

# San Quentin News



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## The #STOPSANQUENTINOUTBREAK coalition



Participants in front of the prison's main gate

File Photo

By Marcus Henderson  
Editor-in-Chief

Major protests, media appearances and a growing social media campaign are being led by former San Quentin prisoners, families of the currently incarcerated, prison reform advocates and some government officials.

"We (the coalition) continue to agree with public health experts who have said that at least a 50%

reduction in the incarcerated rate is necessary for public health safety," said James King, former San Quentin resident, member of the Ella Baker Center for Human Justice, and state campaigner for the Oakland-based organization, #STOPSANQUENTINOUTBREAK.

The campaign is "not just for people inside the prison but people outside of prison," King continued.

King paroled from San Quentin in December after being found suitable for release by the Board of Parole Hearings. King worked as a lead clerk for the Prison University Project, the institution's college program.

Adnan Khan and Eric "Maserati-E" Abercrombie, two former San Quentin residents, took to the airwaves via social media and radio. Both men bought awareness to the prison's COVID-19 out-

break in a podcast interview with Brie Williams of the Geriatrics and Palliative (GeriPal) Care blog.

"Physical distancing is impossible in prison and jail," said Khan on the broadcast. "They're not built for it. Walkways three feet wide. Bunk beds where you can feel all your neighbors' breath

*"There must be space  
in society for the  
humanity of every  
single person"*

"To compound the issue, prisoners are afraid that if they get sick they will be put in The Hole (solitary confinement). So they don't admit when they're sick," Khan and Abercrombie added. "The major response should be decarceration. Reduce the crowding in our overcrowded correctional facilities."

Since returning home, the pair has worked tirelessly to bring awareness to the community.

"Many people think of prisons as disconnected from society, like a cruise ship," said Khan. "But for every two people in a correctional facility, there's about one person who works in the facility and lives in a community. The workers are bringing out whatever they've been exposed to in prison."

Khan and Abercrombie produced short films and public service announcements through First-Watch, a film-making program at San Quentin before paroling.

Khan is the executive director

of Re:Store justice, a justice advocacy organization.

Abercrombie is a singer/songwriter whose music can be heard on the Fox Sports documentary *Q-Ball* and the San Quentin podcast *Ear Hustle*.

In July the #STOPSANQUENTINOUTBREAK coalition movement reached the gates of the prison. Chants of "Free Them All" and banners calling for action waved in the background. The coalition held a press conference that included these elected officials: State Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco; Assemblymembers Marc Levine, D-San Rafael; and Ash Kalra, D-San Jose.

Some of the officials called for a continued monitoring of the COVID-19 outbreak inside California prisons. "We must sustain attention here at San Quentin and at every facility where people are sentenced for time and locked up across the state of California," said Assemblymember Levine. "We must sustain this attention because unfortunately COVID-19 is not going away, so we can't let our guard down."

San Quentin's COVID-19 outbreak ballooned to more than 2,000 positive cases and the death of 26 prisoners and one correctional officer.

Activists and family members are calling for release of those incarcerated to make it easier to control the spread of the virus inside the prison, and bringing the medical care within the system into compliance with the constitutional standards that were court-mandated.

See *STOP* from Page 4

## CDCR and how they're handing the global pandemic

By Rahsaan Thomas  
Contributing Writer

California prison officials are doing everything they can to protect incarcerated people from Coronavirus outbreaks, except release half the population.

"What we are not going to do is make a bad situation worse," said Ralph Diaz, Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) at a recent hearing. He cited homeless-

ness as just one example. "Also, before I would do that, I would be looking at the empty housing units that do exist within CDCR and maximized zones to reduce density at institutions."

Diaz as well as Clark Kelso, the federal receiver over CDCR health care for incarcerated people, spoke at the California Senate Public Safety Committee Meeting July 7.

The meeting, chaired by State Senator Nancy Skinner, was initiated to review the Corona virus

outbreak caused when officials transferred infected men from one prison to two others. The purpose of the hearing was to review CDCR's plans to prevent further spread.

Senate committee members, activists, healthcare experts, and state assembly members Marc Levine and Ash Kalra lined up to have their say and get their questions answered.

Levine called for accountability; Senator Scott Wiener said that if the state wants to control the virus, it will have to reduce the prison population

Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson was so concerned about the situation, she questioned whether CDCR saw incarcerated people as human. "...that's the farthest from the truth. We care about inmates, we care about staff."

By May of this year, there were hundreds of positive COVID-19 cases at the California Institution for Men at Chino, a prison in Southern California.

See *COVID* from Page 5

## SQ's Sgt. G. Polanco passes from COVID-19

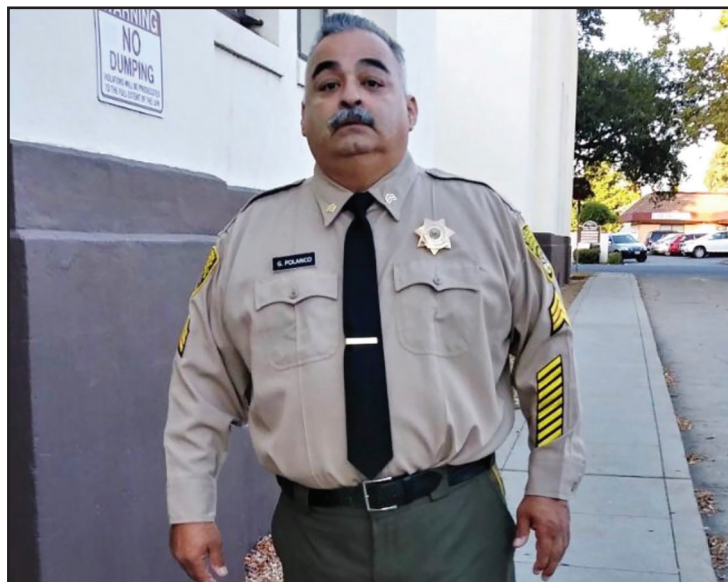


Photo courtesy of CDCR

Sgt. G. Polanco

By Marcus Henderson  
Editor in Chief

Sad news: West Block has lost another guiding light. On Sunday August 9, Sergeant G. Polanco died from coronavirus. Polanco, 55, a West Block unit Sergeant, is among the growing death list in our San Quentin community.

We have lost 26 of our incarcerated peers, friends and associates

to this deadly disease. Polanco became the first correctional officer to die of the illness at San Quentin.

The daily interactions between guards and prisoners are always complex: from the hardliners (on both sides) who view each other with disdain, to the humane, who try not to lose their true selves in this environment.

See *POLANCO* from Page 6

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in San Quentin, San Quentin News had to temporarily suspend production of the newspaper and Wall City magazine. We are currently working on the best practices to bring you a quality paper that meets the administration's protocols. Our voices truly matter and it's important to keep our families and our incarcerated communities informed. We thank our readers and supporters for your patience. You all know the challenges of working from within the prison. San Quentin News would like to give a special thanks to Warden Ron Broomfield and CDCR Headquarters for giving SQ News the opportunity to re-launch in these trying times. We thank our advisers, volunteers and former staff members who have returned home and continue to work to produce this paper. We would not be able to do this without you all. This pandemic has caused all of us to find new ways to move forward. So we thank you again for your patience. -Marcus Henderson



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# AROUND THE WORLD

Skid Row Running Club in the  
Ecuadorian Amazon  
giving a shout out to their running friends  
in the 1000 Mile Club-October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Photo courtesy of Melissa Arcaro





# Survivor describes his struggles battling COVID-19

By Alfred King  
Journalism Guild Writer

The Covid-19 outbreak at San Quentin has caused the death of 26 prisoners and one guard. Ron Lee Jeffrion, 55, is a survivor of the outbreak.

He has been locked up at San Quentin for the last 14 years, working for the Prison Industry Authority’s (PIA) mattress factory and assigned to a cell in North Block. He contracted the virus during a period of quarantine at the prison.

“I’m lucky to be alive, and I continue to thank God I made it this far, but I also realize that I’m still in danger,” Jeffrion said in an interview.

Jeffrion is one of the 3,000 prisoners currently housed here at San Quentin who are not able to social

distance themselves, and who face unclean living conditions and poor health-care delivery.

*“I’m lucky to be alive, and I continue to thank God I made it this far, but I also realize that I’m still in danger”*

He contracted Covid-19 after the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation imported 121 men from a Southern California prison with a serious virus outbreak. San Quentin

had been virus-free and the men were quarantined with no infections; within a short time, thousands of men and numerous guards had it.

Jeffrion’s first symptoms were the loss of taste and smell, followed by extreme headaches, and he could not lay on his back. Within hours he could hardly breathe, so it was time for him to go “Man Down”—the prison term for when you have to call for help.

When the officers got to his cell, along with a nurse, he had a temperature of 101. They took him out to Badger section, part of the prison reserved for people who were showing symptoms. He stayed there for the next five days as his condition kept getting worse.

With no improvement, an ambulance transported him to Seton Hospital in Daly

City, where he was placed in a special Intensive Care Unit for people from San Quentin. There he saw a lot of guys he knew from the prison.

He was not allowed to notify his family that he was sick and near death. For weeks he drifted in and out of consciousness, praying that he would get better and see his family again—his wife and two daughters.

After 30 days on oxygen in the ICU, he was returned to San Quentin, but instead of going back to his housing unit, he was placed in some sort of medical unit recently constructed in the PIA complex. He stayed there for the next 18 days, then was told that he was no

longer infected, though he still suffered from a variety of symptoms.

Dr. Coleen Kivlahan, head of primary care at the University of California San Francisco, sees up to 20 patients like Jeffrion, whom she refers to as “long-haul patients.”

She estimates that there are tens of thousands of so-called “long-haul patients” who continue to experience fatigue, chest pains, cognitive issues, and that much remains unknown about the virus, according to a *Wall Street Journal* article.

Jeffrion still complains about his loss of memory and shortness of breath, and can hardly stand on his own. He is weak and frail

after losing 30 pounds and cannot stand for longer than a couple of minutes.

As harsh as the virus was on him, he is glad to have survived, thinking back to some of the guys he saw at Seton Hospital who did not come back.

He realizes that he is not out of the woods yet. The virus is still here, and he can see it around him, that proper measures are still not in place to protect people in North Block. There is no consensus on how long he will be immune from catching the virus again, but some data suggests he will be immune for three weeks, while other data says he will be fine up to three months.

## United States resumes federal execution in midst of pandemic

By Kenneth R. Brydon  
SQ News Alumnus

The federal government has resumed executions during the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting unsuccessful challenges before the U.S. Supreme Court.

One condemned man argued that the use of pentobarbital to carry out his execution would amount to cruel and unusual punishment. The challenges also question whether the reasonable fears of contracting COVID, held by the family of the victims and spiritual advisers were sufficient cause to impose stays.

Three federal prisoners were at the center of these emergency arguments, made necessary by the government’s unexpected and hasty decision to carry out executions in the midst of the pandemic.

Daniel Lewis Lee was put to death July 13, Wesley Ira Purkey was executed July 15, and Dustin Lee Honken was put to death July 17. All three were executed at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Lee maintained his innocence and argued that pentobarbital induces the effect of drowning, and therefore must result in extreme pain. A District Court ruled that his argument had merit, but a 5-4 Supreme Court majority rejected his position.

The majority pointed out that more than 100 pentobar-

bital executions have been performed without incident. The court also ruled Lee’s request for “last-minute” intervention was improper.

Lee remained strapped to the execution gurney for four hours while the legal jousting played out in the high court. Upon the lifting of the stay, his counsel received no notice of the final ruling, and Lee was executed in the middle of the night.

*“Despite the pandemic, the government still must carry out its important duties”*

The family members of Lee’s victims had also filed petitions seeking a stay due to concerns about the potential of being infected by COVID-19 while witnessing the execution, due to the presence of four confirmed cases at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, but their request was also denied.

Purkey had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, dementia and Alzheimer’s. In his case, the Rev. Seigen Hartkemeyer, a 68-year-old Buddhist priest and Purkey’s spiritual adviser, requested a stay because of his own age and physical health issues. He contended that he was being asked to minister to the condemned prisoner at the risk of his own life.

Honken’s spiritual adviser, Mark O’Keefe, a Roman Catholic priest, made the same argument.

The Supreme Court ruled that protective equipment was available for the advisers and that the executions would be carried out, regardless of the risk created by the pandemic.

The US Department of Justice later stated: “Despite the pandemic, the government still must carry out its important duties.”

These federal actions can be contrasted against what occurred in Tennessee, where two executions were delayed when it was decided that it was impossible for the court to provide full and complete due process under present pandemic conditions.

Federal executions are in contrast to trends in the country which are shifting away from capital punishment. In some instances it has been the inability to attain execution drugs because pharmaceutical firms no longer wish for their products to be utilized in that fashion. But there are growing changes in the use of the death penalty.

A number of states have abolished capital punishment, and its support has waned in the past few decades.

This is happening now in an atmosphere of protests and unrest over inequalities and racial injustice in cities across the nation and the world.

Keith Dwayne Nelson was scheduled for execution Aug. 28.

## For prosecutors nationwide Novembers’s election may heat up

By Harry C. Goodall  
Journalism Guild Writer

The November election can bring swift and significant changes to the current criminal justice system. This will be based on the outcome of many prosecutors’ races.

Reform activists have supported the election of district attorneys who have “promised to reduce reliance on incarceration, increase transparency and promote equity,” according to the *Los*

*Angeles Daily News*.

LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey will battle for re-election in a November run-off. She was elected in 2012, and ran unopposed in 2016. This year she faces George Gascon, former San Francisco district attorney.

“If Lacey loses to Gascon, maybe he’ll do for LA what he’s done for SF. Lacey seems to not want to change her ‘lock up everyone and throw away the key’ mentality,” said Bobby John, a San

Quentin resident.

In Houston, incumbent prosecutor Kim Ogg faces a contested general election in November.

Mike Kennedy, a Texas native housed at SQ said, “I doubt Texas will ever have reform when it comes to criminal justice. It’s not as bad as Cali, but it clearly needs to work their (Texas courts) death penalty stance.”

In Chicago, Kim Foxx will face multiple challengers in the Democratic primary.

The historical nature of prosecutor elections is that they usually run unopposed and serve multiple terms. There are over 2,300 jurisdictions in America that have voting for prosecutor positions, but only 700 jurisdictions presented the voters with a choice of candidates, according to the *Daily News*.

In 2015 the prison reform movement took a strong hold in state legislatures. There has been a notable shift in the national conversation about criminal justice, according to the article.

In his 2016 nomination acceptance speech, Pres. Donald Trump told the Republican National Convention that as president he would return the country to a “law and order” agenda. He now reportedly sees criminal justice reform as a way to woo African American voters, the article said.

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We Want To Hear From You!

San Quentin News encourages the incarcerated, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles. All submissions become property of the San Quentin News. Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Limit your articles to no more than 350 words.
- Know that articles will be edited for content and length.
- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances. (For that, use the prison appeals process.) We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.
- Poems and artwork (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

Send Submissions to:  
San Quentin News 1 Main Street  
San Quentin, CA 94964

For inmates that want to receive a copy of the San Quentin News in the mail, send \$1.61 worth of stamps for postage to the above address. The process can be repeated every month if you want to receive the latest newspaper.

Behind the Scenes

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## The Beat Within

A Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

Your writing should reflect a positive message that helps the youth make a better decision in life. Your stories will be read by the youth in detention centers. If published, you will receive a free copy of the publication. Your story can make a difference. Tell The Beat Within you read about them in KidCAT Speaks!

**Words from the wise, quote of the week** - “I believe that you see something that you want to get done, you cannot give up, and you cannot give in.” - John Lewis (1940 – July 17, 2020) was an American politician and civil rights leader who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1987 until his death in 2020. Lewis also helped organized the 1963 March on Washington. He fulfilled many key roles in the civil rights movement and its actions to end legalized racial segregation in the US. What do you think of this week’s quote? Can you relate? What is something in your life (your freedom, your family, making a change, an education, a job) that you want to get done, and you will not give up or give in? “I believe that you see something that you want to get done, you cannot give up, and you cannot give in.”

**The Beat Within**  
P.O. Box 34310  
San Francisco, CA 94134



# The demands of the #stopsanquentinoutbreak coalition

## COMMENTARY

By San Quentin  
Outbreak Coalition

*This article was written back in August and reflects conditions then.*

After months of urging Gov. Gavin Newsom to take action to curb the spread of COVID-19 in our prison system, we are relieved to see that he is finally starting to grant releases.

The governor's July 10 promise to review 8,000 incarcerated people for release is a step in the right direction. But releasing a mere 6 percent of the people inside California's overcrowded prisons falls woefully short of the large-scale decarceration needed to protect the health and safety of the community. We stand by public health

experts who have clearly stated that the prison population must be reduced to below 50 percent of what the prisons were designed for to adequately address unsafe overcrowding during the pandemic.

To reach the recommended target of 50 percent capacity, roughly 2,000 people would need to be released from San Quentin alone — the site of California's worst COVID-19 outbreak where to date, over 1,900 people tested positive.

In just the last three weeks, at least 10 people have died at San Quentin due to COVID-19, the majority of them were housed on Death Row.

Failure to reduce the population significantly will result in incarcerated people continuing to face grave risk of illness, inhumane conditions of confinement, and death.

While the incarcerated community is most at risk,

public health experts have emphasized that a drastic population reduction is also necessary to prevent community transmission and bed capacity shortages at local hospitals.

In addition, the Newsom Administration's continued focus on people with non-violent convictions ignores the undeniable truths that those convicted of serious offenses grow and change over time, that people age out of crime, and that those committed for violent offenses actually have the lowest rates of re-arrest upon release.

We urge Gov. Newsom to expand his release plans to include incarcerated people across all categories of convictions and sentencing — including those serving Life Without Parole and condemned sentences — and consider individuals for release based on who they are today. Families and community

organizations are eager and prepared to receive our loved ones and the larger incarcerated community upon their re-entry. We will continue to push for comprehensive releases as long as the threat of harm and death by COVID-19 in prisons continues.

We reiterate the demands from our coalition, as stated at our recent press conference outside San Quentin State Prison:

1. Gov. Newsom must visit San Quentin State Prison and tour the facility with the press so he can bear witness to the deplorable conditions inside.
2. The governor and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation must immediately stop all transfers between California prisons, and from prisons to ICE

3. Gov. Newsom must begin the process of drastically reducing the overall prison population to below 50 percent of current capacity, as recommended by Amend, a group of medical professionals at the University of California San Francisco that works to transform correctional culture to reduce debilitating health effects. Amend visited San Quentin in the midst of the outbreak, on June 13. In order to achieve this level of decarceration, Newsom must grant releases without categorical exclusions based on crimes of commitment or sentencing.
4. The governor must

detention centers.

prioritize the release of transgender people who are at disproportionate risk of harm and violence in prison. Additionally, CDCR must ensure that the incarcerated trans community has access to hormones and healthcare immediately — before and after their release.

*"The #StopSanQuentinOutbreak coalition is comprised of formerly incarcerated folks, loved ones with direct connections to San Quentin State Prison, community organizers, and several social justice organizations. We commit to working with currently incarcerated folks to ensure that our advocacy is grounded in their needs and vision, as we engage in rapid response work combating the horrendous COVID-19 outbreak impacting prison facilities across California."*

## What's really needed are paths to good jobs

By Aly Tamboura  
SQ News Alumnus

To stop the revolving door between poverty and incarceration, the more than 70 million Americans who are justice-involved need access to employment that allows self-perpetuating sustainability.

When people come home from prison or jail, they face immense challenges, not the least of which is stigma, and the burden that a criminal record places on people's ability to find safe, secure housing and gainful employment.

While millions of philanthropic dollars pour each year into reentry and job training programs — which are necessary for people in the short-term — we need to do more to address the long-term impacts of incarceration on the perpetual cycle of poverty.

This includes investing in

skill-building that begins inside of prison.

Take my friend Kenny B for example. Kenny has been home and working for six years and still cannot afford healthcare or his own apartment because he works at a low-skilled job.

Despite his efforts to care for himself and his loved ones, Kenny remains reliant on government social services and charities — some of which are funded by philanthropic dollars.

As a newcomer to philanthropy and a former entrepreneur, it hasn't taken long for me to conclude that attention to policy reform, however necessary, has been insufficient if we are truly to dismantle the systems that create and perpetuate the twin cycles of poverty and mass incarceration.

We have, for example, witnessed how campaigns like "Ban the Box" can serve to

distract us from the structural underpinnings of inequality in the workplace for Black and Hispanic men.

Instead, we should be creating paths to employment and entrepreneurship which create self-sufficiency in fulfilling their needs indefinitely while building social and economic equity.

Expanding support for programs like The Last Mile, which teaches computer coding to incarcerated people, and the Prison Entrepreneurship Program, which offers leadership training and a six-month, in-prison "mini-MBA" program, have much greater impact and outcomes than many programs administered post-incarceration.

These programs provide support and mentorship after people are released and — because they are private — they function outside of government bureaucracy.

I know how difficult it is

to reenter the workforce after prison. I also know the value of learning skills while in prison that can provide near seamless reentry into society.

I spent two years learning to code while serving a 12-year sentence at San Quentin State Prison.

The skills I learned not only paved a path to near-instantaneous employment when I was released but also provided enough compensation to provide the resources I needed to thrive post-incarceration.

There are another 2.2 million people languishing in prisons and jails, most of whom will return to their communities. They will need jobs, housing and healthcare, and most will have to navigate the daunting aspects of reentry without the professional skills required to pursue employment compensation that will raise them and

their families out of poverty.

To move formerly incarcerated people out of poverty, we must reduce reliance on job readiness and training programs post-incarceration that are solely administered and funded by the government — and, we must work to improve these programs and their outcomes, and push to remove the red tape that makes the reentry process difficult to navigate. Instead, we should fund and support job training and entrepreneurship programs for people that begin while they are incarcerated.

We also need to change the narrative that incarcerated people are incapable of learning and performing in high-skilled jobs. High-skilled employment not only provides income and stability, it also enables an individual to gain equity in homeownership, to access health care, and to pay col-

lege tuition.

Having equity lifts people out of poverty and brings self-perpetuating, intergenerational sustainability.

Death Row lawyer and activist Bryan Stevenson tells us that "The opposite of poverty is justice." Until system-impacted people attain true economic freedom, they will remain "have nots" and suffer all of the systemic injustices that come along with being poor — including incarceration.

*Aly Tamboura is a manager in the Criminal Justice Reform program at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. He joined the organization in 2017, after working as a software engineer. Having spent over a decade of his life incarcerated, Tamboura brings both his firsthand experience with the criminal justice system and his strong technical skills to CZI to help advance critical reforms."*

## #STOP

Continued from Page 1

The activists are not naïve of the challenges and possible lack of political will to have major releases. But the returning citizens who have become agents of change urge Gov. Gavin Newsom and

CDCR to follow that data.

"The science of people aging out of crime, as well as the CDCR's own risk assessments that have identified tens of thousands of people as low risk for recidivism or violence, should be the criteria," said King.

Jody Lewen, Prison University Project executive director, weighed in on what is

needed during these times of trials in her July COVID-19 update letter:

"What we need right now is political leadership that 1) directly addresses the public's misguided fear of anyone who has been convicted of a serious violent crime; 2) proactively seeks out real strategies for safely housing and supporting thousands of

people as they return from prison...and, above all, 4) transforms the state's sentencing laws.

"What we do not need are legislators, advocates, or members of the media who seek to craft sensationalistic scandals out of deeply entrenched systematic problems or sidestep collective societal failures by, for example,

calling for the heads of the leadership of San Quentin or CDCR."

Lewen added that things at San Quentin would be dramatically worse if San Quentin did not have its current warden.

"There must be space in this society for the humanity of every single person," said Lewen. "The coming weeks

and months will likely challenge us in unprecedented ways to respond to the question of why the lives of people in prison—including those who may have committed extreme violence—have value and meaning."

King concluded, "We stand by ready to help facilitate and use our resources to facilitate safe entry."



Assemblymember Ash Kalra speaking to the crowd



James King arriving at the press conference



# The astonishing growth of San Quentin News

By Steve McNamara  
SQ News Adviser

This is a difficult time for the *San Quentin News*. But it's not difficult for the reasons that plague nearly every other newspaper in the country. Those newspapers are in trouble because they are running out of readers, who increasingly switch to the internet for their information. The *San Quentin News* has plenty of eager readers. Its current problem is that the staff inside the prison's walls cannot gather for staff meetings to plan and run the paper and cannot easily connect outside the walls to get the paper printed and distributed to all of California's other 35 prisons and to the hundreds of other people who usually receive it. The reason, of course, is the COVID-19 pandemic that hit San Quentin harder than perhaps any other place on the planet. The sad fact of San Quentin's infection rate and lockdown has been covered extensively. Meantime, the paper's ongoing issues

depend on stories written from inside and outside the prison, then laid out and prepared for printing and distribution by former staff members who earlier had been released from San Quentin, plus volunteer advisers who help the process just as they did inside. But the core value and mission of the paper remains the same as it says on Page 1: *Written by the Incarcerated – Advancing Social Justice*. That's unique. Across America and the world there are a vast number of publications focused on criminal justice, but almost none of them are actually produced by incarcerated persons. At the *SQ News* it is these people who decide what to write and how to write it — how to approach and improve the system that governs their lives. And how to raise the money to pay for it — the California prison system provides computers and an office, but that's all. Financial support for printing and distribution

comes from outside the prison system. In time, when COVID-19 recedes and San Quentin is again fully operational, the *SQ News* will be back as before, entirely the product of its incarcerated staff. Between now and then, it's a good time to run through the astonishing transformation of the newspaper. The roots of a paper at San Quentin go back to the 1930s to a short-lived publication named *The Wall*. It disappeared until the 1960s when a new paper called the *San Quentin News* emerged. It flourished with local prison news until the authorities grew sufficiently upset by its approach and forced its closure. Then came an enlightened warden, Robert Ayers Jr., who in 2008 wanted to revive the paper, mainly as a conduit for in-prison news. He wanted freedom of expression — “not just the warden's newsletter” — but he had no idea how dramatically it would grow. Ayers didn't know how to publish a newspaper and

none of the incarcerated men in his care knew how. So, he recruited three retired newspaper people and tapped four inmates who were willing to have a go at it. The first issues were 5,000 copies of four pages printed on left-over orange paper on an ancient sheet-fed press and distributed within the prison. Then, to Ayers's amazement and delight, the paper took off. Today it is this:

- Seventeen incarcerated staff members plus seven veteran newspaper advisers plus another six volunteers from outside the walls work in a dedicated media center.
- A dozen or more incarcerated men learn reporting skills in classes offered by the *SQ News* Journalism Guild. Successful students move on to staff positions created by the frequent parole of staff members.
- A rate of zero recidivism among paroled newspaper staff members.
- A newspaper staff of four persons without prior experience has blossomed into a large group of accomplished

writers whose work has also appeared in outside publications such as *The Washington Post*.

- Usually 30,000 copies of a 20 to 24-page monthly paper are printed with color on a newspaper press.
- Distribution is to all 35 California prisons, plus county jails, plus some prisons in other states and also to contributing individuals and officials focused on criminal justice.
- A significant annual budget is supported by individuals and a range of foundations including the Reva and David Logan Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation and the Ford Foundation.
- Laudatory articles frequently appear in major outside publications ranging from the *New York Times*, *L.A. Times* and *Politico*, plus coverage on national TV.
- A website presents current and earlier printed issues in searchable form, plus video.
- There is membership in the California News Publish-

ers Association that includes all of the state's major newspapers.

- There is membership by staff writers in the Society of Professional Journalists, Northern California chapter.
- A Twitter account carries links to *SQ News* articles.
- San Quentin News Forums: These groundbreaking events pair groups of incarcerated men with groups of officials involved with criminal justice who previously had no personal experience inside a prison. The Forums began in 2011 with the department of San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón and have expanded to include district attorneys from throughout the Bay Area and the United States, judges, school teachers, defense attorneys and police departments, most recently the San Francisco Police Department.

What you're reading now is a stop-gap version of the *San Quentin News*. So, hang in there. We'll be back with the real version as soon as COVID-19 allows it.

## COVID

Continued from Page 1

In order to protect medically vulnerable people housed at Chino, the CDCR transferred some of the men to San Quentin and some to Corcoran State Prison. Several of the transferees had COVID-19. At the hearing, federal receiver Kelso explained the decision to move men out of CIM. “On May 23, we decided that the expanding cases at CIM posed an unacceptable risk to the last remaining dorm where hundreds of COVID-19 high risk patients were housed.” Although each person was tested before transfer, Kelso said the results were far too old to be reliable indicators for the absence of COVID. “In some cases,” he said, “the results were four weeks old.” “As it turned out, two of 66 patients moved to Corcoran tested positive when they

were retested at Corcoran,” Kelso said. At San Quentin, he said that out of the 122 transferred from Chino, 25 tested positive at San Quentin. Cases ballooned at both prisons. By the date of the hearing, Corcoran had jumped to 125 active cases and San Quentin had increased to 1,106. There were no confirmed Coronavirus cases at San Quentin until after the group from Chino arrived. Moreover, in order to reduce the dorm populations from 200 to 100 people at San Quentin, the cell blocks were filled with two men in almost every 6x9 foot cell. According to Kelso, doctors from UC Berkeley and UCSF toured San Quentin on June 12. They noted that the cell blocks' poor ventilation could cause the “virus to spread very rapidly,” just like the dorms. Dr. David Sears, a physician and professor of medicine at University of California who was on that tour,



San Quentin's CCHCS building

said at the hearing, “California prisons are already over 100 percent capacity and every square in that chessboard has one or two pieces already on it. This makes strategic movements of residents nearly impossible.” At the time of the hearing, the areas used at San Quentin for isolating people with COVID-19 or symptoms (the hole and former reception cell blocks) were filled to capacity, leaving dozens of people with the virus housed in the same unit, and in some cases, the same cells as those who tested negative, according to men incarcerated in North Block. “Our report recommends that the prison population at San Quentin be urgently reduced to at least 50 percent of the current capacity,” Dr. Sears said. (See report at: <https://amend.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID19-Outbreak-SQ-Prison-6.15.2020.pdf>) A major obstacle to reducing the prison population was Gov. Gavin Newsom's early release orders that only included people who had committed non-violent crimes. Danica Rodarmel, the state policy director of the San Francisco Public Defender's office, argued that by CDCR's own calculation, more than half of the people

in custody are at a low risk for recidivism. “It's clear we can safely and dramatically reduce the prison population today,” she said, “releases should include lifers and not be made with categorical exceptions.” Rodarmel is a former San Quentin volunteer whose husband is currently incarcerated at the prison. Sam Lewis, a formerly incarcerated man who heads the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, spoke about the group's efforts to provide community support and transportation to people coming home from prison. Senator Holly Mitchell, chairwoman of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, asked Diaz about a plan to transfer up to 700 people per week from county jails to state prisons. Diaz clarified that the plan actually calls for transferring 200 people per week, but due to COVID-19 outbreaks, the transfers stopped in April and, as of August 13, were still stopped. Since the hearing, CDCR has increased its efforts to stop further viral spread. Governor Newsom has announced that he will release 8,000 people from the California prison system by late August or early September. The criteria for release now

include people who have committed violent crimes but have a low risk assessment score for future violence. In addition, they must be age 65 or older, or have multiple underlying issues, according to a Prison Law Office report. Diaz has also taken 12 weeks off the sentences of everyone in CDCR without a recent disciplinary issue. Prisoners who are within 180 days of their release dates are being released immediately. At San Quentin, names are being called to parole almost daily. On July 28, San Quentin released about 90 people, possibly a record for one day. Those found suitable for parole are being processed in record time. Gary Harrell, for example, went to the parole board for the 20th time on May 20, 2020. On July 7, 48 days later, Harrell went home. Parole board releases usually take 120-150 days. On July 13, San Quentin went on a two week lockdown to clear the prison of COVID-19. During the lockdown, the kitchen was closed and catered cuisine was provided by an outside vendor. The food was far superior to chow hall food. N-95 masks were given to the prison population at San Quentin. Also, teams wearing bio-hazard suits were

dispatched to disinfect the prison, including the catwalks. Several additional housing spaces have been set up at San Quentin including air-conditioned tents on the yard, beds in the furniture factory, and all three chapels for those who test positive for COVID-19, according to a memo from SQ Warden Ron Broomfield, dated July 22. Even with the additional space, prisoners with different infection statuses — positive cases, positive cases resolved, and negative cases — still inhabit the same cell block. To mitigate harm, however, the population showers in three different groups:

1. Those who tested positive but cleared the virus.
2. Those who tested negative.
3. Those who tested positive and could be actively contagious.

And, in spite of the release of 8,000 more people, the prison population is still 100 individuals over 100 percent design capacity. As of August 10, more than 2,000 San Quentin prisoners and 261 staff members have been infected with Covid-19. The virus has claimed the lives of 25 prisoners and one staff member.

### Measures adopted by CDCR:

At the California Senate Public Safety Committee Meeting on July 7, Ralph Diaz, Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) listed measures the department has taken to prevent Coronavirus outbreaks.

- **Suspended visiting statewide in March**
- **Halted all construction within institutions**
- **Health screening for all employees prior to entry**
- **Provided fact sheets and displayed posters educating about COVID-19**
- **Issued hand sanitizers**
- **Increased cleaning of high traffic areas**
- **Produced and issued cloth barrier masks and made wearing masks mandatory**
- **Reduced the population of dorms by utilizing gyms and empty housing units**
- **Suspended intake from county jails**
- **Expedited the release of over 3,500 prisoners**
- **Worked with Global Tel Link to provide free phone calls on specific days each month**
- **Mandatory staff testing at 12 institutions**
- **Set up a website to keep family members informed.**



# Orlando Romero remembered by friends and by his art

By Joanna Macy and Michael Goldstein

We want to tell you about Orlando Gene Romero, Jr., a dear friend to us and many others. Orlando would have turned 49 next week.

During his childhood, Orlando was seriously neglected and horribly abused, physically and emotionally, by his mother, after his abusive father left the home. He blames no one else, however, for his criminal involvement while self-medicating with drugs and alcohol when he was 20.

Orlando had been incarcerated for 28 years, most of them here at San Quentin, on death row.

He was not the same person who went in.

There is only time to tell you a little about him. He taught himself to paint here, with a friend sending him money for supplies. Now his skill and depth of imagination impress artistic sophisticates. He has generously sent many paintings to the friends he has made on the outside.

In more recent years he



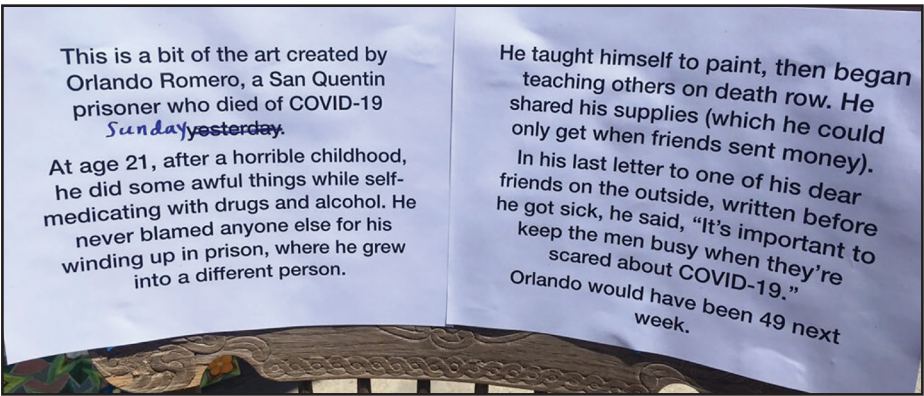
Photo courtesy of Michael Goldstein  
Orlando G. Romero

has been teaching painting to others on the row, often sharing supplies with them. Especially during lockdowns, they would line up to show him what they'd done. "It's important," he said before he got sick, "to keep the men busy when they're scared about COVID-19, and I have some extra supplies."

Orlando also did what he

could to defend gay incarcerated individuals from violence. He sent out two large paintings, one for each of two organizations supporting gay incarcerated individuals, so they could use those for their cause. So he is a force for good inside and outside. Long-time activist and spiritual teacher Joanna Macy, who provided much of the material in this letter, adds, "and he has been a force for good in my own life."

Joanna, who has come to know him well over the last several years, considers him



"one of the most free people I have come across," especially in his ability to extend love.

Orlando was in an outside hospital, on a ventilator for over two weeks. Though healthy and strong before the state's seeing prisoners as expendable led to the epidemic inside here, his survival was uncertain because of extreme damage to both lungs. This is probably a partial result of delays in diagnosis and treatment due to the chaos as the disease spread here.

Orlando died on August 2, apparently of complications related to COVID-19, according to CDCR news release. A coroner will determine the exact cause of death.



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Galicia  
Romero's art on display



Photo courtesy of Michael Goldstein  
Romero's art



Photo courtesy of Michael Goldstein  
Romero's art



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Galicia  
Romero's art on display

## POLANCO

Continued from Page 1

Polanco was in the humane category. In a place of constant uncertainty, stress and toxic personalities—once again, on both sides—Polanco will be remembered as a fair and impartial person and officer. Polanco had the ability and skill to de-escalate

any situation with his smile and years of experience. He would respect the rights of the incarcerated. If we anticipated we had something coming, he made sure that we would get it. But if you broke the rules, he would give you what you'd got coming, too.

Polanco was never away or isolated from the housing unit. He was always available to listen to grievances or just have a casual

conversation.

"I remember when Sgt. Polanco would work West Block, we would talk in the rotunda, where I played my guitar, about politics, old school music and travel," said Aaron Taylor, former SQNews Sports Editor. "In those conversations it was just two middle-aged men talking about life, not a correctional sergeant and an incarcerated person."

"Polanco will also be re-

membered for being one of the first to volunteer and help sponsor the incarcerated "Sign Language program" where incarcerated men learn signing and become mentors to the incoming deaf population.

"Polanco was always interested in connecting to the human—which isn't normal in CDCR—but also not an outlier at San Quentin," said Taylor.

Polanco embodied lead-

ership and what it takes to be of service to your community and nation. He comes from a military family and a line of correctional officers. His uncle Lee Polanco, a military veteran and former San Quentin correctional officer, retired and became the prison's Native American Chaplain. Polanco's son is currently in the military.

As the coronavirus continues to ravage San Quentin, while the administration at-

tempts to get a handle on the situation, it shows that the illness does not discriminate between guards or the incarcerated.

Sgt. Polanco will be missed not just by his co-workers, but also by some of the men in blue, whom he counseled, gave support during rehabilitative programs and debated sports trivia with.

**Rest in Peace, Sergeant. Community is Community**



Sgt. Polanco with his friend  
Photo by CDCR



Sgt. Polanco with his wife  
Photo by CDCR



Sgt. Polanco with his son and wife  
Photo by CDCR



# The stark reality of prison, COVID and the public perception

## EDITORIAL

By Marcus Henderson  
Editor-in-Chief

The screams of “Man Down!” (the incarcerated emergency medical call) rattle around the various San Quentin housing units. The alert starts the sounds of correctional officers loud boots hitting the pavement and their keys jingling adds to the chaos and the panic when the emergency alarms go off.

*All we hope for  
is for society  
to remember  
whatever the  
deed was, most  
of us weren't  
sentenced to  
death by the state*

Medical nurses arrive, covered from head to toe in Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) resembling a sci-fi movie, to administer aid. This scene has played out for months within the prison.

COVID-19 has truly hit San Quentin hard. Twenty-six incarcerated individuals and one correctional officer have died and thousands of others have been infected with the virus transmitted in our community.

Even in these times of crisis, it feels that we (the incarcerated) always have to prove our humanity, our rehabilitation and our willingness to

make amends.

The calls for early releases, to curb the surge of COVID-19 and death, has set off an array of emotions from joy of family members and prison reform advocates to fear and indifference from some of the general public.

How did we get here? It has been almost 30 years of constant lawsuits. I do believe some government officials want prison reform and that must be balanced with the concerns of the general public.

But I must say that it has mainly been the incarcerated and our advocates, who have humanized life within California and the nation's prison system. We (the incarcerated) had to fight for our religious rights (services, artifacts, grooming standards), or access to the courts. We even had to fight to end the indefinite use of solitary confinement and win adequate healthcare—not something special, just adequate.

In 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that California is required to reform prisons to provide constitutionally sufficient physical and mental care to incarcerated people. It's almost a decade later and “that can” seems to be continuously kicked down the road. The cases went from Plata, Coleman vs. Gov. Jerry Brown to Plata, Coleman vs. Gov. Gavin Newsom.



Illustration by Orlando Smith

Now we are in the mist of a deadly pandemic and approaching flu season. The criteria of who may qualify for early release are very narrow. The debate centers on non-violent offenders versus those who have committed violent crimes.

However, the facts are rarely discussed or considered, mainly because of the type of crimes attached to the individual. According to CD-

CR's own recidivism study, more than 50% of prisoners paroled after completion of a determined sentence were convicted of a new crime within three years compared to only 5% of lifer parolees who were convicted of a new crime within three years.

A study by Stanford University between 1995 and 2010 found that of 860 murderers paroled in California, only five returned to prison

for new felonies, but none that required a life term, such as murder.

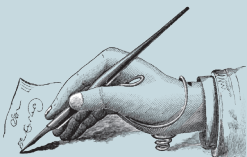
So it pains most of us who have done the internal work—those who have worked through the childhood traumas and accepted accountability—to still be considered politically “risky” and not for safety reasons.

We also accept the victim/survivor rights; we believe in their voice. We learned this

through participating in our self-help groups. It's not for us to tell people who have been harmed how they should feel. We must respect the process. We just want to restore what we can.

As the coronavirus spreads and becomes our new reality, our fears of death are real. All we hope for is for society to remember whatever the deed was, most of us weren't sentenced to death by the state.

## Letters To The Editor



San Quentin News,

Just wanted to give you a shout-out for the article on Mental Health Week. I'm so glad that this has been brought to focus with the CDC. This is something long coming. People only see and hear what prison life does to a person, when there is more that can be done besides prayer, hope, love. I know this because your article has my brother's name on suicides: Jesse Hernandez. He was a big brother that I looked up to, and is still missed so much it hurts.

Thank you again.

Susan Jarcki

Dear Susan,  
We thank you for your kind and inspirational words. San Quentin News will continue to raise your brother's name and the rest of our fallen brothers and sisters.  
We don't always hear the effects this loss has on the family.  
If it's not too painful, San Quentin News would like to tell your story.

Thank you.

Marcus Henderson

Good morning.

I have been following your website since learning of your news organization and journalists through a story on race relations in prisons that aired on NPR.  
I'm especially thinking of you all and your community, now as the COVID-19 virus threatens all communities, but especially those where individuals are not able to isolate in place.  
Are you receiving safety supplies?  
Sincerely,

Bryan

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Hey, I just wanted to say, you guys are doing a badass job at the San Quentin News! I love reading this every month; it helps us (family and friends) know what's up with all of you guys...Good job, keep on doin what yo doin'. Stand tall and keep yo head up!

Angel Paradise

# YOU WILL HAVE A HOME

FREE Temporary Reentry  
Housing to anyone  
released after July 1, 2020

### TEMPORARY REENTRY HOUSING:

- Temporary and available to assist you while transitioning into the community
- A clean, safe place to reside while looking for employment or public assistance
- Shared with others
- Sober and drug free
- Free meals
- A safe, comfortable place to meet with your Parole Agent or Probation Officer

### SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY

If interested in Temporary Reentry Housing Services, request a referral via your Community Transition Program Parole Services Associate, Parole Agent or Probation Officer.





The following articles are reprinted from the Titan Tribune, a newspaper written by students from the Miami Youth Academy, which is a commitment facility for teenage boys. The newspaper is part of a journalism class run by Exchange for Change, a Miami nonprofit that teaches writing skills at MYA and adult correctional facilities. Photos are blurred for purposes of the participants of the program

# Exchange class with University of Miami opens our eyes and creates mix of emotions

By X. S. and K. C.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writers

Nine students at MYA are involved in an exchange class with University of Miami criminology students. When we arrived at the campus for the first session, it seemed a little bit awkward because we were all wearing the same uniform. This stood out to the UM students.

At the start of the class, we paired up with our partners. We started to get to know each other so we could build a relationship over the semester. The UM students were interesting because they managed to choose a different path in life to benefit themselves.

We did have something in common with some of them. For example, some students were also involved with the juvenile justice system as kids. But they learned their lesson and changed to become better in life.

Now, they and the students who were not involved in the justice system have a lot going for themselves. For example, some of them play football or soccer. All are there to further their education.

We learned that if you want something, you have to work hard to get it. One of our partners said she strived to do well in school, which wasn't easy. But she kept going. Now she is in college, driving a nice car and playing soccer. Other UM partners said they have to keep working hard to play football.

During our second class, we talked about juvenile delinquency. We explained how a lot of teenagers can end up making the wrong choices, which then lead them into the justice system.

We had a good conversation about how peer pressure can lead to trouble because students don't want to look bad in front of friends or gang members.

Overall, we found the UM students caring and open to hearing our stories. They were very polite.

Also, we had a good time getting out of our facility and doing something productive.

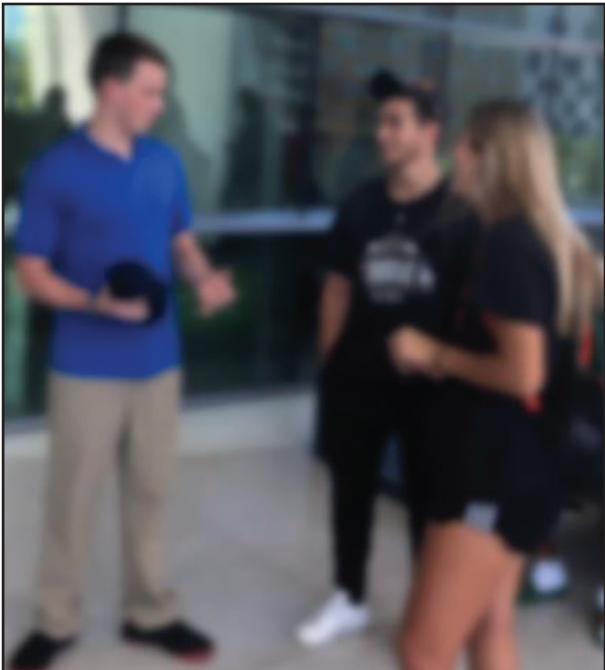


Photo courtesy of Titan Tribune  
UM students speaking to MYA participants



Photo courtesy of Titan Tribune  
University of Michgian students on tour with MYA participants

By J. B.  
Titan Tribune Staff Writer

On the way to our first University of Miami exchange class, I felt excited but nervous.

How are the UM students going to look at me? What are they going to think?

As I walked through the doors at the university, I saw some students stop and stare curiously, wondering where we came from.

As we went inside the classroom, the students stared as we sat down. After we got our groups sorted out, the first question was, "What did you do to enter the (MYA) program?"

I felt subconscious when they asked that question. But as we progressed, the conversation got better. They spoke about how college is and how much fun it can be.

They also spoke about how the dorm was set up, with a television and their own bathroom. That is way different than our dorm at MYA. We have a small room with no bathroom or television in it.

The three college students in our group came from different places: Orlando, New Jersey, and Tennessee. Two of the girls explained how



Photo courtesy of Titan Tribune  
UM students sitting down with MYA participants

Miami is so much better than where they're from because of the beaches, people and summer parties.

After we left the session, we had to do a written assignment about the reasons for us ending up in the juve-

nile justice system. I talked about peer pressure. When we discussed the issue in the next class, the UM students gave me some good advice about staying away from negative peers. I started to feel really comfortable with

them.

We talked a lot about how peer pressure can contribute to juvenile delinquency. I told them that some kids in the neighborhood can commit a crime and not get caught. So that leads other

kids to think those behaviors are OK. MYA student A. D. discusses college life with the UM students in his class.

One UM student said this could lead to crime becoming more normalized in a neighborhood.

## What I learned at Miami Youth Academy

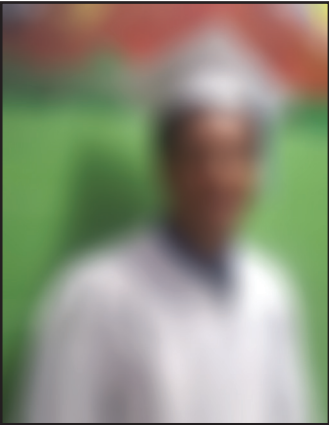


Photo courtesy of Titan Tribune  
Q.M.

By Q. M.

I am 17-years-old, from Fort Myers. I was brought to this

program after charges of burglary and grand theft. I was doing crimes to make money because I didn't have any. I didn't want to rely on other people, and there were not many people to rely on.

I came into this program hoping to get my GED and then get home, as soon as possible. Although I have had bumps in the road throughout my stay, I have learned a lot of different things. They include how to walk away from distractions that could jeopardize my freedom or get me into trouble.

This program has helped me mature and become "the bigger person" in differ-

ent situations. I want every newcomer here to understand that rebelling in this program will never help your situation. It will make it worse.

You can take two different paths in this program. One is easier than the other. You can be a follower or a leader. The follower watches kids who they believe are cool and then tries to be like them. The leader does what is best for himself in any situation, because he came in by himself and he's going to leave by himself.

That does not mean you cannot have friends, but it's important to surround yourself with the right friends. If you do, you'll be fine.

As of now, I have my high school diploma and a Saf-

eStaff food-handling certificate used in commercial cooking. The only hurdle I have not yet overcome is relapse prevention. I will not know if everything is going to go well on that issue until I get back into the world, to my city, and do what I know I should be doing -- instead of going back to what I did before. I believe this is going to be the hardest thing to accomplish, because it's easier to go back to what I knew before I came here.

But what I have realized is that I can conquer anything I put my mind to. It just takes effort and hard work, so I will strive to do better, not just for my family but for myself.

Q.M. has graduated and is back at home.

### Me and Only Me

Excerpts of rap lyrics by Q. M.

They wasn't outchea for me when I was on my down fall  
They wasn't vouchin' for me when I couldn't stand tall  
I dropped to my knees, I prayed the lord take 'em all  
See they laughed at me and thought that I was dumb. . .  
Switch it up see, they thought I was dumb  
I got my GED, despite where I came from  
I know it's not much but look what I have done  
I got some younguns lurkin' to put down dat gun  
Survivin' in dis jungle, it's hard to shake sum  
You don't like to look stupid, so you play dumb  
My father looked me in my eyes and said you need to change son  
I been despised so many times, but dat don't change nun  
This the reason I slang iron, but I pray change come  
Momma I hope you proud of your son you made some  
They say change gon' come  
I bet I be the one to change some



# Father Greg writes the human story of gangs

**Book Review**

By **Heriberto Arredondo**  
Staff Writer

Father Gregory Boyle is a Catholic priest who has made significant steps in helping gang members turn their lives around, and helped the public to understand what led them into criminal lifestyles.

In his book “Tattoos on the Heart,” Father Boyle (also known as “G” to the gang members he helps) writes stories about gang members who are usually demonized and portrays them as human beings who have suffered incredible traumas throughout their lives.

The Jesuit priest is the founder of Homeboy Industries, an intervention program for gang members. He began his career in 1984 as an associate pastor, and then pastor, at Dolores Mission. It’s located in the Boyle Heights area of East Los Angeles and stands between two public housing projects, Pico Gardens and Aliso Vil-

lage, which at that time was considered the gang capital of Los Angeles.

Father G uses “dichos” (Spanish sayings) and homie street slang, which is hilarious and at other times very touching. He quotes several poets and theologians and uses parables throughout his narrative. His book is incredibly heartwarming and tragic. It is full of hope, compassion and empathy.

For those who are marginalized from society, Father G is able to understand and talk about the core issues and beliefs that gang members internalize, like how author John Bradshaw claims that shame is the root of all addictions. “This would certainly seem to be true with the gang addiction. In the fact of all this, the call is to allow the painful shame of others to have a purchase on our lives. Not to fix the problem, but to feel it.”

You won’t be able to help but feel compassion for the children in Father G’s book.

He tells the story of a little project kid in his office who had regularly been

late for school and missing class. “I hear you’ve been late for school a lot,” Father G tells him. He cries immediately, “I don’t got that much clothes.” He had so internalized the fact that he didn’t have clean clothes (or enough of them) that it infected his very sense of self.

He goes on to say later in the same chapter: author and psychiatrist James Gilligan writes that the self cannot survive without love, and the self, starved of love, dies. The absence of self-love is shame, “Just as cold is the absence of warmth.”

There are moments in the book when homies will find and understand their self-worth.

He writes about how he sends homies to give speeches and accept awards for him (which he gives them), like Elias: He’s trembling as he holds the yellow lined paper on which he’s written his speech. It’s not much of a speech, really—there is no poetry, only the unmistakable testimony of this kid standing there, transformed and astonishing.

The audience seems to

get this. He gets to the end with a big finish. “Because Father Greg and Homeboy Industries believed in me, I decided to believe in myself. And the best way I can think of payin’ ’em back is by changing my life. And that’s exactly what I’d decided to do. Thank you.”

The audience erupts in applause. They truly go nuts. They are on their feet and people are crying and shouting.

Elias doesn’t even understand that they are clapping for him and not Father G until someone tells him. And so, an entire room of total strangers hands Elias back to himself in no uncertain terms.

Father G talks of the violence and its effect on the community and ultimately on those he loves—the gang members themselves. You will find yourself reading a story of someone you begin to enjoy and root for and it will leave you heartbroken when their life is tragically taken. When this happened, I would continue reading, hoping that the next person would make it.

Father G”doesn’t offer steps or solutions to the widespread problems of gangs. He states: “My book will not be a ‘How to deal with gangs’ book. It will not lay out a comprehensive plan for a city to prevent and intervene in their burgeoning gang situation.”

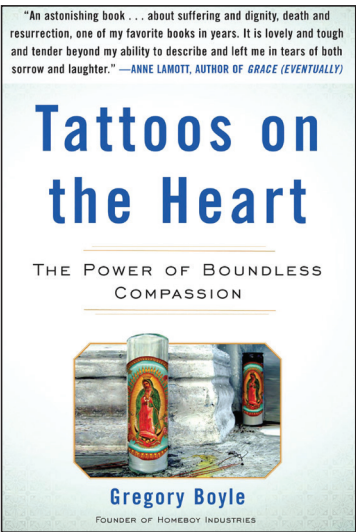
Instead his hopes are that, in finding a home for these stories in this modest effort, “I hope likewise to tattoo those mentioned here on our collective heart.”

The book does not concern itself with solving the gang problem. It aspires to broaden the parameters of our kinship. It hopes to put a human face on the gang members and to recognize our own wounds in the broken lives and daunting struggles of the men and women in these parables.

That in itself is the first step toward fixing the gang problem anywhere in the world—seeing gang mem-

bers as human beings, having empathy without judgment. When you develop that “kinship” you can share your love with someone who has been deprived of it and help begin the healing process.

It does not matter what your beliefs or religion may be. When you read “Tattoos on the Heart” you will find a higher power in the love for your fellow man.



## Reform Alliance donating 100,000 masks to prisons to combat COVID

By **Harry C. Goodall Jr.**  
Journalism Guild Writer

Reform Alliance has a goal of donating 100,000 masks to prisons to aid in combating the COVID-19 virus.

Shaka Senghor of Reform Alliance received an anonymous \$100,000 donation, said Jessica Jackson, chief advocacy officer. The organization used this money to buy personal

protective equipment.

“We partnered with Shaka Senghor — who spent 19 years in prison and wrote a memoir about his life — who was able to find us an anonymous donor who donated \$100,000 to buy masks,” said Jackson.

Reform Alliance was founded in 2019 by celebrities and business leaders, according to *CNBC* on April 3. Among its members are

musicians Shawn “Jay-Z” Carter and Meek Mills. Meek was once arrested on drug charges.

Another member is Van Jones, who served in President Obama’s administration. Jones helped pass the First Step Act. Other members of the group are notables such as Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots; Robert Smith, CEO of Vista Equity, and Dan Loeb, CEO

of Third Point. This group helps as advocates for granting clemency and reforming penal codes and probation.

Of the purchased masks, 40,000 were delivered to the Tennessee Department of Corrections and 5,000 were delivered to Mississippi State Penitentiary.

New York’s Rikers Island will receive 50,000 masks. Rikers Island usually houses around 5,000 to 6,000 incar-

cerated people and there are at least 200 documented cases of COVID-19.

Senghor is a consulting producer for the *Oprah Winfrey Network* program titled “Released.”

He visited San Quentin in November 2017, where he said he wanted to collaborate with men in prison, according to a *San Quentin News* article.

The documentary “Re-

leased” follows Kevin Carr and Sam Johnson, who were both paroled from San Quentin. The show illustrates how they are transitioning into society.

Senghor had spent 19 years in a Michigan prison.

Both Senghor and the attorney/author of *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander, have spoken at the Ella Baker Center in Oakland. Senghor also met President Obama.



My friend died in San Quentin due to COVID-19. His death was entirely preventable. Incompetence and inaction by California’s leaders are driving illness and death inside the state’s prison system.

By Adnan Khan

*This piece is a commentary, part of The Appeal’s collection of opinion and analysis.*

I just found out my friend died. He contracted COVID-19 in San Quentin State Prison after a botched transfer of positive cases there. As I write this in my grief, I cannot imagine the devastation his family is experiencing with the loss. I knew him well. I was incarcerated with him in San Quentin where I was serving a life sentence. We spent a lot of time together on the yard, in self-help groups and educational classes. I also know San Quentin, the prison, really well. I spent my previous four years there, completing a total of sixteen.

His death was preventable and his safety should’ve been prioritized. He tested negative on June 25 and then died on July 25. He was mixed with positive cases after he tested negative. San Quentin doesn’t have anything under control. All it would’ve taken was political courage to reduce the prison population significantly. Tragically, given what he was left with—trapped in a tight box with COVID-19—survival was out of his control and death was inescapable for him. Sadly, most people won’t care about my friend’s passing. His incarceration gave the state legitimacy to deny him his humanity. As a society, we accept punishment and torture as the only exchange for breaking a law, not redemption. Inhumane treatment becomes acceptable—so as we enter incarceration, the human being gets extracted from the body. Our dignity is confiscated along with the personal, material belongings during the initial strip search.

All of this is made possible by society’s narrow focus on solely the crime. Subsequently, the narrative is shaped as a permanent boogeyman-esque identity for that person. We hardly ever factor in the next decade or two of that human being’s journey to make that assessment whole and accurate. What the public fatally lacks is something we as incarcerated people have an abundance of in prison. Proximity. In prison, we get to know each other extremely well. As the years crawl and the hours get slower, we fill each challenging second by dissecting each other’s lives. We become each other’s test studies and learn the anatomy of the proverbial heart. We spend hours upon hours crammed in tight spaces calculating the psychology behind each other’s thoughts.

Trust and safety are destinations in prison. If found, a sudden ability to go into the depths of each other’s innermost shame, pain, trauma, remorse and the thorough details of a person’s accountability for the harm they’ve caused are unlocked. Oftentimes for the incarcerated, this level of intimacy can gain a more profound understanding than one’s own family. We carry each other’s stories with us wherever we go. The heart-wrenching, often gruesome experiences shared with us do not get left behind upon our release either. It’s not that I remember, it’s that I know. I know who was molested by their father, who was beaten with closed fists by their foster parent at 8 years old, and whose friend was shot and died in his arms at the age of 14. For larger society, these stories don’t match the face tattoos or visible scars. These stories don’t match the warm smiles or laugh lines we see on the prison yard daily. It’s like a deception of senses where I’m staring at the body and face of a grown adult yet hearing the sounds of a child’s shriek.

Furthermore, I know why they committed their crimes. Not to make an excuse for the crime but to understand why. Why they committed robbery, assault or murder. But society is deprived of such a narrative. They’re deprived of the level of accountability and the depths of remorse my fellow incarcerated people have for their victims. I wish they could see how many good people exist inside. I wish they could observe how much of our lives are spent trying to make amends, somehow, some way. Instead, their identity is forever trapped in a time capsule that society and politics has forced them into. As an activist who has been impacted by incarceration, I don’t have a work life that is separate from a personal life. Detaching the two feels immoral to me. I can’t clock out of caring about someone. Getting to know people comes with a burden. Especially in prison. Especially when leaving them behind upon your release. Proximity comes with a set of responsibilities of which you become the project manager of. Survivor’s guilt places deadlines on you that you have to reach. And as in the case of my friend, “deadline” in relation to advocacy is a horrifically accurate term.

Our organization’s slogan is “from proximity to policy.” I feel safe around the people you might fear the most. It is my proximity that gives me access to empathy. Society and political leaders are tragically uninformed about people in prison, yet, make deadly decisions based on their fears. Our obligation should be to know people in their totality, and only then can we create safe policies which address the needs of everyone. Instead, the public’s ignorance has incarcerated our loved ones’ identities and has handcuffed their humanity to their crimes. Everyone should have the privilege, like I did, to get to know a person as a whole. Society saw my friend as someone who was not deserving of dignity. They believe the person who did the crime deserved to die of COVID-19. But if they truly knew who my friend was, he would’ve been released to his family. Rather, they saw him as an enemy of the state. They chose not to acknowledge his humanity. My friend was neglected and he is one of millions of examples of other incarcerated people identical to him.

People we incarcerate are not our enemies. They are victims of societal failures and their crime does not negate their restoration. They are brothers and sisters, daughters and sons and they are someone’s really good friend. My really good friend. As much as we can argue about who the enemy is, one thing that is inarguable is that humanity’s enemy is neglect.



Snippets

Ray Kroc was a milkshake-mixer salesman and in 1954 asks the McDonalds’ brothers to let him franchise McDonald’s restaurants outside California and Arizona.

Uavs are used for the shipment of live-saving medical equipment and medication where human transport would be too time consuming in Africa.

Turning down the \$11 million dollar role for “Speed 2” resulted in Keanu Reeves being blacklisted by 20th Century Fox for 10 years.

Half a millennium before Christopher Columbus “discovered” America, Viking chief Leif Eriksson of Greenland landed on the Island of Newfoundland in the year 1,000 AD.

Crossword

Edited by Jan Perry

Theme: 2 N 1

Across

1. Strew

5. Below average grades

9. Stunt

14. Moving along

15. Cheerios spelling

16. Legendary folk hero in Romania

17. Individual thing

18. Exodus writer Leon Russell

19. Pretender

20. Italian sparkling drink

22. American and British TV show

23. A village in Latvia

24. Body of water

25. Actress Keibel of Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the Bone Collector

29. \_\_\_\_cute

31. Type of gene

34. James of Psych

35. Wif of Tyndareus king of Sparta

36. Buck

38. \_\_\_\_-friendly

39. King of Phthia, ancestor of all true Greek

40. A town in Norway

41. Ready to eat \_\_\_\_

42. Japanese noodle

43. Instagram or Facebook announcements

44. Cunning

45. Popular music album

46. Hotel attendant

47. Decay

49. Airport abbr.

50. Follows Sunset or Vegas

53. What college students pull

59. Pursue

60. Asian surname

61. Mail

62. Broadcasted

63. Indian nursemaid

64. Pipe cleaner

65. Shouts

66. Type of cell

67. Ancient Irish sport

Down

1. Government seizure

2. Actress Hathaway

3. Liquor container

4. Type of bag

5. Jason \_\_\_\_

6. USS destroyer

7. Money

8. In Greek mythology, an alias of Demeter

9. Distinct period

10. Type of music

11. Alternative name for the Guilds of Florence

12. John Mayer song

13. \_\_\_\_ for Kids

21. Alita’s name

24. Jazz musician Getz

25. Type of frog

26. Flowers

27. Best possible

28. A person in prison is one

29. Smooth

30. Perfect place

32. \_\_\_\_ and Trude

33. A style of Jamaican folk music

35. \_\_\_\_ Pizza- US restaurant chain

37. Metal tool

39. Actress Helen

43. City in Austria

46. Will Smith movie

48. Newspaper pieces

49. Actresses Faris and Kendrick

50. Marking

51. Chemistry term denoting replacement of oxygen by sulfur in a compound

52. National park in the Himalayas

53. Actor Sandler

54. Domesticated animal

55. Hong Kong bank

56. Actress Reid

57. Actor Morales

58. Wrench violently

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By Jonathan Chiu

Last issue’s answer

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Sudoku

Corner

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9	3		2					
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Last Issue's

Sudoku

Solutions

8	6	1	5	2	7	3	9	4
2	7	4	3	9	6	8	1	5
3	9	5	1	4	8	6	2	7
5	3	2	9	8	4	1	7	6
1	8	9	7	6	3	4	5	2
6	4	7	2	1	5	9	3	8
9	5	6	8	7	1	2	4	3
4	2	3	6	5	9	7	8	1
7	1	8	4	3	2	5	6	9

7	4	8	9	2	3	1	6	5
3	9	5	6	4	1	2	7	8
1	6	2	8	5	7	4	9	3
5	7	4	3	8	2	6	1	9
8	1	9	7	6	4	3	5	2
2	3	6	5	1	9	7	8	4
6	2	1	4	9	8	5	3	7
9	5	3	2	7	6	8	4	1
4	8	7	1	3	5	9	2	6

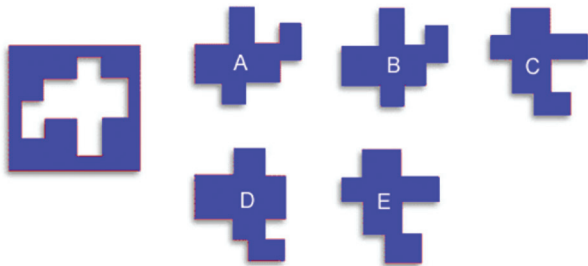
Brain Teasers

Quick! Count the number of times that the letter F appears in the following sentence:

“Finished files are the result of years of scientific study combined with the experience of years.”

How many did you find?

Please pick the piece that’s missing from the diagram on the left.



Mental Stimulation

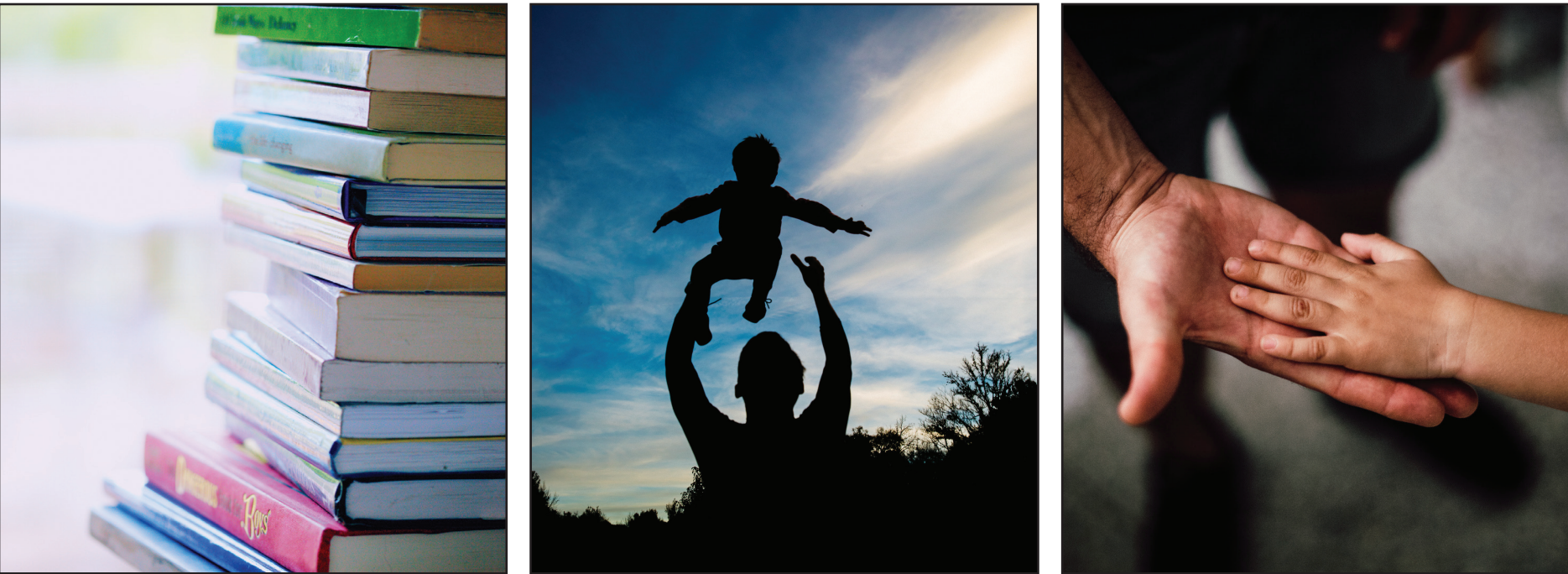
Here you have a few quick brain teasers to exercise your attention and your working memory—the ability to keep information in your mind while manipulating multiple units of information at the same time. Given them a try ... they are not as easy as they may seem

- Say the days of the week backwards, then in alphabetical order. (Speak other languages? Try doing the same in Spanish, French, Mandarin...)
- Say the months of the year in alphabetical order. Easy? Well, why don’t you try doing so backwards, in reverse alphabetical order.
- Find the sum of your date of birth, mm/dd/yyyy. Want a tougher mind teaser? Do the same with your spouse’s or best friend’s date of birth (without looking it up...)
- Name two objects for every letter in your first name. Work up to five objects, trying to use different items each time.



RESOURCES

The Walls to Bridges Project is  
Free and open to all incarcerated persons



Parents, Grandparents, Godparents, Siblings, Uncles & Aunts  
Whatever your relationship, we're here to help you stay connected to your family during this time.  
We'll mail the child (any age up to 18) an age- appropriate book with a note that says it is from you.  
There is no limit per person. If there is more than one child, each of them will get a book.  
This program is operates while supplies are available.  
There are two options to sign up:  
Send a letter to us, including your name, relationship to the child, and the contact information for the guardian or caregiver of the child (phone number and/or email address). Do NOT send us their mailing address.  
We will reach out to them and facilitate mailing the book.  
In your letter, let us know what kind of book you think the child will like or any other thoughts you have.  
OR Ask the guardian or caregiver of the child send us an email at wallstobridges@gmail.com

WALLS TO BRIDGES PROGRAM  
C/O CRC OF SANTA CRUZ  
614 OCEAN STREET  
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060

DON'T WANT TO OR CAN'T PARTICIPATE? SEND US A LETTER ANYWAY! LET US KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS ON WHAT FAMILY MEANS TO YOU

Setting up to welcome Pacific Islands back

By John Lam  
SQ News Alumnus

A nonprofit organization in Los Angeles is pioneering ways to help formerly incarcerated Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) resettle and reconnect back to their communities.

"There's a taboo for APIs who were and are incarcerated," said Duc Ta, formerly incarcerated youth offender, professional chef and co-founder of API RISE.

"My own parents didn't understand the work that I was doing with API RISE, but I felt compelled by my passion to provide a platform for people coming home. So I can relate on a very personal level to the cultural shame around individuals who were incarcerated."

The passion to provide social support for system-impacted APIs is what draws community supporters, advocates and the formerly incarcerated to the organization.

"My brother was incarcerated in the late '90s, and his incarceration inspired me to pursue a law degree," said Paul Jung, a lawyer and co-founder of API RISE.



Photo courtesy of Duc Ta  
Duc Ta and Paul Jung

"I know the power of providing a social safety net that offers returning citizens a place to feel like home ... a place to reconnect, to build camaraderie and to celebrate life. My brother is a living testament to the power and success of API RISE."

"My brother paroled in 2018 after serving 21 years. He is now working as a licensed electrician and volunteering his time to give back to API RISE, so others who are following behind him can be given the same opportunities for success that he has enjoyed."

API RISE was founded in 2015 by community members Paul Jung, Traci Isihigo and two formerly incarcerated APIs, Duc Ta and David Kupihea.

Before Covid-19, the organization held monthly meetings in a church located south of downtown Los Angeles.

"A big part of our group is to socialize, host healing circles discussing forgiveness, and things members are struggling with," said Ta. "We also host cooking classes, guest speakers and other fun events for our members."

Since Covid-19, API RISE continues its work by hosting bi-weekly meetings on Zoom to check in with members and come up with ideas to provide mutual aid.

"We want the API brothers and sisters who are sitting behind bars serving 5, 10, 15 years or even longer to know we are here for them. If you need support letters, jobs and other resources before paroling, write to us," said Ta.

*"You don't have to go through this alone, or feel stigmatized; we are here for you"*

"You don't have to go through this alone, or feel stigmatized; we are here for you."

API RISE currently offers the following services:

- Member Care (support groups, linkages to re-entry programs, mutual aid peer support)
- Prison In-Reach (letter writing, parole preparation assistance, family support)
- Policy Advocacy (local, state and federal), especially as it relates to immigration and criminal justice reforms

# API RISE

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER REENTRY  
& INCLUSION THROUGH SUPPORT & EMPOWERMENT

Are you paroling to Southern California and in need of resources, assistance, support letters and job referrals? Contact our organization, API RISE, we are a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles founded by formerly incarcerated individuals with the support of community members.

Write to us:

API RISE  
P.O. Box 53664, Los Angeles, CA 90053

Connect with us:  
apirise@gmail.com / facebook: API RISE Los Angeles / Instagram: api\_rise

Our goal is to build an actively engaged and involved Asian Pacific Islanders (API) community of API inmates, formerly incarcerated individuals, at-risk youth, families, allies, and supporters. To educate our community around issues of how the criminal, legal and prison systems impact APIs and to organize around the needs of currently and formerly incarcerated community members.



RESOURCES

Correspondence reading guide by mail

Point Global Outreach provides a free 29-page Resource Directory for Prisoners. This directory provides correspondence courses for many religions and spiritual traditions, legal support, pen pals and more. Most organizations in the directory offer their services, books and literature free of charge to prisoners. To request a copy, write to:

Naljor Prison Dharma PO Box 628 Mount Shasta, CA 96067

GUIDELINES:

- Let these organizations know the book restrictions in the prison where you are incarcerated: maximum amount of books they allow to be received at one time? Does the prison accept used books or new only? Paperbacks only?
- List only the subjects or types of books of interest. Books are often donated and change every week. Distributors do their best to send something close to what you ask for. Requests by title or author are often challenging to fulfill.
- Please write clearly — especially your name, ID number, and address. Include all this info on both the envelope and in your letter.

**1. Beehive Books Behind Bars (Serves WA, OR, CA, ID, NV, AZ, UT, MT, WY, CO, NM prisons only)**  
**Weller Book Works**  
**607 Trolley Square**  
**Salt Lake City, UT 84102**

- *BBB matches book requests from prisoners to books that have been donated to them.*

**2. The Prison Library Project c/o The Claremont Forum**  
**915-C W. Foothill Blvd, PMB 128**  
**Claremont, CA 91711**

- *The Prison Library Project mails over 15,000 packages of books each year to inmates as well as boxes of books to prison librarians, educators and chaplains.*

**3. Prisoners Literature Project (PLP) (Serves all of the US except Texas prisons c/o Bound Together Bookstore**  
**1369 Haight Street**  
**San Francisco, CA 94117**

- *Limit requests to once a year; Takes 2-4 months to respond to requests. PLP does not have the following kinds of books: law books and legal guides; romances; horror; Bibles and Christian literature*

**4. Bellingham Books To Prisoners (BBTP)**  
**PO Box 1254**  
**Bellingham, WA 98227**

- *BBTP are partnered with Seattle Books To Prisoners. Last year over 7,000 books were sent to prisoners.*

**5. DC Books to Prisons**  
**PO Box 34190**  
**Washington, DC 20043-4190**

- *Provides free books to prisoners in 35 states and supports prison libraries. You may mail requests to us every five months. You may request titles or authors, but since all our books are donated, prioritized genres or areas of interest are more likely to be filled. We don't send legal books. Please list prison restrictions if known. If required by your prison, please include a pre-approval form. Please do not send requests from more than one inmate per envelope. We do not send to county or city jails, or to prisons in Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington State or Wisconsin. However, we will send to inmates from Washington DC in any federal prison. It can take us up to three months to respond to requests.*

**6. LGBT Books to Prisoners (Serves LGBTQ prisoners in all states except TX)**  
**426 W. Gilman Street**  
**Madison, WI 53703**

- *Sends books and other educational materials to LGBTQ-identified prisoners across the U.S. Each package contains 3-5 books, educational materials, and LGBTQ resources. 25,000 books have been sent to people in prison for each of the last two years.*

**7. NYC Books through Bars (Serves all US states except: AL, FL, LA, MA, MI, c/o Bluestockings Bookstore MS, NC, OH, PA with a priority to NY prisons)**  
**172 Allen Street**  
**New York, NY 10002**

- *They match requests from prisoners to the books they have available.*

**8. Providence Books through Bars**  
**42 Lenox Avenue**  
**Providence, RI 02907-1910**

- *Since the number one requested book is a dictionary, PBB tries to send out as many as they can as well as thesauruses and reference books; provide requests for as many types of books as possible.*

**9. Women's Prison Book Project (Serves all US states except: CT, FL, IL, IN, MA, MI, MS, OH, OR, PA) c/o Boneshaker Books**  
**2002 23rd Ave S**  
**Minneapolis MN 55404**

- *Provides women and transgender persons in prison with free reading materials covering a wide range of topics from law and education (dictionaries, GED, etc.) to fiction, politics, history, and women's health.*

RELIGIOUS RESOURCES

**10. Bible Truth Publishers**  
**59 Industrial Road**  
**Addison, IL 60101**

- *Supplies free Bibles in English and Spanish to prisoners*

**11. Chapel Library**  
**2603 West Wright Street**  
**Pensacola, Florida 32505**

- *Offers free Christian literature including study courses and Bibles. Available in tracts, booklets, paperbacks and audio tapes*

**12. Prison Fellowship**  
**44180 Riverside Parkway,**  
**Lansdowne, VA 20176**

- *Publishes Inside Journal® a quarterly publication of Prison Fellowship that is distributed inside corrections facilities. Written specifically for incarcerated men and women, in both English and Spanish.*

PEN PAL PROGRAMS

**13. Human Rights Pen Pals**  
**1301 Clay Street**  
**P.O. Box 71378**  
**Oakland, CA 94612**

- *Provides educational and supportive correspondence between people in solitary confinement and supporters outside the prison walls.*

**14. Lifelines to Solitary**  
**c/o Solitary Watch**  
**PO Box 11374**  
**Washington, DC 20008**

- *Solitary Watch provides support to people in prisons living in isolation, through its Lifelines to Solitary project. Through personalized letters and quarterly newsletters, they keep in touch with more than 3,000 people in solitary confinement across the country. Write to Solitary Watch to request a pen pal and newsletter.*

**15. Unitarian Universalist Association**  
**CLF Letter Writing Prison Ministry**  
**25 Beacon Street**  
**Boston, MA 02108**

- *Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF), a part of the Unitarian Universalists, provides ministry and correspondence to those who are isolated. The CLF Letter Writing Ministry matches prisoner members with non-incarcerated Unitarian Universalist's for an exchange of friendly letters on topics of mutual interest. All letter writers (prisoners and "free-world") agree to the same guidelines, which emphasize that our program is not intended for romantic, legal-aid or financial/gift interactions. Contact the address above to request a pen pal.*

**16. FFUP (Forum for Understanding Prisons)**  
**29631 Wild Rose Drive**  
**Blue River, WI 53518**

- *Write directly to FFUP Pen Pals to request a pen pal volunteer. Provide some information on your background and the areas of interest for which you would like to correspond.*

**17. National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms**  
**P.O. Box 66301**  
**Washington, DC 20035**

- *Write directly to NCPCF to request a pen pal volunteer.*

MEDITATION RESOURCES

**18. The Human Kindness Foundation / The Prison Ashram Project**  
**PO Box 61619**  
**Durham, NC 27715**

- *Provides free books mostly written by one of its founders, Bo Lozoff, offering spiritual guidance and support. The most well-known of these books are: We're All Doing Time and Deep and Simple. Offers a free newsletter sent three times a year called "A Little Good News" providing spiritual support for the incarcerated.*

**19. Prison Mindfulness Institute**  
**11 S. Angell St. #303**  
**Providence, RI 02906**

- *Organizes a pen pal program between prisoners and meditation volunteer.*

**20. Prison Mindfulness Institute and Prison Dharma Network**  
**11 S. Angell St. #303**  
**Providence, RI 02906**

- *PMI provides books and resources on Mindfulness and Meditation through their "Books Behind Bars" program. PDN offers a support network in the practice of contemplative disciplines, with an emphasis on sitting meditation practice. Offers the principles and practices of Buddhist teachings.*

**21. Buddhist Peace Fellowship**  
**PO Box 3470**  
**Berkeley, CA 94703**

- *BPF's programs, publications, and practice groups link Buddhist teachings of wisdom and compassion with progressive social change. Offers free meditation information and a newsletter.*

**22. Siddha Yoga Meditation Prison Project**  
**P.O.Box 99140**  
**Emeryville, CA 94622**

- *Provides the Siddha Yoga Home Study Course to inmates upon request. Lessons are received monthly and are available in Spanish translation. A free newsletter, study course and resource guide are also provided.*

**23. Mindfulness Peace Project | Solitary Confinement**  
**6800 N. 79th St, Ste. 200**  
**Niwot, CO 80503**

- *You might pass this on to a chaplain or psychologist:*

- *A mindfulness program broadcasted into isolation units (in the CO DOC). Provides channels for education and spiritual instruction as well.*

SOLITARY TOP LEVEL

**24. Liberation Prison Project**  
**PO Box 33036**  
**Raleigh, NC 27636**

- *Offers spiritual advice and teachings through letters, books and various materials to people in prison interested in exploring, studying and practicing Buddhism.*

**25. Ratna Prison Initiative**  
**1507 Pine St.**  
**Boulder, Co 80302**

- *Provides mindfulness meditation instruction through correspondence relationships. Provides free books on Buddhism to inmates.*

**26. Prison Contemplative Fellowship**  
**Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.**  
**10 Park Place, 2nd Floor, Suite B**  
**Butler, New Jersey 07405**

- *Teaches Centering Prayer, a receptive method of silent prayer. It is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Programs offer varying degrees of instruction, guided practice and study. Christian orientation, however can be used by anyone.*

Correspondence self-help guide by mail

NA Behind the Walls  
PO Box 1605  
San Diego, CA 92176

Sponsorship Behind the Walls  
1935 South Myrtle Ave  
Monrovia, CA 91016

Criminon  
PO Box 9091  
Glendale, CA 91226  
Paths include Road to Happiness, Lifeskills, Overcoming Addiction

Prison Letters 4 Our Struggling Youth  
603 B East University Drive, #219  
Carson, CA 90746

Fair Chance Project (Mentorship Program)  
9103 SO Western Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

Getting Out by Going In (GOGI)  
PO Box 88969  
Los Angeles, California, USA 90009