Wed 9 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM  
PRS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM  
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am  
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM  
Stark Raven – 1<sup>st</sup> Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston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



*One had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or a rat in a trap.*

- Ida B. Wells

### 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 & 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

### 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

*Night time is really the best time to work. All the ideas are there to be yours because everyone else is asleep.*

- Catherine O'Hara

### 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)

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*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](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

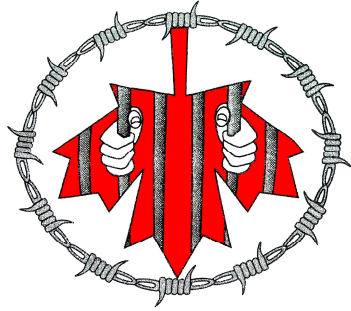
Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- 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



**SOLITARY  
CONFINEMENT IS  
TORTURE**



Women's Prison Network  
Summer 2026 - Issue #43

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

visit, download, print, donate:

WomensPrisonNetwork.org  
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

> Mar > Jun > Sep > Dec >

Fall Issue #44 is mailed out:

Sep 1, 2026

Send in your work before:

Aug 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