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Reality of incarcerated pay increases leads to job cuts and financial losses

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Across the state of California, a long-awaited pay increase for incarcerated workers took effect April 16. Although first seen as a step in the right direction, for 25% of San Quentin's workers the pay increase ultimately amounted to an overall pay decrease, or release from their job assignment.

"I can barely buy a case of soups. It is cosmetics and hygiene or feed myself," resident porter Mike Barker said.

At San Quentin, around 80 residents received an hourly wage reduction due to errors previously implemented to their pay scales, according to San Quentin's assignments office. The change eliminated about 100 jobs of the prison's workforce of over 800. It also eliminated all unpaid job assignments, which according to SQ Assignments Lieutenant D. Schlosser, had affected less than 1% of workers in San Quentin.

Some incarcerated workers did see a wage increase of up to 50%, but many residents reported disappointment over a 20% reduction in their hourly wages.

Dismay over the issue echoed at other facilities. Avenal resident and porter Mark Tolson wrote to express his concern that increases in pay for some would draw on the state's minimal resources, which might lead to a pay decrease for others.

"Not only did we receive a pay



Photo by Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Resident laborers, welding in San Quentin's Maintenance Vocational Building

cut and reduced hours, but because of job cuts, the remaining porters have to work harder," Tolson said.

According to the CDCR, the changes to the pay rates of incarcerated individuals resulted from an amendment to Section 3041.2—a section of Title 15, the set of regulations and policies that govern California prisons. The October 2023 statement said that the pay increase would apply across all

levels of inmate jobs statewide. The CDCR's initial statement of reasons for the change indicated the raised pay would increase restitution payments for victims of crime and allow incarcerated workers to save more.

"I am recognized as a professional. I have worked hard to establish trust with my supervisors," resident Ronnie Mendez said. "I value good work ethics and I take

pride in my performance." Mendez has worked at San Quentin Plant Operations since 2006 and has earned a \$1/hour hourly wage since 2018. He said his previous work experience provided him with engineering and fabricating skills transferable to his current position. The changes to the

See WAGES on pg 4

SQNews wins First Place Award Prison Publication of the Year



The Stillwater Awards for excellence in prison journalism

By Bostyon Johnson
Managing Editor

San Quentin News won first place for Prison Publication of the Year in the 2023 Stillwater Awards. The Prison Journalism Project co-sponsored the awards with the Society of Professional Journalists.

Of the eight categories, San Quentin News received first place as a "regularly distributed journalistic print publication inside, in circulation for two years or more," said the category description in the award announcement.

"Winning awards is a testament

See AWARD on pg 4



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Jason Lehman and resident re-enact a police officer-pedestrian stop gone awry

Retired police sergeant continues service by going inside

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

Charismatic. Straightforward. Energizing. Such descriptions of Jason Lehman, a former Long Beach police sergeant, came from the attendees of an afternoon training session conducted at a San Quentin chapel April 23. Lehman's mission at San Quentin: to reduce acts of

violence between police and incarcerated persons.

Lehman trained correctional officers in the morning and then trained residents in the afternoon. Both groups received exactly the same training. Over 120 staff members attended the morning session, said Warden Chance Andes. Over 70 residents showed up in the afternoon and in the back row sat Warden Andes,

listening attentively for a second time. "It's quite an honor to share the same message of peace with both incarcerated people and with correctional staff," said Lehman.

Lehman said he directed the organization WYSM, which he acronymically pronounced as "wis-m" — an elision for "wisdom"

See TAG on pg 5

Self-improvement groups show what The 'Q' has to offer

By Richard Fernandez
Staff Writer and David Ditto
Associate Editor

Peer mentors held a prison-wide event to kick-start a program giving new arrivals to San Quentin a higher level of support for achieving rehabilitative success.

The "Orientation Kick-Off" featured incarcerated facilitators, tutors,

graduates, and spiritual leaders from approximately 80 self-improvement groups hosting tables, where they greeted hundreds of residents who were eager to learn about what The Q has to offer.

"The California Model has given us greater opportunities to rehabilitate ourselves and mentor the new guys just beginning their journeys,"

See KICKOFF on pg 5



Photo by Vincent Turner // ForwardThis

Warden Chance Andes signs up for the 500 Mile Walk event

CPR CLASS
RESIDENTS LEARN LIFE SAVING SKILLS
SEE PAGE 3

CMC: A DAY OF ATONEMENT
RESIDENTS DONATE TO CRIME VICTIMS
SEE PAGE 9

JUNETEENTH
STAFF AND RESIDENTS CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH
SEE PAGES 12-13

ENPA
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
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San Quentin News reports on rehabilitative efforts to advance social justice and to improve public safety.

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PROFILE

In memoriam - Jeffrey Douglas



Courtesy of SQ Library

Right: J. Douglas enjoying a day in the community he cares so much about



SQNews Archives

Left: J. Douglas enjoys another day in the San Quentin Library with the now Senior Librarian Gabriel Loiederman

San Quentin staff and residents shared fond memories

**By Jordan Junious
Journalism Guild Writer**

The San Quentin Rehabilitation Center has lost a beloved and longtime member of the community.

Douglas Jeffrey, 30-year veteran librarian at SQ, passed away April 7 at the age of 82. He served as the senior librarian until his retirement in 2020.

His commitment to the people of San Quentin will forever leave an impression in the hearts and minds of those who knew him.

“He was literally the coolest boss that I had ever had,” SQ resident and former library clerk George “Mesro” Coles-El said. “He was easy to talk to and very well-read.”

Many SQ residents and staff expressed appreciation for Jeffrey’s passion for helping others and the impact that his dedication had on the SQ community.

“He had a really amazing

rapport with the incarcerated. He always maintained that as his primary focus,” Gabriel Loiederman, current SQ senior librarian, said.

Jeffrey’s peers knew him as a man of few words; the results of his work ethic and commitment are still evident today at The Q.

“He wasn’t going to tell you what you wanted to hear, he was going to tell you what was real,” resident and library clerk Larry Ryzak said.

Jeffrey was born on February 11, 1942, in Bakersfield, Calif. He served in the U.S. army for three years in the early 1960s and completed his Master’s Degree in library science at the University of Southern California. He began working for the California Department of Corrections in 1985 at the California Correctional Institute in Tehachapi.

Three years later he began his tenure at San Quentin,

where he spent the rest of his career.

Jeffrey’s influence stretched through the entire community of Marin, where he was a well-known patron of local coffee shops, restaurants, and the Civic Center Library, said several who knew him outside of The Q.

Many recalled his eccentric sense of style and his quiet presence that could fill a room.

Marin local and SQ staffer David Yount recalled how he befriended Jeffrey at a local coffee shop, connecting with him over a mutual love of classic hats.

“We found out that we actually worked at the same place for over 16 years and had never spoken to each other,” Yount said.

In addition to Jeffrey’s work with the SQ general population, he also dedicated several years in service of the condemned population. He worked in the SHU library

where he was able to foster relationships with some of the most secluded prisoners in the state.

“He was really into helping them [death-row inmates] with their cases,” said SQ Notary Public Mr. Cornell. “He would come back to the library and talk about how he could help them.”

Jeffrey created a safe and educational space for SQ residents to convene and socialize.

“His vision for the library was to cultivate an escape. Where the rules weren’t just in your face,” Loiederman said. “And since he left, I’ve tried wholeheartedly to adopt that attitude.”

San Quentin not only lost an employee, but a friend, a confidant, and a steward of equal justice.

“He lives forever in that library and will be missed,” Coles-El added. “Even when he had to put his foot down, it was all for the good of the library.”

A veteran’s journey from prison to redemption

**By Lawrence Randall
Journalism Guild Writer**

Sid Anderson, a formerly incarcerated individual, journeyed from prison to redemption by overcoming obstacles and finding comfort in serving others.

While incarcerated he said he could not get away from doing God’s work. Upon release he said he established churches, the leadership within congregations, and strengthened the faith within the communities he resided in.

“God trained me in spiritual combat while being of service to my fellow man,” Anderson said.

He said he believed he is an example of what God’s grace and mercy looks like. Anderson said once he re-aligned himself with God’s destiny for him, his motivation for building and pasturing churches changed.

“It’s no longer a case of motivation for me; sometimes it just comes down to life and death,” Anderson said.

Anderson was born in Fontana, California where he grew up in a two-parent home with seven siblings — six-boys, and one-girl. He said growing up in a God fearing family meant going to church was a daily routine.

After graduating high school at the age 18, he joined the United States Marine Corps, where he was stationed to camp Lejune in North Carolina.



Courtesy of Sid Anderson

Sid Anderson in his United States Marine Corps uniform

Unlike his father, Anderson’s challenge in leading others to the Lord occurred in the midst of an active war zone.

While serving in ‘Desert Storm’ he started his first church congregation. This path of stewardship was similar to his fathers, who pastured while Anderson was growing up.

He said after his first sermon in Samolia every person in attendance accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior that day. He said he was able to accomplish this feat in a room full of Samolians while standing on top of a cot. “Just

like in the movie Black Hawk Down.”

He said there were distractions which became second nature, and he said before he knew it, he was leading a double life.

“Some people tell me they did not have a mom or dad in the home, (and) that’s why they failed in life,” Anderson said. “I had both parents and I still fell.” Anderson said

Anderson said he found himself falling away from God’s mission and in 2011 he committed a felony offense, which placed him in the back seat of a police car for the first time. While, sitting in the car

he reflected on a Bible scripture to lift his spirits, “God will not be mocked.”

Anderson said his fall came when he stopped listening to the voice of God. He said it was when he listened to his own voice instead of God’s, those distractions such as abusing money, and living a life of infidelity took over.

Over the next 9 years, Anderson was housed in California Rehabilitation Center in Norco, CA. He said this time behind the walls reignited his fight to minister to God’s people and build churches.

Rather than giving up and be, defeated Anderson said he understood that adversity was going to come.

He said he understood some of the skepticism and negativity that could come directly from people in the church. The gossip and backbiting about his failures as a man of “The cloth,” were going to be difficult, but Anderson said while people can forgive they will never forget.

“I still can overcome and not give up on what I love,” Anderson told himself. “The will power to not allow failure to have the last word,” is simi-isidis similar to the teachings of his parents.

He said something profound was in his spirit before he was released in 2013.

“I told the devil that he thought he would bury me, but he did not realize I was a seed,” said Anderson.

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Your Voice Matters!

The San Quentin News strives to include our readers' voices in every issue. We invite prison residents, staff, and volunteers to submit your original articles, letters to the editor, and art for potential publication. Submissions should be clear, concise (350 words or less), true, and of interest to our incarcerated community.

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CPR training program for SQ general population

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
 Staff Writer

Three-and-a-half million deaths by heart attack happen every year and only four of ten bystanders would have known how to prevent them with hands-on CPR.

To reduce deaths of incarcerated persons, REVIVE sponsored the second hands-on CPR training program for a general population facility in California. During the state-certified training event, REVIVE, a peer-to-peer Instantaneous Life Saving Skills Group, introduced its new partnership with Marin Medical Reserve Corps and Marin County Public Health.

"We have extended the California Model beyond the relationship of the incarcerated and staff. We have extended it to our neighborhoods by reaching out to professional organizations who share in the assistance of making us more viable for society as we go home," said resident Gerald Welsh, the founder of REVIVE.

Prior to REVIVE's first training event on June 4, training in CPR and other life-saving skills went exclusively to incarcerated firefighters and to the Scared Straight program.

The three-hour class, titled "REVIVE: Saving Lives One Life at a Time," had 100 residents visit four stations. The first station introduced them to CPR. The second station instructed on the use of an Automated External Defibrillator, an electrical device used to restore normal heartbeat. Station Three engaged in Stop-the-Bleed training that taught emergency blood-loss prevention. The fourth station instructed in Narcan training, a procedure used to reverse opioid overdoses. Training at each station lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Welsh and Anne C., Senior Program Coordinator for Marin Medical Reserve Corps, opened up the event that was taught by dedicated volunteers of the Marin Medical Reserve Corps and Marin County Public Health.

Lee Ann P., an epidemiologist for Marin County Public Health, acted as evaluator of the county's first training in a carceral setting. "I love it, seeing everyone actively participating. It says a lot that people came here today to learn skills that allow them to help in their community — after, all they aren't here learning skills to help themselves in a medical emergency, they're here to learn skills to help those around them," said Lee Ann P.

Other volunteers reminded residents that non-medical



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Residents are taught how to appropriately apply a tourniquet

attendees who gain the skills should help until they are given direction by prison staff or until medical professionals arrive on.

Michaela George, Ph.D., who also has an M.P.H. — a master's degree in public health — has assisted at Marin Health and Human Services.

Dr. George said she felt "amazed to work with incarcerated resident Welsh, [who] shows enthusiasm while working, displaying a compassion for community that empowers everyone to accomplish this first training."

Mentors of the program told participants that having knowledge lends great strength and having life-saving skills affords insight that might allow attendees to act on instinct instead of having to think twice if noticing someone in distress.

Christian L., an EMT for Marin County shared his thoughts. "I hope other institutions could get the opportunity to have this program. I know that level four is like warfare, so they can apply these life-saving methods," said Christian L.

Resident Welsh suffered traumatic experiences that prompted him to design the program once he discovered his passion to save lives at SQRC. Thirty days later, Welsh discovered a method to allow residents to provide care for residents or downed staff. He called it Instantaneous Care.

After initial research, he formulated his Inside Project Team and pitched the idea to Lt. Gardea, San Quentin's former Community Resources Manager, who soon approved it and assisted with finding a staff sponsor.

On Dec. 5, 2023, Welsh reached out to 15 organizations by letter, including the Marin County Fire Department, who forwarded Welsh's pitch to the Marin



SQ deaf community stepping up to show they care

County Health Department.

Anne C., responded within 48 hours of receipt of the letter.

Anne shared MCPH and MMRC's pride in collaborating with SQRC to provide support for this training program. Through contributions in program design, evaluation, and the provision of trainers and equipment, MCPH is assisting SQRC residents to equip them with essential skills for managing medical emergencies when they happen.

The program took place in Chapel B, set for two daily sessions of 50 students each.

The success of the life-saving skills class has allowed Welsh to receive preliminary financial commitment from Adriana Jackson, district director for Senator Nancy Skinner. "She was on board from day one and will fund the graduation," Welsh said.

Welsh said the organization hoped to collaborate with the state and various philanthropic entities to have 300 residents state-certified every six months.

The revised program would ensure certification in Instantaneous Care and the new partnership would provide a more intensive

two-hour state-certified program.

REVIVE's sponsor is SQRC Senior Librarian Gabriel Loiederman and the Life-saving Skills program

"I got additional support from several staff including CO A. Brooks, Vocational Painting instructor Mr. Sutton, Dr. Pachynski, Dr. Anderson and Dr. Barendson of Mental Health, and Coach K. Bhatt. They were all supporters of everything I needed, e-mails addresses, communication, etc. Without their help, my dream would not have come true," Welsh said.

—Marcus Casillas contributed to this story

OUTSIDE RESOURCE TEAM

Anna C.
 Christian L.
 Lee Ann P.
 Dr. Pachynski
 Michaela George, Ph.D., M.P.H.

INSIDE REVIVE TEAM

Gerald Welsh
 Kevin Schrubbs
 Robert Gomez
 Lee Jasparr
 Harold Meeks
 Dewayne Scott



Revive Staff demonstrates for residents where to locate the sternum on the dummy



Revive Staff teaches residents how to properly apply a pressure on wound and dress a tourniquet

WAGES

Continued from page 1

CDCR's wage structure have cut his pay to \$0.80/hour.

His previous wage afforded him the opportunity to pay his restitution without any outside support.

"It is disheartening that someone who does not know what experience and quality of work I offer is determining how much I earn," Mendez said.

Resident Michael Woods said he was told he was getting an increase in pay and then was terminated. "I felt betrayed. I go to parole board in July and I did not receive a chrono stating why I was cut lose."

Lt. Schlosser said a memorandum provided the week of the implemented change served as justification for the loss of pay, per CDCR Title 15.

Woods has been incarcerated over 40 years and said the job kept him occupied. He said he worked as hard as he could and never had a problem with the free or correctional staff. "I have to go outside three or four times a day to keep my mind positive. It is not good being cooped up in the cell," Woods said.

"Pay increases shall not be automatic or based on the inmate's longevity in an assignment. Increases or reductions in pay rate shall be based on available funding, the work/training supervisor's recommendation, and the inmate's work/training performance reports, subject to review and approval of the inmate assignment authority," according to the amended section. [Eds. note: above italics indicate amended changes in the language.]

While wages for some incarcerated workers rose, the state's budget for its incarcerated workforce did not. The amended section added that pay increases are based on available funding.



SQNews Archives

Dining room line servers preparing dinner trays for residents

This requirement would ensure that work assignments would not be established or pay would not increase above the available funding and to avoid a deficit in the state budget.

"We [the assignment office] were fortunate we had a year to plan to apply changes and to gather input from area supervisors, which resulted in a smooth roll-out," Lt. Schlosser said.

Lt. Schlosser acknowledged that these changes adversely impacted some individuals due to previous errors to pay scale implementation. He said the workforce did require reduction, which eliminated more than 100 positions. Lt. Schlosser said he based eliminations on department supervisors' recommendations.

Since implementing these changes, Lt. Schlosser said new positions within San Quentin have been created and filled including the addition of positions in East Block and Carson.

Some residents said they appreciated having a job regardless of pay because it gave them purpose and boosted their morale. Many said they saw work as a step toward earning a paid position in future.

Resident porter Jim

Mattos said he enjoys making the housing unit a better place to live. "Being and feeling useful is great. I feel respected and valued." He said when he heard of the pay increase he was looking forward to paying down his restitution faster.

In response to residents concerns Lt. Schlosser and the assignment office met with residents individually on the Lower Yard for more than five hours to inform and answer questions.

"Mrs. Latrell was receptive to my situation and she took the time to listen to my concern," resident Gordon Nelson said of the assignment office technician.

Resident Ronald Holt, a maintenance mechanic for H-Unit, said San Quentin Plant Operations workers deserved every penny of that dollar they had previously earned.

Holt said he is certified through California's Department of Industrial Relations, which he said required over 4,000 hours of training that included two years of hands-on instruction.

"Our expertise and work go beyond journeymen," Holt said. He asked, "By cutting our pay, who is then determining our skill level and value of work performance?"

Many residents expressed concern that the reduced hours did not increase the flexibility to attend self-help programs.

"Contrary to popular belief more hours to get programming is not necessary," resident Trevor Lawson said. "I think it is some what of a cop-out to say the problem is time management to positive program."

Lawson said having a full-time position in prison will prepare incarcerated individuals for successful work outside prison. "It is on the incarcerated individual to take an active role in maintaining work-life balance," Lawson said.

Some residents worried that these changes would only increase the already long wait time to enroll in many of San Quentin's rehabilitative programs. Some speculated that the change would present even greater challenges for residents of other facilities, where there are fewer programs.

Avenal resident Mark Tolson said that while the pay increases seemed unfair, he is thankful to have a job.

"I take a lot of pride in my work and would do it regardless of pay, or lack of, simply because it needs to be done," Tolson said.



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

MVB resident worker sanding down the basketball court's surface



Photo Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Resident working to keep the Q garden looking beautiful



Photo by: Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Kha Sok wiring a housing lighting unit for the cells

AWARD

Continued from page 1

of the hard work of our staff and the support of our readers" said Marcus Henderson, *San Quentin News* editor-in-chief. "Our focus is always about the people we serve — to give them the news that matter to them and be a resource for what is possible to change their lives. We thank all our advisers, administration, and social justice organizations for being a part of the *San Quentin News*."

The announcement warned *San Quentin News* to stay vigilant. Only one vote separated the paper from the runner-up, the *Mule Creek Post*. The *Endeavor* came in third place.

"The *San Quentin News* is the *New York Times* of prison newspapers. The quality is consistent, the quantity is impressive, and it's as close to a professional newspaper as the judges saw — from writing to reporting to design to photography," the judges wrote.

The eight judges consisted of four professional journalists, two journalism professors, one prison research graduate student, and a civil rights attorney. Stillwater awards executive director Michael Anguille attended each Zoom session, but did not vote. The voting took place on Zoom.

"All too often, incarcerated citizens in this country are cast away and stripped of their voices. The Stillwater Awards



Photo by J. Salvador // SQTV

The award winning San Quentin News Staff

will change that," Anguille said. "In highlighting the contributions of the incarcerated population to the world of journalism, we will ensure that no voice is left behind or silenced — least of all, the many bright men and women behind bars."

San Quentin News produces a monthly newspaper designed and written by incarcerated persons to share their voices with the public. The paper circulates 35,000 copies, almost all to prison facilities in the state.

Jan Perry, SQNews outside advisor, has been coming into the newsroom editing stories of the staff since 2018.

"I'm thrilled of course. The men here work very hard under very difficult circumstances and still manage to put out an award winning newspaper," she said. "The fact that prison journalism is



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Certificate won by San Quentin

having a light shown on it is long overdue."

Yukari Kane, a former *San Quentin News* advisor, noted that a resurgence of prison journalism has begun, said the Stillwater announcement

page. Kane founded the Prison Journalism Project.

"More prison journalists are sticking their necks out every day, working in severely restricted environments to shed light in some

by the responsibility to do what is right."

Other award winners were former *San Quentin News* editor-in-chief Steve Brooks who won second place in the Prison Journalist of the Year category for "packing his stories with facts and quotes without bogging down the entire thing," said the report.

Kevin D. Sawyer, *San Quentin News*' former associate editor, now a freelancer, won second place in the Best News category for "San Quentin is Decaying. California has no clear plan to fix it," an article co-published by Prison Journalism Project and CalMatters.

"I'm really pleased and I am proud of the work that the paper has done, especially by both writers Kevin Sawyer and Steve Brooks," said Professor William Drummond, a long-time advisor of *San Quentin News* and a lecturer at UC-Berkeley.

Sawyer's work was a shorter entry that tightly laid out its premise. "No wasted words, no unanswered questions. It's just as long as it needs to be," said the commentary.

SQNews's mission advances social justice and restores communities by reporting on the rehabilitative efforts in California facilities. The publication informs policy makers, legislators, and community leaders as they make decisions on criminal justice system. *San Quentin News* serves to inspire incarcerated persons with stories of opportunity, hope, and accountability.

of the least accessible places in this country," Kane said. "Writers behind bars not only work with us but also publish articles in prison and general publications, personal blogs, and newsletters for both inside and outside audiences. We're thrilled to celebrate their best work."

Staffer Jerry Gearin is the chairperson of the English Journalism Guild, which is SQNews' farm team for up and coming journalists, he highlighted the importance of the recognition and what it represents for the organization.

"We are able to inform the uninformed including the misinformed. The recognition of staff shows change, the incarcerated individuals can come together, and produce a productive publication," said Gearin. "It also gives me a sense of belonging followed

TAG

Continued from page 1

— but which stood for “Why’d You Stop Me?” The phrase referred to the frequent inquiry asked of peace officers during traffic stops. Lehman said the question addressed the fairness of such a stop: persons who asked it typically considered themselves unfairly singled out.

“Have you encountered a C.O. who stopped you and searched you?” Lehman asked, and every hand went up. Lehman then engaged a volunteer resident in a role reversal scenario that demonstrated the necessity for a routine stop.

The stop’s probable cause focused on baggy clothing, which Lehman said many persons would consider an unfair reason for a stop. The San Quentin resident played the officer and Lehman played a stopped pedestrian.

At first, the simulated stop went well. Lehman portrayed the pedestrian as rational and in compliance with the officer’s requests. Suddenly, the scenario took a turn for the worse. The pedestrian pulled a gun from his baggy clothing and aimed it at the officer.

The gun, a non-firing model made of red plastic, “is the same size as my head,” said Lehman, who had concealed the large weapon inside his baggy clothing. Lehman’s role reversal proved the validity of the stop: Many residents no longer considered baggy clothing as an unfair reason for the stop.

Fairness featured as the key philosophy of Lehman’s message. He conceptualized fairness as the surface of a table with four legs named voice, neutrality, respect, and trust. The legs made the table functional, gave the table solidity, and most importantly, made it stand up, said Lehman.

Lehman explained voice as a concept that “makes you valued.” Neutrality to Lehman meant “treat everyone in the way you want them to treat you.” To Lehman, respect



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

meant an earned quality he equated to trust; he called “disrespect” an emotion applied to someone “who has lost your trust” but also “an emotion you can remove.” Trust, Lehman’s fourth table leg, “comes from community, from keeping your word, from appreciation.” He finished his explanation with a recommendation to “have a bias toward positivity.”

“Let us keep these four legs intact,” said Lehman, leaving residents with the advice to “build relationships before you need them.”

At that point, Lehman uttered a sentence that many residents regarded as their primary takeaway. “If they [the custody staff] all left, no one here [meaning the residents] would make it.”

In context, Lehman’s message said that residents needed the custody staff for basic preservation of peace and order at San Quentin, much in the same way that society needed police for

basic preservation of peace and order in towns and cities.

Warden Andes said, “I am all about strategic messaging. We had good conversations with the custody staff this morning. If I can stand up here and talk about prison reform, then we are breaking down barriers.”w

“The bottom line is; we care about people.”

—Warden Chance Andes

Warden Andes acknowledged that progress would take time: “For the Super Bowl event, seven staff members showed up. Today, we had over a hundred.”

“The bottom line is: we care about people,” said Warden Andes.

Lehman concluded his training with the words, “Own the change; take the reins.”



Above: Website information on WYSM - T.A.G.

Left: J. Lehman introduces the audience to Why'D You Stop Me (WYSM) concept

Below: Warden Chance Andes addresses everyone in attendance



KICKOFF

Continued from page 1

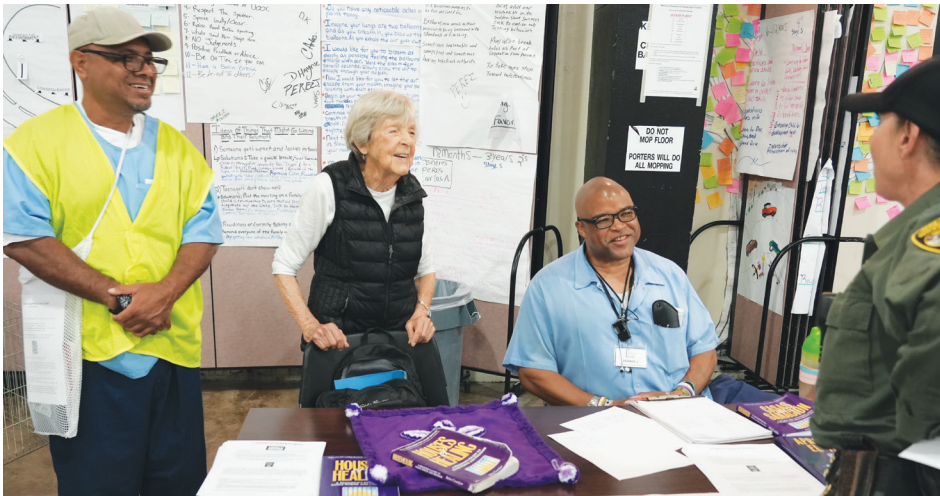
said Bruce Fowler, an incarcerated facilitator who has been with California Reentry Institute since 2016. “We are here to help our community learn everything we need to know to be successful in prison and in life.”

Fowler, other mentors, and CRI founder and Executive Director Collette Carroll hosted their group’s table, one of some 50 tables set up in the gymnasium with aisles full of people asking questions and signing up for the educational, vocational, and self-help groups.

Carroll said 36 people had filled out enrollment slips for CRI during the five-hour event. She began her 25th year volunteering inside SQ in May, the month the Kick-Off was held.

The event was created by The People In Blue, a group of San Quentin residents helping facilitate implementation of the California Model. “We are trying to show what is possible when we all work together,” said their invitation to the Kick-Off.

“If we can change the system from the bottom up as the administration changes from the top down, the change will be faster...and cheaper,” said TPIB’s introduction to the event. “They can now truly view residents as helping to improve the system and not just as burdens.”



House of Healing group sponsor K. Jackson and group members engages with an officer

The event enjoyed substantial support from prison administrators. Public Information Officer Lt. Berry, Community Resources Manager Marco Barragan, and Community Resources Office staffer Angelina Torres made their rounds, answering questions, engaging mentors, and helping people sign up for groups. The SQ Resource Team hosted giant-screen video games for the community in their office in the gym.

“I even saw Warden Andes fill out a form to join one of the groups,” said TPIB member Robert Tyler.

Groups also hosted tables in the chapels, in the education area, and on the yard.

Linda Rice, a harpist and volunteer with SQ’s Catholic services for more than 30 years, was preparing the class she instructs on humility.

Spiritual mentors from Graced Out Ministries offered prayer slips, Kairos shared workshop information and schedules, and Prison Fellowship signed up 70 people for the next cycle, according to outside facilitator Sue Brown.

Muslim, Native American, and Rastafarian spiritual groups also hosted tables in the chapel area. Dental and mental health services staff provided information in the education area.

In total, throughout the event, more than 1,000 enrollment slips were filled out and turned in to the CRO for addition onto the waiting lists and eventually, hopefully, into the programs. Many groups have a wait list of a year or more.

This event kicked off implementation of a more structured orientation program for people entering San Quentin who are

beginning their incarceration or transferring from other prisons, according to Tyler. The goal is to guide the new arrivals toward positive life choices.

Too many new arrivals immediately fall into old patterns of drug or alcohol use, gang culture, and other criminality, according to Tyler. Orientation would show them they have opportunities for a fresh start at SQ.

“Youngsters want to fit in,” said Tyler. “We want to show them that there is a lot of support for them becoming part of something positive. Even in prison, we have a choice.”

TPIB proposes facilitating an orientation program where established incarcerated mentors would meet with people as soon as they get off the bus in SQ. The intervention could last from five minutes to days.



Residents Sergei Conchar, David Ditto, and ??? of project REACH

Similar orientation is standard at many CDCR prisons.

Each newcomer would choose a volunteer peer mentor, who would share their personal prison journey and help them develop a rehabilitation and reentry plan—a roadmap to set and achieve productive goals during their imprisonment.

Providing a backpack and supplies to every resident to support their educational and rehabilitative goals is also planned in association with the event. Distribution is being coordinated with the SQ Resource Team, according to TPIB President Arthur Jackson.

Jackson thanked SQ Buddhist program volunteer Jeff Marcos for his generous contribution and also thanked the African American Community Healing director,

former SQ resident Darnell Moe Washington, for facilitating the donation.

TPIB designed the Kick-Off to facilitate Peer Mentorship, one of the four pillars of CDCR’s California Model presented by the Advisory Council’s report to the Governor in January. The report describes the four pillars as “the foundation for a prison system that better serves public safety by returning people to their communities with the tools needed to succeed and live a life without crime.”

The next pillar that TPIB plans to help implement is Dynamic Security, which promotes positive professional relationships between staff and incarcerated people. The final two pillars are Dynamic Security and Become a Trauma-Informed Organization.

What is the big deal about the Earned Living Units in South Block

By T.J. Marshall
Journalism Guild Writer

The Earned Living Units at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center have a process that promotes healthy living conditions, positive community, and self-help.

The two honor living units, Alpine and Donner, are located in the prison's South Block. Donner is the only single-cell living unit, with a capacity of 238 residents. Alpine is double occupancy, and has a cap on its housing population.

The next single-cell living unit will be East Block and/or Carson, according to Lt. Haub.

Patrick Kitlas has served over 20 years on a life term, and eventually he was paroled from SQ's Alpine living unit.

"I was lucky enough to live by myself and it was the most advantageous aspect of being in the ELU," said Kitlas. "It allowed me to concentrate, pray, meditate, and focus on what I needed to do in preparing for my parole board hearing. Living alone had a huge effect on my mental health by lowering my anxiety. I was lucky to do the last year of my time in one of the ELUs."

Since April 2023, approximately 14 lifers from Alpine were found suitable and have paroled, according to Correctional Officer Stribling.

Less than 10% of all residents in SQRC have the opportunity to live in the designated single cells in Donner Section.



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

A view into a Donner resident's cell.

Correctional Lt. B. Haub said the current residents in Alpine and Donner units would have first options to move to East Block and/or Carson once they open.

Haub has emerged as one of the chief proponents in promoting and helping to move forward with the California Model.

He has helped to empower residents facilitate self-help groups, which have been a huge success.

There are currently more than 40 peer mentorship self-help groups and as many facilitators in both Donner and Alpine sections. The honor units also hold classes in parole board planning and re-entry plans for a successful transition.

These groups run seven days a week. In the past year, the ELUs have been a role model for change in prison culture at San Quentin.

The non-violent

environments have promoted a community with a focus on rehabilitation and self-improvement.

An SQ resident expounds on his living experience in a healthy and safe community.

"I first moved into Alpine when it opened. That was nice because there was no violence in there but I had a cellie. After having been on the waiting list for a year, I was asked to move to Donner," said J. Uhler.

He adds that living alone helps him get a good night's sleep without someone moving about within the cell. The privacy has been wonderful for his mental health and peace of mind.

According to Lt. Haub, in order to move to any ELU there is a vetting process of job assignment or self-help attendance. Applicants must be free from any rule violations reports which includes 128s and 115s for 12 months.

In addition, residents must have been at San Quentin for three to six months.

To be considered for residency, a person must send CDCR Form 22 to South Block Correctional Officers Stribling or Wilson. Residents who do not meet all qualifications will find their request delayed until they meet the criteria, according to Officer Stribling.

All people entering an ELU must sign an "Earned Living Unit Agreement," which involves 10 basic guidelines residents must follow. The guidelines are common-sense directives, such as "no fighting."

Alpine has established a section for hearing-impaired residents on the second tier. A Video Relay Services kiosk allows them to communicate with their families.

Color-coded light fixtures helps staff to alert and communicate with the hearing impaired residents. Also in Alpine, there is an electronic display showing program status.

The deaf community has excelled in programs, school, and is currently facilitating American Sign language groups, becoming a contributing and valued part of rehabilitation.

"The communication between the staff and the residents has improved," said Correctional Officer K. Dotts about working in the ELU. "There is little to no violence.... Enforcing the rules has become easier and we are beginning to meet each other on the same level."



Elevated view from the second tier of Donner Unit.



Front facing view of the artworks on the wall of Donner Unit.

Residents of San Quentin send books to connect with loved ones

By Arsenio P. Leyva
Staff Writer

San Quentin residents helped to raise children's literacy rates by sending out books.

At the Kids' Summer Reading Book Fair in May, hundreds of San Quentin Rehabilitation Center residents chose free books to send to their loved ones.

The genres of donated books available included

graphic novels, picture books, BIPOC (bi-racial indigenous people of color) books, Spanish language books, and science and educational activity books, which were the most popular. The event aimed to supply titles that would appeal to young readers of the three age groups of 4-15.

Customers of Bay Area bookstores Copperfield's and Book Passage donated the books to the non-profit

organization Friends of San Quentin Library, prompted by signs in the stores. The 1,100 donated books surpassed the previous book fair that had approximately 900 books sent out by San Quentin residents.

At the event, library clerks handed out instruction sheets to each resident that provided a step-by-step process for sending their selections to their loved ones. The residents also filled out survey questionnaires about their

experiences and suggestions for future book fairs.

San Quentin librarian Charlotte Sanders, who helped organize the event, said that San Quentin's refocus toward rehabilitation has helped make events like this possible. "We have seen new changes, and a new perspective from the officers that's more supportive," she said. "They see the library as something that is beneficial for the residents."

Four other volunteer librarians assisted the residents in choosing and locating the right books. "Reading is an educational and healthy outlet for fathers and their children," said volunteer Francesca Bell.

Natalie Atwright, a librarian at the San Francisco Public Library, said she saw volunteering at San Quentin as an extension of her work there, since "at the library, I do re-entry work with former prisoners."

Resident Bobby Armendariz said he felt blessed to have the opportunity to share books with his family after being incarcerated for 21 years. "This opportunity helps them feel that they aren't forgotten about," he said. "Grampa still loves them. The connection of picking out a personalized book for them is amazing."

—Justin Wharton
Journalism Guild Writer
Contributed to this story



SQ residents pick out books for their family and friends



An array of children's books for residents to select from

Photos by J. Salvatore // SQTV



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Dignitaries, veterans and residents stand at attention as the San Quentin Color Guard presents the flags.

Armed Service banquet recognizes SQ resident Veterans and dignitaries

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Centerpieces of paper-constructs of military service vehicles decorated banquet tables. Video montages highlighted incarcerated veterans. An empty table represented veterans who lost their lives while incarcerated.

A week before Memorial Day, for the first time in almost five years, an Armed Services banquet took place at San Quentin's Garden Chapel.

"This is a unique fellowship. We are quiet, yet we are loud. We are humble, yet we are proud. Call to serve is embedded in us and still alive today," resident emcee and Veterans' Group of San Quentin chair Noah Winchester said.

VGSQ hosted the event for nearly 200 residents, administration, and outside guests. According to Winchester, the five-hour event mirrored a military ball.

Ron Self, a former resident and founder of Veterans Healing Veterans, praised the incarcerated veterans and

said he honored their sacrifices. Since his release after 23 years of incarceration, Self has sponsored the VGSQ, which he said began with a legislative mandate in 1997.

He said he could relate to the feelings of shame associated with coming to prison as a veteran.

"I am here trying to unite all groups of veterans; that applies to race, color, and creed. There shouldn't be a divide. A veteran is a veteran," Self said.

Incarcerated Army veteran Rob Lambuth said he had looked forward to the gathering because of the camaraderie and support. "I appreciate the ability to rehabilitate in a safe space."

VGSQ detail members escorted the dignitaries to their table: Ron Self, sponsor Tina Rutsch, Veterans Healing Veterans sponsor Roberta Deli, Assistant to CRM Angelina Torres, CRM Marco Barrigan, and education office technician Cannon.

VGSQ presented Self and Rutsch with shadow boxes made by a resident. The boxes included a VGSQ hat, a

coined dog tag stamped with San Quentin insignia, and a group photo of VGSQ members. Other gifts included flags flown at Arlington National Cemetery and wooden wall art with images of service members.

Guest of honor Mary Donovan, an advocate for veterans' benefits, said incarcerated veterans have a long history, and each incarcerated veteran carried a piece of that history. "When you share with the outside world your experiences, it helps others," she said, adding that she felt privileged to play a part in that history.

"I think that we hold veterans to a high stature in society," Donovan said. "Theoretically, we afford the incarcerated a low standard and there's a cognitive dissonance. It's an honor and I feel very fortunate to be able to do this part. So many people astonish me and inspire me, and it's an honor to be able to help. I feel lucky."

Warden Chance Andes told the veterans he admired them for their service. He said of all the things he has done in life,

he never did have the opportunity to serve. "Thank you for your service and all you do."

VGSQ members received certificates and engraved coins similar to the traditional dog tags they wore during their service.

"The challenge coin, cover, and certificate I received felt awesome," said resident Marine Randy Sherman. "This is probably the most touching thing that I've been to since the Marines."

Resident veteran Jack Flaherty said VGSQ membership has grown much since restarting in 2023, after Covid. He said word of mouth and new hats spurred a lot of interest among the resident veterans.

Veterans showcased their talents in a variety of performances from the VGSQ choir ensemble to violinist John Zeretzky and the Greater Good, and a boot camp song performance by Michael Hartley. Lee Jaspar played lead guitar for the R&B band NSF.

Non-veteran residents stepped up to entertain,

acknowledging the veterans in attendance. The artistic ensemble performed a reenactment of a color guard presentation of the flag. Matt Sheppard and Jay Kim presented comedy skits and Samuel Jackson gave a spoken word performance. Outside guest Essence Goldman played guitar and sang.

Attendees said they found the event entertaining and praised the performances. "I believe this banquet may take the cake as one of the finest ones that this prison has seen. This is a real cut above the ordinary ones and sets a high standard," resident Ray Melberg said.

The Marine Corps ceremonial cutting of the cake took place after the color guard marched the cake to a table with a VGSQ detail. Winchester said the cake represented the annual renewal for service members for honor, courage, and commitment in the quest for peace worldwide. The first slice went symbolically to VGSQ veterans; the next slices went to the guests, then to the eldest and youngest veterans.

Before the event ended, Winchester called attention to a small empty table at the side of the room. He said the table symbolized the frailty of incarcerated individuals as it represented the service members who lost their lives while incarcerated. The table sat next to another empty table that honored prisoners of war. "We call them brothers in arms," Winchester said.

Resident Air Force veteran Mark Stanley said the event made him feel purposeful and worthy. He said the best advice he could provide for his fellow brothers in arms concerned the importance of forgiving oneself. "With guilt comes a dark energy," he said. "Start really forgiving yourself. I feel good about myself now. I feel that I belong again and that my service was not in vain."

"This was my first time involved in a military ball," resident VGSQ PIO Steve Drown said. "To have this many people in the room has been rewarding. It is great to see all branches come together as a unit."



Steven Joyner, US Navy Veteran, Fallen VGSQ



SQ's CRM Barrigan, Mary Donavon, and Tina Rutsch, were honored and presented with gifts



The Rice family honored with salute

Fallen soldiers gone but remembered at San Quentin on Memorial Day

By Arsenio P. Leyva
Staff Writer

On Memorial Day at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, the Veterans Group of San Quentin lay a wreath to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the armed forces.

A display of several flags to represented the various entities of the armed forces along the fence of the Lower Yard, in front of R&R. A large number of veterans attended the ceremony, most of them part of the VGSQ.

While the trumpet played "Adjutants Call," the members of VGSQ stood at attention. Many residents respectfully stopped their activities during this moment of recognition.

"This day represents honoring all the fallen service men and women who gave their lives to keep liberty and freedom in this country. We also honor those who are protecting our nation at this moment today as

active members of the armed forces," said resident and veteran Richard Otto.

Members of VGSQ changed the guard every 15 minutes throughout the ceremony. Many incarcerated veterans exchanged their experiences of their active service. They all commemorated their fellow service members who did not make it back home.

The honor guard placed flags at this commemoration and handed out fact sheets that explained the origin and history of Memorial Day.

"I remember my grandfather who served in WWII, Frank Burr, my brother who served in Vietnam, Frank Cadman, and my father who served in the Korean War, Connie Mack Chanault," said incarcerated person, Darrel L. Chenault. He served in the Army at the "European Theater" in Germany.

"I'm also remembering their service for their nation, and friends I served with



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

VGSQ members present the different Armed Forces flags

that have fallen," added Chenault.

Observance of Memorial Day started back on May 30, 1868, as "Decoration Day." Starting in 1971, its observation changed to the last Monday of May, beginning a custom that placed the American flag on the graves of veterans.

Official recognition as a

holiday started in 1873 in New York. In 1971, Congress standardized the holiday as "Memorial Day," according to a historical fact sheet posted at the wreath laying event.

"The VGSQ are very well organized. They are also supported by outside organizations. We are frowned upon for being in prison,

but it's nice that support for the veteran exist here," said resident and veteran Joel Barrera.

Every time the VGSQ made its presence known at events at SQRC, it increased awareness within the prison community. This attracted new veteran arrivals to participate and support other incarcerated veterans in

their rehabilitative efforts.

"I take pride of the military service even while in prison," said resident John Logsdon about Memorial Day. "We still get a second chance to live life and freedom with our families because of our military veterans when we go home. We have a free nation because of them."

Federal Bureau of Prison shuts down FCI despite recent improvements

By Ramon Fritz
Journalism Guild Writer

The Federal Bureau of Prisons announced the closure of a Northern California Women's Facility, in the midst of improving conditions at the prison.

In a statement to the Associated Press, BOP Director Colette Peters said that despite the efforts toward addressing recruitment, staff misconduct, and aging infrastructure, the preeminent thing was to close the facility, according to the *Associated Press*.

An AP investigation uncovered a pattern of abuse as well as unfavorable conditions across decades. This shutdown acknowledges the

BOP's inability to improve the conditions within the prison environment, noted the article.

The Federal Correctional Institute is located in Dublin, Calif., 21 miles East of Oakland. It was one of the six prisons that house only incarcerated women. FCI Dublin housed 605 women, although they have since been transferred to other facilities.

Advocates suggested that the women be released due to sexual abuse, hazardous conditions, and the lack of health care.

In August of 2023, eight women incarcerated at the prison filed a lawsuit against the BOP. The suit stated that BOP failed to stop the abuse and allowed the women to

suffer retaliation for reporting abuse by having their property taken or being placed in solitary confinement, stated the AP.

Amaris Montes, an attorney who represents the women, stated the closure came as a shock.

"It's a signal the prison knows they are not meeting constitutional standards to keep people safe from sexual assault and sexual harassment," said Montes.

The attorney believes that the BOP is quick to shift accountability by transferring the women out to other places, instead of helping them with their needs.

She also added these women have mental health issues that need to be addressed, amongst

other things.

At least eight staff members were charged with the sexual abuse of incarcerated women, and five correctional officers have pled guilty. Two officers, including Garcia, were found guilty during trial. One case is still pending.

California law states that sexual activity is illegal between staff and incarcerated persons.

Correctional staff has power over the women, therefore, an incarcerated person cannot give sexual consent.

Advocates think safety measures may be needed at other prisons where women are housed, according to the associated Press.

"The BOP is the defendant in the case. It's not FCI



By Jesstess87 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=90796484>

FCI DUBLIN Womens Facility

Dublin," Montes said. "And so we are in the mindset that this did not end our case — that

they still have a responsibility to our clients to keep them safe," Montes said.

Youth offender sentenced to 162 years now works for Senate's Public Safety Committee

By William Burley
Journalism Guild Writer

A youth offender gained his freedom through hard work, perseverance, and employment in the California's State Capitol.

As a child with an unstable home life, Jared Nava longed for respect, according to an article in *The Los Angeles Times*. After multiple moves and a traumatic event walking in on his stepfather attempting suicide, he became determined to prove himself. His criminal history began with petty crimes, fighting, and vandalism, which led to carrying

a gun, escalating into violence.

"The more violent you were, the more you felt like you were respected and feared," Nava told *The Times*. "So much in life felt so powerless."

Nava was riding in a car when it pulled alongside a Lexus sedan, occupied by what he thought was a rival gang member of his "Don't Care Crew." He shot multiple rounds into the car, severing the spine of one of the occupants and grazing the leg of another.

Nava was offered a plea deal of 30 years but turned it down. Then 17, he was tried as an adult for attempted murder

and possession of a short-barreled shotgun and was sentenced to 162 years. But at the sentencing, the survivors addressed the court, offering forgiveness. Moved by the love they expressed, Nava committed to make amends.

"As I got older and I really understood the gravity of what I had done," Nava told *The Times*, "I'll say that it was extremely humbling that somebody who had experienced such a wrongdoing could find it in their hearts to forgive me in that moment."

In prison, he earned a GED and then an Associate's Degree in Business and Technology.

He participated in self-help groups such as Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous, Alternatives to Violence, and Narcotics Anonymous. Then he met film producer Scott Budnick, founder of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, who was teaching a creative writing class.

"You know when someone is remorseful, and you know when they have some of those core qualities that can make them very successful? I saw all of that in him," Budnick said in the article. He eventually produced a documentary called "They Call Us Monsters" focusing on three teens

charged as adults, including Nava.

Christopher Hawthorn, director of the Fair Sentencing Clinic, saw the documentary and believed Nava had been poorly represented at trial. In 2018, Hawthorn helped Nava put together a clemency application and forwarded the application to the California Governor's office. In March of 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom commuted his sentence to 10 years to life, and Nava was released that December, more than 150 years ahead of schedule, the article said.

Budnick drove Nava to

Sacramento, helping him settle in and look for work. He introduced Nava to Erika Contreras, secretary of the State Senate, who told Nava about an internship available at the Capitol.

Nava applied for the job and was hired. Now, at 28, he works for the Senate's Public Safety Committee, with a reputation as a hard worker, stated the *Times*.

"As a group, we're supportive of people being rehabilitated ... Nava's presence turns the abstract into flesh and blood, a reminder that policy affects people," said Mary Kennedy, chief counsel of the committee.

1. Sacramento
(The Mercury News) - The Rico trial has exposed flaws on both sides of the case. The dual prong case of Ronald "Renegade" Yandell accusing state and federal officials of retaliation stemming from his political activism including a massive hunger strike to end solitary confinement. Witnesses included low-level drug couriers, also the head of California prisons, Jeffrey Macomber who was a subpoenaed defense witness who testified about warnings received by authorities about an impending murder.

2. Colorado
(Colorado Newsline) - New bills signed into law would change the criminal justice system including allowing name changes and measuring the success of the criminal justice system. SB24-29 allows a group of community members and state agencies to measure housing, education, social support, risk-reduction among others and provide a report to legislative

3. Oklahoma
(Oklahoma Watch) - A new bill would roll back criminal justice reform measures by turning current misdemeanor crimes into felony charges. SB145 will lower the dollar amount of theft from \$1,000 to \$500. Critics of the bill say the felony theft threshold could cause the state's prison population to increase. "We should focus on the organizational aspect of people stealing large quantities and hold it for resale, not single moms stealing diapers and things like that," said Michael Olson, the policy counsel for Oklahoma for Criminal Justice Reform.

4. Mississippi
(Mississippi Today) - People awaiting mental illness or substance abuse treatment are being jailed even without being charged with a crime. HB1640 would allow those with civil commitments to be held for 48 hours if they are actively violent. "This new process puts the person first. It connects someone in need of mental health services with a mental health professional the first step in the process," said Adam Moore who is a spokesperson for the Department of Mental Health.

5. West Virginia
(The Intelligencer) - Corrections Training Foundation in West Virginia held its week long training for law enforcement and organizations that manage detention facilities. The training consisted of 50 vendors and around 1,000 trainees.

6. Philadelphia
(Associated Press) - A family is suing the state of Philadelphia after the governor exonerated the youngest person to be sent to the electric chair in 1931. The 2022 exoneration of Alexander McClay Williams allows the state to pursue damages from the state, according to the report. "We are deeply disgusted by the behavior of the state, but it is emblematic of what we also have went through, so we came here today to stand up with the family and stand for what we see as our little brother," said Dennis, who last month was awarded \$16 million by a jury after spending 25 years on death row, the largest verdict shown to an exonerated person in Philadelphia history.

7. New York (New York Focus) - Lawmakers would like to pass an amendment so prosecutors can introduce sexual assault evidence from uncharged cases. The bill was protested by then senator and current president Joe Biden. "It is absolutely, positively the wrong thing to do. ... It absolutely violates every basic tenet of our system," said Biden. Majority Leader Michael Gianaris noted that the law is important. "It's important for survivors of sexual offenses to have the opportunity to be heard," he said.

8. Massachusetts (USA Today Network) - Massachusetts will turn The Bay State Correctional Center into an emergency shelter for eligible families with children and pregnant women starting in mid-June. The program will run from six months to a year according to state officials. "The decision was made as part of its ongoing response to the number of migrant families arriving in Massachusetts," said Norfolk officials. According to the report, the facility already has a cafeteria, gymnasium, large common room, and offices for administrative activities. State Emergency Assistance Director Scott Rice noted the plan for the facility is to remove the fences and barbed wire, add a playground, and classrooms for teaching English language.

NEWS BRIEFS
BY BOSTYON JOHNSON
MANAGING EDITOR



Photos courtesy of Adam Ingala-Whiting

Residents at the California Men's Colony joined hands in a circle as a sign of solidarity proved that much can be accomplished as long as there is a will to carry out.

California Men's Colony hosts Day of Atonement: Victim and offender dialogue

By Brian Landry
CMC-Contributing Writer

For the 2nd Annual A Day for Atonement, held during National Crime Victims Week on April 23, 2024 in the Protestant Chapel at California Men's Colony (CMC), the incarcerated population participated in an event where survivors and victims of crime shared their stories and brought awareness of their experiences to offenders. Hosted by resident Adam Ingala-Whiting and sponsored by Project R.I.S.E (Resilience, Integrity, Strength, Endurance) and Restorative Partners, the purpose of the event was to honor victims and show offenders the tangible consequences of their criminal actions; sparking thought about how their crimes harmed those victimized and setting in motion the needed change within themselves and their communities.

The day incorporated a moment of silence for victims, poetry from David Martinez and Ralph Woo, a song performed by Adam Ingala-Whiting, David Martinez, Rex Bell, and speeches by incarcerated John Bell and Carlos Martif and free-Nora, Tanya, Mos Salas, and Israel Garcia.

Ms. Nora, the first guest speaker, shared her heart-wrenching story about losing her son to a gang shooting. "They called my son, evidence," she stated. Hearts broke as she described his funeral. "They let me throw the first dirt on him," she ended.

Keynote speaker Israel Garcia, of Uncommon Law opened up after an emotional pause with, "A week. That's what the nation gives to people impacted by crimes." He recounted the murder of a veteran, Mr. Townsend, in 1995. "Someone he knew...brutally attacked

him with a razorblade," Mr. Garcia explained, adding that the attacker was a fifteen year-old kid. "That fifteen year-old kid was me," he said. The entire room gasped, shocked by this statement coming from someone wearing civilian clothing.

Mo Salas, Amity Program Director at CMC, said, "The truths I've come to realize are that you are valuable people," and that, "people do monstrous things, but I've never met a monster."

"I truly believe that no one is beyond the hope of healing," said Ms. Tanya, another victim impact guest speaker.

The event closed with Cindy Ayala, of Restorative Partners, accepting a check for \$2,367.11; money raised by the incarcerated population. She stated, "A ripple effect of a loving action can be way bigger than the one that was caused by pain."



Speakers shares stories during the CMC event.



Resident participants presented a \$2,237 check

Centinela State Prison recognizes 31 CALPIA resident graduates

CDCR News Release

In front of cheering family, friends, and staff, 31 graduates at Centinela State Prison received their industry accredited job certifications on May 16, hosted by California Prison Industry Authority.

CALPIA provides real-world job training to incarcerated individuals inside California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation prisons so they can succeed when returning to their communities.

"I am so thrilled to be standing here today to honor you and your accomplishments," said Acting Warden Guzman. "CDCR and CALPIA want to see you succeed including many of your friends and family who are here today, so take advantage of this opportunity before you."

CALPIA is a self-funded state entity that provides job skills to approximately 5,700 individuals inside CDCR prisons. Participants apply to be in the programs and CALPIA has countless success stories.

David Solorio was among the graduates. He has been incarcerated since 2012 and has served as a Lead Mechanic and now Lead Clerk over the Fabric Enterprise.

"CALPIA's belief in second chances and dedication to the incarcerated workers' rehabilitation are truly



Left: (From left, CALPIA Chief Assistant GM Suzie Changus, former graduate Tony Curtis, a current graduate, CALPIA GM Bill Davidson and Nicole Collins, Assistant GM over Operations) CALPIA representatives stands proudly next to their resident graduates as they hand out their certificates.

Below: Centinela Resident graduate hugs family member.

Photos by: Stephanie Eres

commendable," said Solorio. "This has been a stepping stone on my road to rehabilitation and ultimate success."

Solorio also graduated with an AA degree in Psychology and plans to enroll in the San Diego State University Bachelor's Degree Program on B-yard.

"You are sitting where I was sitting. I got an opportunity," said formerly incarcerated Tony Curtis. "Those certificates you receive are recognized on the streets. I put them on my resume (and) got the job. I had no experience, but I had CALPIA."

Curtis returned to his community in 2020 and started

working as an Environmental Services Technician at a San Diego Hospital along with working as a Journeyman for construction firm Henkels and McCoy.

A recent University of California, Irvine, recidivism study found that CALPIA participants have a 15% return to custody rate after three years, which means 85% of all CALPIA participants do not return to prison. The lower recidivism rate saves the California millions of dollars of incarceration costs each year.

Curtis is now the co-owner of a construction company, which was the first company

to partner with Lowe's and has expanded to Walmart for solar services in the Southern California area. In addition to his construction career, Curtis is a senior pastor at a local church.

"It starts right now. Success begins with opportunity," added Curtis. "I hope you realize the value of having something that is valuable not only today, but in the future."

Story and Photos by Stephanie Eres, Submitted by Michele Kane, Assistant General Manager, External Affairs California Prison Industry Authority





No More Tears staff, volunteers, guests, and resident group members celebrates graduate's completion of 12 week course curriculum

Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews



NMT Exec. Dir. M. Gardener



Founder of NMT L. Morris



Former resident A. Martin



Keynote speaker B. Jenkins



Resident Timothy Young playing acoustic guitar

55 residents No More Tears graduates and celebrates their achievements

By Jordan Junious,
Journalism Guild Writer

The No More Tears program hosted a graduation ceremony inviting more than 85 San Quentin residents, public officials, outside guests, and facilitators on June 1. The event celebrated the commitment of graduates to non-violence, and validated their efforts in understanding the far-reaching impacts of violence.

The ceremony included several guest speakers, performances, and special acknowledgements. San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins was amongst the many attendees present.

"It is unbelievable, every time I come here [San Quentin], the level of intelligence that are behind these walls," Jenkins said. "It brings tears to my eyes how smart you all are. Show the world what you were always capable of."

No More Tears is a program dedicated to stopping violence in communities, and was founded by Lonnie Morris in 1999, former San Quentin resident whom served over 40 years behind bars. Those who have completed NMT and paroled have maintained a 15% recidivism rate, according to Mick Gardener, the program's executive director.

"It is a passion for me to see people out in the community who were once in here," Gardener said. "What has happened is a result of over a thousand people who have partaken in this program, and a good 300 have gone home."

NMT was created as a result of several panel discussions about violence in the outside community. At the time, Morris noted that most violent offenders in the community were cycling consistently through San Quentin.

In response, several incarcerated individuals formulated a 12-week curriculum aimed at giving others behind bars tools to mitigate their violent behaviors.

"The unique thing about us is that the curriculum was created by incarcerated individuals. It is from their mindset. It is like peer-communication," Gardener said.

Former SQ resident and NMT outside volunteer Aaron Martin shared insights from his experience behind bars, and the challenges he now faces as a free person.

"I am still working on myself, it is not over [just] because I am free," he said. "You are worthy of freedom and you are worthy of forgiveness."

Certificates were given to graduates and special acknowledgements awarded to participants who made a significant impact in the class.

Several NMT members gave performances. These included music performed by residents James Lipston, Henok Rufael, and Timothy Young, and poems by Steven Warren and Curtys Taylor.

"[NMT] impacted me deeply," shared Taylor. "It taught me about my wrong thinking, and it let me know... that my way of approaching life was distorted."

SQ Correctional Officer Hunter performed an a cappella rap about the California Prison Model and fostering a positive relationship between staff and incarcerated individuals.

"I wear green, he wear blue; but yeah, we both rap," she rapped.

Resident facilitator Steven Warren described his experience with the program as a "brotherhood." He spoke about his past negative influences and his NMT brothers who now provide him with

positive motivation.

"I was humbled by today's event and grateful to see so many people graduate the class. Just to see the genuine smiles on people's faces," he said.

Several members of the SF District Attorney's office conveyed their thoughts about the impact of programs like NMT.

Investigator Jessica Zamora noted that being a law enforcement officer doesn't allow officers the opportunity to "get to know someone [that you are arresting]," and that coming into SQ helped her better understand the stories of incarcerated people.

"Every time I come to San Quentin I really believe we are all equal, and I encounter many good people who made mistakes," added Robert Guzman, a member of the San Francisco District Attorney's office. He expressed that while accountability is necessary,

it should be carried out "in a way that is fair."

The event concluded with parting words from several resident facilitators. They conveyed their gratitude towards the group's founders and sponsors.

"Brother Lonnie influenced me to come to this group, and even though I did not say much, I learned a lot," said resident and graduate Dante D. Jones.

25 years after founding the organization, Morris gave thanks to all members of the No More Tears family and extended a warm welcome to all graduates.

"Everytime I come in, I see the impact it [NMT] has on the men, and this helps me," he said. "I could not do this on my own, the family is involved in everything we do."

— *Aristeo Sampablo*
Staff Writer
Contributed to this story

60 residents commit to stopping Domestic Violence and heal in the process



H.E.A.R.T. Sponsor Cherie congratulates grads

By Edwin Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair

The Healing, Empowerment, Accountability, Restoration and Transformation program known at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center as H.E.A.R.T., held its third graduation in which it honored 60 members for their commitment toward stopping domestic violence and healing themselves in the process.

The program had 44 graduates from their regular group and an additional 16 from the Youth Offender Program. They facilitated separate cohorts that embraced the youth within their midst.

"The symbol of the HEART program is a heart that is not solid," program director and founder Cherie McNaulty said.



A combination of two cohorts connected through forming healthy relationships

Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

"This symbolizes the light that shines through the broken parts of our heart. When we shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same."

According to the curriculum, weekly two-hour-long classes continued for 26 weeks with focus on the members' written reflections, known as prompts, followed by group discussions. There program has three modalities: the Duluth educational model, cognitive behavioral therapy, and family values for persons predisposed to family violence. All of them have trauma-informed aspects.

The event consisted of

several presenters including the host, head facilitator Dennis Jefferson, and inside speaker Ian Hamilton, both San Quentin residents.

"We're celebrating these students who have taken a step closer in service of an ideal relationship that is free of abuse," said Jefferson. "When you think about intimate partner violence, that means those closest to you, or those that claim to love you. They can also pose the gravest risk to their partner's safety."

Resident and co-facilitator Harry Goodall Jr. spoke about the importance of this program and how it gave him the tools for introspection, leading him

to a successful BPH suitability hearing.

He said he found ironic that the Sunday prior to his hearing, the weekly class topic was healthy relationships, which was the very first question the commissioner asked him during his hearing.

"It was so fresh on my mind that, out of all the questions, I was sure of that answer. She [McNaulty] taught me real-life scenarios from a survivor's standpoint," he said.

According to Jefferson, the program taught him who to be more responsible to his loved ones. But, it is also a space where their humanity

has breathing room to pivot and course correct.

Hamilton expressed the facts of his crime as well as his old mentality that fostered his sense of denial and effort to gain control. He talked about the impact that this program had on his growth and the most important tool he gained from the group.

"One of the many valuable things I've learned is intervention points. At these points, I have a decision to do, or not to do something," he said.

McNaulty observed the countless victims of domestic violence and relayed several statistics. She wiped away

tears as she spoke about her trauma as a survivor and the impact the program has had on her life.

"I have generations of domestic violence in my family. I am my family's cycle breaker," she said. "You now have a higher standard to uphold and the best gift you can give to others is being your authentic self."

The director called the graduates to the stage one-by-one to receive their certificates and to shake hands with each facilitator. She acknowledged the facilitators' hard work and dedication to the program.

This journey of self-discovery and healing was a rude awakening for Pablo Sanchez. Prior to this class, he had tunnel vision about domestic violence. He said since taking the class, he understood that domestic violence meant more than physical abuse and that it encompassed the reality of all emotional and psychological harm that one rendered to one's significant other.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, graduates had the opportunity to deliver parting words as they continued their post-H.E.A.R.T. journey. Some gave thanks to their mothers and others persons influential in their lives.

"Each of you have gone through the H.E.A.R.T. program, so each of you have gained insight into domestic violence and its impacts," Hamilton said. "It begins, continues, or ends with you."

Number of residents conversing with members of deaf community grows

By **Bostyon Johnson**
Managing Editor

Thirty-one residents joined a growing number of incarcerated persons able to converse with members of the deaf community as San Quentin held its second annual American Sign Language graduation.

The 16-week-long ASL course united San Quentin's residents through a non-auditory language of body cues. Prior to the program, only 11 residents communicated by "signing" — using sign language. That number has since risen to over five dozen.

"I never thought I would be in prison representing the deaf community," said Tommy Wickerd, the founder and facilitator of the group. He said he saw deaf residents arrive at the rehabilitation center and instead of isolating themselves, they found a whole population who wanted to communicate with them.

Linda Wickerd, Tommy Wickerd's mother, previously appeared in a documentary about deaf residents who had transferred to San Quentin. In the documentary, she spoke about how proud she felt that her two sons could finally talk to each other because of a video call system that allowed deaf residents to communicate.

At the graduation, Tommy Wickerd's wife, Marion Wickerd, said that Tommy was incredibly moved by residents' desire to learn to communicate with the deaf community. "The U.S. needs to have more ASL programs to speak at prisons," she said. "Everyone should have friends. You all matter."

The new ASL banner hung center stage with a collage of signs and photos of the group facilitators and founder Wickerd. Three residents designed and painted the banner over two weeks and 200 hours to represent the strength of San Quentin's deaf



Immediate Left: Family members, instructors, and students celebrate together.

Below Left: ASL resident teacher Albert E. Campos co-emcees the event.

Below Center: Marion Wickerd receives gift from Class of 2024 as thanks.

Below: Marion Wickerd congratulates graduates as Tommy Wickerd signs to his brother live.

Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews



residents. They featured the twin masques of comedy and tragedy, representing the documentaries "Friendly Signs" and "Silent Treatment," both films about the struggles of deaf communities in carceral settings.

The Prison Law Office's Rita Lomio addressed the graduation as one of the guest speakers. She discussed the difficulties of having deaf incarcerated persons transferred to San Quentin and the patience and the legal maneuvers that the job required.

Then, after thanking the facility staff for supporting the program, she addressed the graduates. "This class breaks barriers and builds communities," she said. "It requires an open heart and an open mind."

Warden Chance Andes congratulated the class for their willingness to learn a new language to communicate with deaf residents, saying, "This is what community looks like."

Resident and graduate Brian Conroy signed about

his journey from spelling letters in county jail to putting together full sentences at San Quentin. "Now, at the end of this class, I am proud to say that I am a part of the deaf community here at San Quentin."

Resident Clayton Addleman added that he never expected to be "graduating anything," and that founder Wickerd and program facilitator Albert Campos Jr. did not just teach him a new language. "What Albert and Tommy may not know is how much they taught

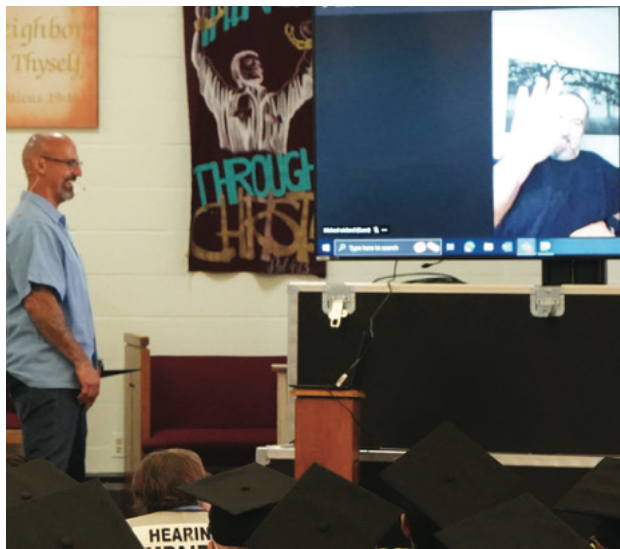
me about life," he said.

Deaf residents also signed their appreciation for the program. Campos called the experience of working with other residents in his non-auditory world "a blessing." And resident Jaime "Happy" Paredes signed about the joy he felt for all the students who completed the program to learn his language.

"I am proud of all the students for learning my language," he signed. "Now San Quentin has 62 more people I can communicate with."



Guest speaker R. Lomio



Above Left: Resident Clay signing as he accepts his ASL graduate honors

Above Center: M. Wickerd signs a joke as Tommy interprets for the audience.

Above Right: Kaomang Saeliaw performs deaf rap as Mesro Coles-EI interprets.

Left: ASL Class of 2024 gather to congratulate each other for their achievement





Courtesy of Wikipedia

Opal Lee, activist and educator, who advocated for Juneteenth as holiday

SQ CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH



Photos by Vincent O' Bannon // SQNews

Founder of Black Man Wellness Darnelle Wade, and Dejon Joy formerly incarcerated at the Q

**By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair**

San Quentin residents observed Juneteenth with a skill and strength competition, including music, spoken word, and encouraging speeches.

The first festivities took place on Lower Yard's basketball court, hosted by Sammie Nichols.

The sporting event consisted of six teams with four people on each team. The first team to complete 50 push-ups, 100 jumping jacks, and one lap around the exercise yard was the winner.

The event was very competitive, but team one, which consisted of Saul Cedille, Kenneth Gatison, Kahraan Nabali, and Johnnie Dirden, were the victors earning Iced Honey Buns and Pepsi Colas.

The next event took place in front of the ARC trailer, a building also located on the Lower Yard where numerous self-help programs take place.

Marcus Wali Henderson hosted the event; he welcomed everybody with greetings in recognition of Freedom Day.

"God created us all to be different; we all want to celebrate each other," said Henderson.

He introduced resident Ramon Fritz to elaborate on what Juneteenth is. He explained to the audience that June 19, 1865, was the day when the slaves in Galveston, Texas, were the last people to receive the message that slavery had ended.

Fritz referenced Opal Lee, an activist and educator, who advocated for Juneteenth to become a national holiday, which President Joseph Biden signed into law June 21, 2021.

Fritz quoted Lee: "If people can be taught to hate, they can be taught to love."

The host called upon the house band, "New Syndicate Funk." The band played four sets of original and old school funk, and the attendees showed much appreciation with dancing and applause.

Next, Henderson called to the stage "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen," featuring residents Rhashiyd

Zinnammon, Mesro El-Coles, Robert Belfield, and Correctional Officer I. Hunter.

This performance marked the first time a correctional officer teamed up with incarcerated people to celebrate Juneteenth.

"Rome was not built in a day, that's why we asked for help, all the way from Norway," Hunter rapped, in reference to Norway's model of corrections. Her lyrical message sent positive vibes through the crowd as they applauded her.

As rapper Belfield displayed his skills, he expressed love for his mother, saying he wrote these lyrics before her death.

Resident Samuel Jackson came to the stage and gave residents meaningful spoken word. He told attendees that when he says "I am hungry; you say 'I can eat.'"

He said, "Low energy, I cannot stand on my feet, I am hungry." The crowd yelled, "I can eat." Jackson added, "No visible tears, just mental fears."

The entertainment kept flowing when Leonard "Funky Lynn" Walker wooed the crowd with his instrumental funk; the young percussionist Tierney "Yoshi" Shellmyer accompanied him.

Steven Warren was up next; he brought consciousness in a poem called "From the Plantation to the Palace."

He quoted Harriet Tubman by saying "I could have saved thousands, if only they knew they were slaves."

SQ resident Lamavis Comundoiwilla of the Artwork Initiative, said that the art program is here to protect and promote the present and formerly incarcerated, and at-risk youth.

He displayed his artwork around the stage, honoring black women. "You can tell the greatest of a nation by how it treats its weakest. Black people were verbally disrespected, and black women were considered the lowest of society. However, when we got into trouble we turned to them for help," Comundoiwilla said.

In observing the artwork, resident Jambri Johnson Sr. said that he saw the beauty of flowers,

the strength of precious metals, depicting grace and fine material, and the beauty of black skin.

Attendees adjourned inside the ARC trailer for the conclusion of the celebration. Once inside, Henderson thanked all the attendees. He spoke about "Bridging the Generational Gap," a conversational series between the young and older offenders at The Q.

Henderson and resident Richard Bhimji collaborated on the idea of bridging a different type of gap.

The host recognized 23 youngsters and elders with a certificate of participation; he showed appreciation for No More Tears sponsors Lonnie Morris and Mick Gardner and SQNews advisor Amanda Weitman for their contributions to this event.

Henderson called up Dejon Joy, who was formerly incarcerated at The Q.

Joy told the crowd that he was at the prison from 2018-22. "I started the program Prevail, which gave Black men a space to come together, taking the barbershop conversation to another level," said Joy. "I did not have a life sentence; any term over 20 years is a life sentence."

Darrell Wade, who represents the Black Men's Wellness program, told the audience that the program focuses on the physical and mental health of Black men.

He said people outside of these walls are not free and that freedom starts here (pointing to his chest) before it starts here (pointing to his head). He added, "You are building communities here. Hold on to that."

Wade continued, saying, "By celebrating Juneteenth, we are honoring our ancestors and those who are fighting for freedom. Happy Juneteenth!" He concluded with a belly breathing exercise, that echoed well-being.

During the course of the event a few incarcerated residents elaborated on what slavery and Juneteenth meant to them.

In reference to involuntary servitude and the 13th Amendment, resident Bhimji said that [punishment by incarceration] is Dr.

Martin Luther King's Jr. last stand.

SQ resident Arthur Jackson said, "It makes me feel like the work isn't done. Wherever there's involuntary servitude, there are still the vestiges [remnants] of slavery."

According to Henderson, being "culturally aware" is worthy; existing in prison contributes to our "unique perspective."

—Tyrone D. Jones
Journalism Guild Writer



Art work of L. Comundoiwilla



Imam Muhammad Fasih enjoying the event



Terence "T-Baby" Robertson all smiles with his certificate



Nate Williams first juvenile charged as a adult, and Dante D. Jones



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon

San Quentin House Band "New Syndicate Funk" (left to right: L. Jasper, T. Shellnyer, M. Adams, D. Farris, and P. Comax) entertaining the crowd with their music



"The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen," featuring Officer I. Hunter, entertaining the audience with music and rap



Members of the San Quentin hearing impaired community



No More Tears sponsor Mick Gardner and resident facilitators smile as they join in on the festivities



Residents serving Juneteenth refreshments



Officer Fernandez with residents L. Comundoiwilla, E. Chavez, S. Zinnamon, and A. Alexander



SQNews Adviser A. Weitman looking out for everyone

Design program tasked with re-purposing material from old PIA building

By William Burley
Journalism Guild Writer

Amid the changes at San Quentin, not every remnant of the former state prison will end up in landfills. Circle Back, a volunteer Earned Time Off program, came up with an idea to reuse bits and pieces for the reimagined rehabilitation center.

Under the CDCR's new California Model, San Quentin's transformation would not only involve rehabilitative programming, but also physical alterations to the facility. Plans call for a new Educational and Vocational Center to replace a deactivated Prison Industry Authority building.

The dismantling process of Building 38 has already salvaged and cleaned much reusable lumber. Circle Back's plan calls for the participants to take this reclaimed lumber and use it to construct seating and ornamentation for the indoor and outdoor open spaces of the new Education and Vocational Center.

The program is overseen by Dave Lewis, Director of Facility Planning and Management, with Raaj Patel, CDCR Program Manager, from Banner Construction and Jeremiah Kelly, Senior Superintendent of McCarthy Building Companies, the contractor for the project.

Circle Back originated with Gaia Celle, the principle architect for the new center, an employee of the Danish architectural firm SHL that created the design plans.

Celle and SHL project manager Jetta Magensen, interior designer Joanna Targowicz, landscaper Valerie Conant,



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Architect layout design of the proposed new learning center to be built in the near future

and SHL volunteers Carlotta Pellegrini and Ashley Stoner wanted to "leave a piece of themselves behind" before returning to Denmark. They stayed on as volunteers start up Circle Back.

Their Design Workshop took place in the chapel complex for three consecutive Saturday mornings.

The first workshop began with an introduction and discussion on ways to reuse materials. The SHL volunteers encouraged creativity in a subsequent brainstorming session for use of the reclaimed lumber. Participants came up with ideas that ranged from simple benches for sitting and relaxing to elaborate works of art.

In week two, the participants presented their ideas

and sketched-out design concepts to the design team. After having discussed the merits of the various concepts, they created scale Styrofoam models of the more promising ideas to envision the final products.

In the final week, the individual design teams presented the various designs and concepts to the whole group. After much discussion, the group voted on which of the projects they would produce once the group reconvenes in August.

The volunteers from SHL appeared impressed by the creativity displayed by the residents, who all seemed excited to take part in the program. When asked what prompted them to join the effort, their answers covered

a wide range.

Mikael Walker said that he had a background in carpentry and that he found working with wood therapeutic. Edward Moss and Ruben Vaca liked the idea of up-cycling the materials. Tony Haro, Eric Bergen, and Greg Prestigiacoemo enjoyed the artistic appeal of the project. Coby Phillips just wanted a connection to making a change. Coby said he wanted to do something purposeful after having spent the last 24 years in SHU.

All residents of San Quentin will have access to the campus grounds, not just students. The architects stressed the idea that entering the campus should give residents a way to rehabilitate through relaxation.



Above and below are design pieces being considered by Circle Back to reconstruct with recycled wood salvaged from old SQ buildings



22 outside employers give face to face interviews to resident graduates

By Bostyon Johnson
Managing Editor

Twenty-two employers and reentry specialists came to San Quentin's Chapel B for face-to-face interviews with resident graduates for Employer Day, organized by Prison to Employment Connection.

The May 31 workshop focused on connecting residents with jobs prior to leaving San Quentin. The event aimed to give feedback, support, reentry resources, and post-release job placement opportunities to residents.

"What is very unique about prison to employment is the relationship building," said Sumer Schulze, Executive Director of P2EC. "You don't have to be defined by your choices in the past and you can do programming that helps you think about your future."

The curriculum taught

resume building, how to maintain eye contact and proper body language, and interviewing techniques. Graduates of the program called this day "the Super Bowl" of the entire workshop. Residents lined up in the center aisle to meet the employers who interviewed and assessed them.

Program Manager Gabrielle Nicolet acknowledged residents for their commitment to participation in the workshop. She praised them for creating success packets to display all their hard work in the program. "You guys are a big inspiration for why I do what I do out there," she said.

The late Diana E. Williams created the employment readiness workshop P2EC in 2014. The program works as a Rehabilitative Activity Credit program that reduces sentence time for some participants.

The course required attendance of 14 weeks of classes for completion.

Employers sat in a row of chairs facing a row of residents ready for interviews and assessments. Equipped with clipboards, they spent 15 minutes with each resident.

"You are all welcome to come down and join, if you are not afraid of hard work, we will hire you," said Kenneth Miller with Iron Workers Local 378 to the graduates of the program who completed the workshop.

Resident and facilitator Angel Alvarez noted the importance of the program and its beginnings. "The entire event is the heart of a volunteer who made a difference in this program," he told the audience right before reading words from the late Williams. "One of her favorite sayings, 'Job, Ready' is a

chant that she would say and we want to honor her on this great 10-year anniversary."

"This interview was very emotional for me," said resident Terry Winston. "I knew this was what we would be doing when we get out. You have no idea the ripple effect that you have on our lives. What you see right here is not just me — I stand on the shoulders of thousands of people who came before me."

Residents who completed the program talked about the confidence they gained from speaking with interviewers and the ways in which the workshop had prepared them for this day.

Resident Edward Moss discussed his feeling about the course. "One of the things that made this program impactful for me was the humanity," he told the volunteers.

The program presented

challenging moments and quitting would have made the easier option, according to graduate Jose Melena. "Every time we had the group, they encouraged me."

Melena later received word from an interviewer that the company would hire him. "I'm speechless. I may not have the words to express myself, but to every one of you, thank you," he said.

Resident Y. Liu talked about having nightmares about facing life's challenges after leaving San Quentin and said P2EC was his first experience with a job-training program. "I am comfortable sharing my uncomfotability," Liu said.

Resident and facilitator Robert Tyler said the program has benefits for anyone who would want to work after release.

"If you're planning to get out, P2EC is the program to

[help you] understand not only the methods for a successful job search but the ideological challenges. If you can be prepared, it is more likely that you can be successful," he said.

The P2EC chair Tom Lacey attended the event as an interviewer. "My hope is that these people that come through this program develop the skills and self-confidence so that they can be successful on the outside. Getting a job is crucial on the outside," said Lacey.

The program gave residents the option to attend without being close to board or release.

"Hopefully when you get to board, things go your way, and you will be calling us soon," said Kevin McCracken, former executive of P2EC.

—Ramon Fritz
Journalism Guild Writer
Contributed to this story



Residents interviewed by prospective employers



Residents and potential employers engaging in Q&A's

- ORGANIZATIONS
RESPRESENTED
AT EVENT:**
- Alameda County Public Defender's Office
 - Alameda Workforce Development
 - Bureau Veritas Construction
 - CalTrans
 - Caminar Jobs Plus CEO
 - Checkr
 - Firebrand
 - Gotlight
 - Iron Workers Local 378
 - Prison to Employment Connection
 - Roots of Success
 - San Francisco Public Spaces
 - The Last Mile
 - Veterans Healing Veterans

Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Santa Clara Prosecutors discuss rehabilitation and justice reform

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

On a sunny Bay Area day, six prosecutors took the time to make a two-hour trip from Santa Clara to San Quentin to discuss rehabilitation, sentence recalls, and racial justice at a San Quentin News forum with the Santa Clara County District Attorneys office.

Eleven residents met David Angel, Adam Flores, Maurilia Luevano, Alisa Esser-Kahn, Shalese Huang, and Tyrone Wilson in the SQTV studio. They formed a circle facilitated by resident Vince Turner.

Angel joked that coming into San Quentin felt like having a reservation at a fancy restaurant, but the conversation soon turned serious.

“Every time I first see a defendant, I see him at a low point in his life, as a person who does not want to go to prison,” said Angel, the prosecutor who arranged the visit.

Angel said many defendants “come in with priors, so 100% of the people I see have failed. It would be really helpful to see them here in a more human setting. I know that they did terrible things.” Angel paused and surveyed participants. After a moment, he continued with a different tone. “What I thought at age 19 or 20 is totally different from now.”

Resident Bernard Ballard followed up on Angel’s



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Prosecutors and residents engaged in humanizing conversation from recidivism to sentence recall

positive note. He said, “Our recidivism rate runs really low. How does that play out in resentencing?”

Angel replied, “When I look to recall a sentence, I look for a positive development. If you got issue on racial justice, talk to us.”

Ballard asked Angel whether anyone had taken steps that would let offenders work with someone for preventive measures. “What steps has your office taken to talk to kids?”

Angel replied that his office often stepped up if they saw a need.

Flores added, “We work very closely with schools. Positive mentors can truly change someone. We want to make sure that offenders go to school. I want students to participate in pro-social activities. They build skills and they do not even know that they are doing it. I am very proud that we can do something for them.”

Angel said, “If a crime was very serious, I have to go to the community, to the family of the victims, and I have to have something to put in front of them. Was the original sentence too long? Can one say,

‘No one today would get such a long sentence’? A judge has to approve it and no judge ever refused us.”

“We want to look at a journey of a person,” Angel continued. “I want to know what was the moment at which they have changed. Do they have write-ups? We all know that recidivism goes down as one gets older. What would have changed? Someone who has committed a lot of small crimes would seem more difficult to rehabilitate than someone who has done one big crime.”

Esser-Kahn said she worked

on cases in which mental health played a part and she often worked with persons in mental hospitals. “Some victims have not heard from us in 40 years. Victim advocates are very important.”

She said most of the people she worked with had committed murders. “Did they misunderstand the crime? I still have contact with the victims’ families. Will they keep taking their medications? I have all these professionals that tell me about these defendants. I look at who these people are now and I see them ten years later and they have succeeded.”

Wilson, in his job for 12 years, said he specialized in mental health treatment cases: “The DA’s office does not keep track of treatment of offenders. I wonder if it would benefit our victims. The resources are not there. We reframe the lens on how these crimes are committed. When I applied to law school, I wrote in my essay ‘the ink on this page does not define the man’ and this is how we should look at a defendant. One thing I want to know: what was the nexus that made you want to change? Time — or something else?”

Huang said she dealt with resentencing and prosecutor-initiated recalls. “We are all cognizant that the criminal justice system has multiple stakeholders. We are trying to recalibrate how cases handled before all to benefit inmates. We are trying to find reasons to bring these back to court.”

About prosecutor-initiated recalls, Huang said, “If no other avenues exist, we now have this one. Not too many inmates have the opportunity to program in the first ten years. What has transpired in 15 years of incarceration? Justice holds a scale while blindfolded. The importance of the blindfold says that prejudices do not exist.”

San Quentin News editor-in-chief Marcus Henderson concluded the forum, saying, “The crime will never change. There are lots of success stories out there.”

“Blue and Blue” law enforcement forum series, working toward understanding

In painting, mixing blue and blue colors just would create more of the same, but at San Quentin, mixing officers in blue and residents in blue created an unlikely phenomenon — a complementary pairing that led to a shared understanding.

As part of *San Quentin News’* continuing “Blue and Blue” law enforcement forum series, 24 blue-wearing residents of San Quentin Rehabilitation Center met with 31 officers and associates of the San Francisco Police Department, although the officers wore their street clothes. The two groups met in the Garden Chapel to discuss rehabilitation and ways to reduce violence. The May 30 event ended as a thriving success.

“Society looks at the old penal image of the prisoner but everyone has a story. Finding out the big issues between incarcerated persons and officers would give us

a way to find out and bridge the differences between us,” said Patrol Officer Alan Katz, who has worked the graveyard shift for the last eight years.

An officer who identified himself as Vinnie said he came to San Quentin not knowing what to expect. “In the limited time we had, I learned a lot about how people on the opposite side of the fence can be so similar. It was an eye opening experience and I feel glad I came here. I will tell my colleagues to experience this, too.”

“I think one big thing I enjoyed was finding out who is behind the badge, who is the actual person,” said resident Anthony Lyons.

Jamie, an officer at the SFPD’s Community Engagement Division, called the meeting “powerful and humanizing.”

The Blue and Blue forums at San Quentin have a five-year-long history. Since

March 2019, the meetings have supported public safety on a level never before contemplated. In the second forum in April 2022, the concept had already garnered a reputation as transformational.

Central to the forum’s success remained the leadership of Assistant Chief David Lazar, whose take-away said, “Traumatic situations have brought you here. I am impressed with proactivity of this group. Real change happens.”

The forum began with introductions in one large circle. Residents introduced themselves with their crimes and their sentences. Introductions by the visitors followed. The circle soon broke into six small circles each with four residents and five visitors. The small circle conversations often took emotional turns.

Facilitator Ryan Pagan, a resident, said, “It’s all about

perspective. If we change the way we look at each other, we change the way we treat each other. I hope we turned your perspective on us upside down and you look at us differently.”

After the small circles, the forum took a short break and reconvened in one large single circle.

San Quentin News circulation manager Richard Fernandez, the moderator of the forum, took command in the center of the circle. Fernandez said he wanted to provide “an opportunity to open the doors to residents who have not had the chance to interact with police officers and to understand their daily duties and responsibilities. I steered the forum to explore issues like biases and stereotyping.”

Moderator Fernandez turned the microphone over to residents.

San Quentin News Sports Editor Anthony Carvalho

said, “Police officers are survivors of crime, too.”

Resident Ramon Fritz said, “You guys have a job to do. You bring order. Today, I can understand that I had done it all wrong. Change is possible. Thank you.”

Resident Eric Allen echoed the sentiment and said, “I have seen a big change.”

Resident Dante Jones said he found refreshing that someone goes right rather than left — or wrong.

SFPD Captain Johansen said, “It was a great experience.”

SFPD Officer Mark Powell said he found the forum really moving and thanked San Quentin for hosting the event.

An officer who identified himself as Lattimore said, “Such an experience seems hard to put into a short statement. I appreciate speaking with people in blue and I will take this with me.”

Julie Lazar, the wife of

the assistant chief said, “I enjoyed myself meeting residents. I found them enlightening and engaging. I did not know what to expect, but experienced a new perspective that brings hope, and in this world, we need hope.”

Officer Nathan Bernard said, “Not something we get to experience, so unique, such an eye opener. We think of these buildings as filled with inmates but they are really filled with stories.” Bernard said he has served in the SFPD for 17 years and would come back to the next forum.

At the end, *San Quentin News* Editor-in-Chief Marcus Henderson said, “You did not ‘catch’ a case: you committed a crime.” Residents in the circle named their victims.

Assistant Chief Lazar concluded the event, saying, “Have a plan. Come on back and give back. That’s the next chapter.”

— C. K. Gerhartsreiter

Parole Grants lead to further review processes up to a year after suitability

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Whenever the Board of Parole Hearings would deem residents suitable for parole, such residents might not necessarily leave the facility after the customary wait period of 120 to 150 days.

“The decision at your hearing to grant or deny you parole is a recommended decision,” stated the Board of Parole Hearings fact sheet. “The recommended decision goes through the ‘decision review’ process. If the decision is to grant you parole, then the Board of Parole Hearings and the Governor automatically review the decision.”

In addition, Section 2.27, “Board’s Review of Hearing Panel’s Decision,” states, “All decisions by a hearing panel at a parole hearing are proposed decisions, meaning they are not final. Proposed decisions

will become final within 120 calendar days from the date of the parole hearing. During the 120 calendar days following a parole hearing...the decision may be reviewed by the Board’s legal division.”

This rule can lead to other events unfolding, such as an En Banc Review, and Recession Hearings, which can create up to an additional yearlong wait from the initial suitability finding. Many residents might not know about these delays.

Residents who pass the governor’s review must still reach their minimum sentence dates. Most residents about to parole must reach the Minimum Eligible Parole Date, commonly known as the MEPD. Paroling youth must wait until their Youth Parole Eligible Date and elderly residents for their Elderly Parole Date. Nonviolent offenders must reach their Nonviolent Parole Eligible Date.

The BPH will schedule most residents up to 13 months ahead of their MEPD for their initial hearing date. According to CDCR data, this delay would prevent backlogs. Residents suitable during their initial hearing would likely remain in custody for another 11 months.

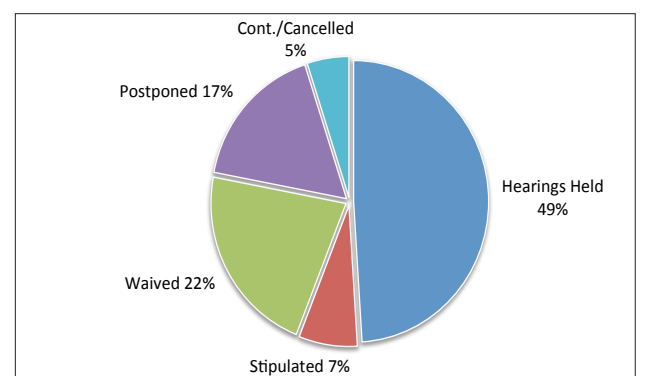
Residents can reduce their MEPD by earning rehabilitation activity credits up to 40 days per year, and milestone credits up to six months per year, the fact sheet states. Reducing one’s MEPD date with rehabilitative credits may improve one’s chances of a favorable parole grant at an initial hearing.

According to the BPH’s “Just the Facts” explanatory addendum, “The percentage of grants given at an initial hearing has increased significantly since 2014. In 2022, 38% of all grants were given at initial hearings, more than

twice the percentage of hearings in 2017.”

“Persons whose hearing date was moved up because of the Board’s Administrative Review process had the highest grant rate in 2022, with 58% of hearings held resulting in a grant,” stated the BPH fact sheet.

The fact sheet stated that an independent review conducted by the California Committee on Revision of the Penal code indicated that the committee “found no difference in outcomes based on race and ethnicity,” which held true on initial or subsequent hearings.



Pie graph made by C.K. Gerhartsreiter // SQNews

YEAR	# of Hearings	# of Grants	% of Grants	Breakdown
2018	2,929	1,136	39%	Hearings Held 49%
2019	3,441	1,184	34%	Stipulated 7%
2020	3,464	1,234	36%	Waived 22%
2021	4,189	1,424	34%	Postponed 17%
2022	4,445	1,259	28%	Cont./Cancelled 5%
2023	4,166	1,434	34%	
Average	3,772	1,279	34%	

Multi-talented resident youth inspires

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

An inspiring musician and rap artist looks to make good on his talents once released from prison.

Tierney "TJ" Shellmyer Jr., 26, has been incarcerated since 2023; he was sentenced to two years and a half years for great bodily injury. He arrived at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center on March 20, 2024.

"A goal of mine is to get my life back, have a perfect mindset," Shellmyer said. "I have a vision to become a recording artist."

He is a percussionist in the prison's rock and R&B Bands. The snare drum is his favorite instrument; he played the drums at a recent SQ event that honored incarcerated writers.

"Being a drummer is like the heart beat of the band," Shellmyer said. "I will be playing the drums for the rest of my life."

He went to Crenshaw High in Los Angeles California, where he reach the 12th grade. He currently attends a song-writing class, taught by professional song writer Essence Goldman. She mentors the men at SQ, healing through voice.

According to Shellmyer, his mom went to jail when he was young. The Los Angeles County Protective Service wanted to put him in foster care, but his grandmother allowed him to live with her.

Shellmyer previously participated in a rap battle competition on the prison's exercise yard, sponsored by incarcerated residents. He was dubbed the front runner, until something happened.

"I was nervous at first, but



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Tierney "TJ" Shellmyer

I started free styling. I did not stick to the script [plan], he said. "I rehearse every week, conducting lyrical exercise. I write five verses, and five hooks [chorus] a week."

Shellmyer says he would like to gain more understanding of how Black culture empowers people through music.

He told SQNews that rap artist Kendrick Lamar gives him inspiration because he gives back to the community, despite a prior life of drugs and violence. Shellmyer and Lamar grew up in the city of Compton, Calif., but in different eras.

He says Calvin "Snoopdog" Braudus is his favorite rap artist. He adds that Braudus' album "The Blue Carpet Treatment" is his favorite amongst the many.

After reading Malcom X's Biography, he was inspired to do better. He learned how a street hustler name Detroit Red went on to become a human rights advocate.

According to SQ

"A goal of mine is to get my life back, have a perfect mindset."

—Tierney Shellmyer

resident Steven "Rhashiyd" Zinnamon, prior to prison he was a certified sound engineer; he is now a sound designer for the prison podcast "Ear Hustle."

Zinnamon says that Shellmyer brought a new style to the young generation of incarcerated rap artists. He has the energy and the vibe like no other at The Q. He is always smiling; that separates him from other residents, because smiling is not common in prison.

"His swag [style], his wave [sound], and skill level is deeper [better] than current rap artists," he said.

Zinnamon is currently a mentor in a program called "Music and Masculinity."

He says the self-help group enables young people to get insight about themselves through the process of music.

"Our objective is to take these men and allow them to speak their truth. We hold the flashlight [helping them], while they work on their engines [themselves]," said Zinnamon.

Shellmyer revealed to SQNews that his primary goal at the moment is to focus on parole, once released in July.

"I do not want to have kids until I'm at least 35," he says. "By that time I will be financially stable. I want to be a great provider."

Education over incarceration demonstrates success in youth diversion

By Stuart Clarke
Journalism Guild Writer

Youth diversion away from the criminal justice system for those accused of delinquent behavior is increasing nationwide, according to the Sentencing Project.

A March 2024 report by Senior Research Fellow, Youth Justice, Richard A. Mendel, and a Diversion Working Group of experts documented the significant progress of recent youth diversion opportunities.

"This momentum to make diversion a centerpiece of juvenile justice reform is encouraging given powerful research showing that youth who are diverted from the justice system are far less likely to be arrested for subsequent offenses," wrote Mendel.

Diversion for youth offenders has long been an option in the juvenile justice system. The report also noted that diversion has frequently been misused.

Youth who would reap the most benefits — those who pose manageable risks to public safety — have not been sufficiently diverted. Instead, they endured prosecution and sanctions in the juvenile courts.

"Research studies consistently find that being arrested in adolescence substantially increases the likelihood of future justice system involvement," wrote Mendel. "It reduces future success in school and work."

Diversion policies have been established nationally using several approaches. Many states have enacted

significant new laws and programs to mandate and expand diversion.

Kansas mandated the Immediate Intervention Program for youth accused of a first-time misdemeanor in 2022, yielding a 92% success rate.

New Hampshire created several behavioral health interventions, which screened all youth referred to juvenile court. Most youth have been diverted to behavioral health programs instead of court interventions.

In 2022, 72% of assessed youth were recommended to non-court interventions. The report noted that new delinquency cases dropped 50% between 2018 and 2022.

San Francisco offers enrollment in a community-based diversion program for all youth misdemeanor cases. This includes restorative justice and support programming such as mental health counseling, tutoring, employment, community service, and life skills workshops.

"Too often, young people enter the delinquency court system not because they have committed serious offenses, but rather because they face acute needs and require support," wrote Mendel. "In these cases, youth should be served outside the court system by human service agencies with expertise in addressing young people's needs."

In North Dakota, youth accused of status offenses, such as running away, truancy, or alcohol possession, are removed from the jurisdiction of the state's juvenile

delinquency courts and referred to a "Human Service Zone."

Connecticut removed all status offenses from the courts and has routed those youth offenders to the state's network of Youth Service Bureaus, away from the justice system.

Restorative justice diversion programs have increased. They require youth offenders "to focus on and repair the harm caused by their misconduct, and often include face-to-face meetings with victims," wrote Mendel.

Restorative justice directly addresses the needs of victims, increasing victim approval with the justice system. It would also benefit youth by building empathy.

States such as Colorado, Nebraska, and Minnesota have invested heavily in these programs.

Pre-arrest diversion has expanded. Los Angeles County has a network of community-based diversion programs under its Department of Youth Development. It has offered pre-arrest diversion for up to 80% of youth delinquents.

"State and local leaders across the country... are recognizing and acting on the evidence that arresting youth and prosecuting youth in the court system is often counterproductive," wrote Mendel.

Success rates of diverted youth have risen as diversion practices have improved.

Youth are "far more likely to succeed in education and employment than comparable youth who are arrested and prosecuted in juvenile court," cited the report.



SQNews Archive

Project Avary Walk for Children Event in 2019 pre-covid

Kid CAT Speaks: The return of Project Avary to San Quentin

By Pheng Ly
Staff Writer

Within months, the San Quentin Kid CAT group lost two longstanding members, Kenny Vernon and Bruce Fowler, but gained two freed Kid CAT alumni. The San Quentin Kid CAT group congratulated Fowler for making it home to his family after serving more than a quarter of a century of incarceration.

The group is preparing to complete their session and start the next cohort for Kid CAT First Step. Their next major event on the calendar is Project Avary's March for Children, which is planned

to take place sometime in mid-September.

Project Avary — an acronym for Alternative Ventures for At-risk Youths — has a long history of involvement with San Quentin. Danny Rifkin, a co-manager of the rock group the Grateful Dead, met on a San Quentin tour the prison's then-Chaplain Earl Smith, and the two developed collaboration as members of the Grateful Dead visited to record the San Quentin Choir.

Project Avary has since evolved into an extensive year-round non-profit for children of incarcerated

parents. Since its start, the organization made long-term 10-year commitments to families with children from age eight to 11.

According to the organization's publications, Project Avary has helped children heal from the impact of having an incarcerated parent. They have done so by providing these children with a long-term community support-base filled with peer and adult mentors who helped them develop life skills.

The organization has provided children with safe places in which they could connect with other children, older teen leaders, and alumni

counselors and mentors. They call this their "Avary Family," a community with a culture fostered by love and care. Through Project Avary, children learn to develop leadership and essential life skills to help them overcome their struggles.

Project Avary's literature cited research that revealed children with incarcerated parents as frequently showing "signs of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder." Such children experience a greater likelihood "to end up in juvenile detention than their peers, struggle in school and experience higher dropout

rates. [They] are at higher risk for drug and alcohol addiction and teen parenthood [and] can be distrustful of adults and authority," said the organization.

The group's literature also discussed Teen Leadership Mentoring Programs with a summer camp with the goal of turning teenagers with incarcerated parents into teen leaders. "Summer camp and monthly outdoor and wilderness outings build community, leadership, and important social and emotional skills. The Junior Counselor program, beginning at age 15, empowers teen leaders to guide and

counsel younger children in the program."

The literature said Project Avary also engaged in advocacy for teens, by giving "voice to the forgotten needs of the children of incarcerated parents and asserts the implementation of the CIP bill of rights at the local, state, and national level."

The Project Avary literature quoted an unnamed teen participant as having said, "Avary is a safe place for everyone. I care about everyone on Avary staff and campers because they have always showed me love and that they cared and that they want me to be someone."

Kid CAT (Creating Awareness Together) is a group of men who committed their crimes in their teens and were sentenced as adults to life terms. The group's mission is to inspire humanity through education, mentorship, and restorative practices. Kid CAT Speaks wants to hear from all the juvenile lifers, educators, and policymakers concerning juvenile justice issues and rehabilitation. Contact us at San Quentin News, Attn: Kid CAT Speaks, 1 Main Street, San Quentin, CA 94964

Mount Tamalpais College Appreciation Day

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair

Highlighting the power of higher education, the residents of San Quentin Rehabilitation Center celebrated teaching and learning in a Volunteer Appreciation Day event emceed by Nandita Dinesh, Mount Tamalpais College's Dean of Academic Administration.

At the event MTC came together for the first time to showcase students who have contributed through writing.

"It is a very powerful idea in being able to recognize that both sides have things to teach and both sides have things to learn from each other," said Randy Pendleton, an MTC teacher.

In recognition of the hard work of teachers and students, the crowd stood and cheered their accomplishments.

SQRC resident Michal K. Moore took the podium and read his piece "The Madness of Prison."

He read about the way knowledge bestowed power but only if one knew how to apply it. Moore elaborated on the difficulty of prison and the benefits of learning how to think outside the box. He reminded the audience that Helen Keller, the first blind and deaf person to receive a bachelor's degree, never gave up.

"How ignorance brings fear, and being able to educate oneself brings respect; when you are uneducated, the world will leave you behind," Moore said. "Freedom, to me, means to have freedom of thoughts. The number one way to free your mind is through knowledge and when properly applied it becomes wisdom."

Professor Ian Sethre took the podium next and spoke about citizenship. "I was eager to work with adults who were willing to learn. Education creates a new life-long learner with meaningful



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

MTC'S Resident clerk Crowe and Dean of Academic Administration N. Dinesh

participation. It is up to the learner to own education."

Sethre's speech concerned the five million returned citizens who may not vote in the U.S. The professor said, "We live in a bubble compared to the rest of the country. Persons in prison count but their votes do not."

Dennis Jefferson, another SQRC resident, spoke about domestic violence, a topic that resonated with many residents. He focused his speech on "The Tragedy of Othello," a Shakespeare play written in 1602, which he felt has relevance in today's society.

Jefferson said the play highlighted dysfunctional relationships of love, jealousy, manipulation, and marital abuse that remained relatable, universal, and senseless.

He emphasized Othello and Desdemona's toxic love story. "If Othello was here on the yard, taking groups and attending MTC, what insights would he share? What has he learned?" Jefferson asked the crowd.

"It is very important [to have] this kind of conversation in regards to domestic violence because it helps us address it," said Alex Naeve,

who teaches English and communications. "I think that it is very important to listen to the people whose voices are not represented on the outside."

"I think this event is important because it helps the staff and the students to get to know each other better," said Victor Olguin, a resident and MTC Academic Librarian.

Resident Daryl Farris discussed his childhood experiences in a speech about the Green Book, a travel guide for African-Americans. The Green Book guided African-American travelers to areas that had welcomed them, while alerting them about racist areas that did not tolerate them.

Part of Farris' speech also concerned the S&H Green Stamp Books — as distinct from the Green Book — a popular consumer promotional device for retail purchases, a scheme comparable to today's frequent-flyer points.

Farris talked about his father's military service and how the military frequently transferred families from one base to another. During one such transfer, he said, his family engaged on a

cross-country trip in 1964. He said he recalled his mother telling the children that they would travel to places that accepted S&H Green Stamps for redemption, but in reality, they traveled to places in accordance with Green Book recommendations.

Farris' parents shielded their children from the existence of the Green Book because its existence embarrassed them. He said he grew up in complete ignorance of the Green Book and did not know about it until he saw it featured in a movie a few years ago.

"My parents were proud of this country but they did not want their children to grow up knowing how shamefully America treated some of its citizens," Farris concluded.

Farris' speech had several attendees in tears.

MTC Chief Academic Officer Amy Jamgochian closed the event with positive remarks toward all the participants who had presented their narratives. She talked about how difficult it is for some people to speak in public, and that MTC can empower and give them the confidence to do so.

SQ's MTC students give professors feedback

By Jordan Junious
Journalism Guild Writer

Mount Tamalpais College held their first "Students Teaching Teachers" event this May, providing both new and returning teachers an opportunity to learn from San Quentin residents.

The forum encouraged MTC teachers to engage in open dialogue with students, and ask questions to better understand the lives of students and state of education in SQ.

"The purpose is to give them information about our experiences outside of the classroom, and how that informs their teaching and our ability to learn," event co-organizer Miguel Sifuentes shared.

Resident Carl Raybon, also a co-organizer, noted that the event began as a conversation between himself and Sifuentes. "When we started talking with Nandita Dinesh [MTC Dean of Academic Administration], we wanted to know what could be done to produce a better student."

"This event is about collaborating on how we prepare MTC teachers to be more effective in the classroom," said Dean Dinesh. She added that many of the instructors at the event had never taught in an incarcerated setting before.

Sifuentes shared that he wanted to take on the role of a teacher by sharing his prison experiences to break down stereotypes of incarcerated people. He wanted to emulate the pedagogical model of education in which a teacher can be the student, and a student can also be the teacher.

Five residents sat on a panel and fielded questions about various parts of their lives. Dinesh asked about aspects of their lives that would be helpful to illuminate for the new teachers.

Answers varied from limited access to the outside world, to time-heavy commitments such as jobs and self-help groups.

"We have other

commitments such as jobs and Prison Industry Authority but there's school and self-help groups. When do I fit in my time to study, or the chapters of reading that you assign me?" lamented one MTC student.

Dinesh further inquired about harmful assumptions past teachers may have held that impacted the students negatively.

"I wish I had had access to this workshop three years ago when I began volunteering at MTC," said Gabriella Licata, MTC linguist and researcher. "Much of what we learned on this day, I learned through conversations throughout the years. But, it would have been really useful from day one."

MTC students played a slideshow to demonstrate their living quarters and other parts of the institution to their teachers; this allowed them to gain a glimpse into what life looks like in San Quentin. MTC resident facilitators displayed photographs of the Upper Yard walkway, North Block entrance and cell, H-Unit, the chapel, and the canteen.

"The Students Teaching Teachers event helped me, as a teacher, understand the academic goals of my students and the limitations of their personal lives. Which is incredibly important as I design my course," said Fiona Callahan, first-time teacher in an incarcerated setting.

Several teachers and students expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to share with one another. Dinesh added that there would be two more opportunities for the group to reconvene in the middle and end of the summer semester.

"Evoking these questions about our roles as students and teachers extends beyond today. Examining our positions as people that are a part of this system is important if we are to truly transform it," Sifuentes concluded.

— Cesar Martinez
Journalism Guild Writer
Contributed to this story

Drama therapy program offers a deep understanding of personal trauma

By Arsenio P. Leyva
Staff writer

Prison theater programs promote incarcerated persons to explore traumas and to address them in form of drama therapy.

Maura Tarnoff an English lecturer at Santa Clara University has been bringing students to San Quentin Rehabilitation Center to participate in Shakespeare workshops, according to Santa Clara University.

The benefits of these drama therapy programs have moved the participants [incarcerated] to forgive themselves for their crimes, and make amends to

their victims, their families, get a deep understanding of personal trauma, the report stated.

According to Tarnoff, the residents who have participated have developed a sense of self-worth. Many have dropped out of gangs, obtained higher education and have reestablished family ties.

"Drama therapy taught me to work with all different kinds of persons. It helped me understand people's emotions, the humanity in myself and of others, said San Quentin resident Jay Kim. It also helped me to interact with my community together with my scene partners."

Shakespeare's Hamlet, has a positive affect post incarceration. Alumni recidivism rates have remained under five percent, compared to the average state rate of 83 percent.

The success of these drama therapy programs is due to how the Shakespeare Hamlet story relates, it is where an intellectual had found himself lost in a revenge tragedy and was lost as to what to do, stated the article.

With the support of formerly incarcerated participants, the drama programs have been so positive, they have expanded to 14 more California, added the story.

Tarnoff connects

Shakespeare with real social issues, including mass incarceration. Shifting the prison model of punitive justice towards restorative justice and true rehabilitation.

It offers the characters of the drama program to take on some of humanity's complicated emotions, providing a place to express them and address them with their peers, according to the story.

Elizabeth Arreola Aguilar, a lead scholar joined her class with the Shakespeare workshop at SQRC this past January, and two residents' participants acted out a scene related to keeping our emotions inside.

The scene consisted of one person sitting in the middle, around that person were other participants that represented different hidden emotions such as: happiness and sadness, while acting out those emotions, stated in the article.

The person in the middle sat there expressionless hiding these emotions, representing how we go through traumatic moments that may have happened without naming it. Through this scene, it was given a voice.

"What does it mean to use art to recognize somebody as human?" stated Tarnoff. "For me, the study of Shakespeare in these workshops creates the

possibility for more of these moments to happen, but they are not enough, another act must follow."



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews
Shakespearean Jay Kim

Titus Andronicus takes center stage in SQ's Chapel B

By Jordan Junious
Journalism Guild Writer

Murder, betrayal, and revenge were on full display at the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center with the first ever performance of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* within the institution.

This was the first time that this Shakespearean classic has been performed in a California correctional facility, according to the Marin Shakespeare Company, which sponsors and teaches at the prison. The resident performers delivered a tear-jerking production for several peers, staff members, and over 20 outside guests at the May event.

"We've decided to show you this exceptionally violent play in hopes that you can deal with the violence and trauma in your own life," said resident Bruce Bowman, who commented.

Resident actors transformed a potentially traumatic play into an opportunity to learn about and explore the underlying issues surrounding violent behavior.

"Why are human beings so foul? Shakespeare is showing us how deep trauma turns into psychopathic behavior," Bowman said.

The story followed *Titus Andronicus*, played by resident Steve Drown, through a series of misfortunes and tragedies.

The portrayal of the

rape and mutilation of his daughter, Lavinia, played by resident Tim McCrea, was replaced with an open dialogue with the audience. They unpacked the horrific event in an educational and informative way.

"Those in our Shakespeare family who have experienced rape say, 'You don't get past it, but you get through it,'" McCrea said. "Survivors can gain a new sense of self-reliance, self-resilience, and self-esteem."

Unlike traditional productions, the resident actors discussed the deeper issues surrounding anger, violence, and victimization.

"He's a hurt person, an angry person. Where does that anger come from?"

resident commentator Darwin Billingsley asked in reference to the story's antagonist, Aaron.

Audience members wiped away tears during resident Jay Kim's emotional depiction of his character, Lucius.

"[Expressing] the hatred, the anger, the frustration. That is what drama therapy is. It's giving back to the community," a resident said.

After the show, the actors received a standing ovation for their performance. Outside sponsor and co-director Suraya Keating opened the stage for questions and comments from the audience.

"I've never been to San Quentin. When I came in to see this work, I was prepared to have my heart

opened in a different way," said guest Michelle Bombe. "Sometimes...on the outside you lose the 'why', and this helps me get back to why I think it's important to tell people's stories."

Several residents took the opportunity to offer their gratitude and share their experiences in working with the company.

"I am so grateful for [co-director Leslie Currier] and Suraya. [Marin Shakespeare] has really helped me in my rehabilitation, getting up and talking in front of people," resident Colby Southwood said.

Keating started working for Marin Shakespeare in 2005 and she finds a "family-like bond" in the community they

have fostered at San Quentin.

"This program represents what is possible when we come together with open hearts," she said. "I would hope that this program inspires others just as we've been inspired."

The original idea for Shakespeare in prison came from Curt L. Tofteland, who attended the play. He said that he started Shakespeare Behind Bars in 1995 in effort to "get at what it means to be a human being."

"Shakespeare Behind Bars is not about performance, but rather, [the] process. It's like life."

Resident McCrea described his experience of working with the Marin Shakespeare Company as "life changing."

ESPAÑOL

De Prisioneros a Conductores de Vehículos de Carga

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair

Nueve latinos se graduaron de trailereros en el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin.

La ceremonia comenzó cuando la señora y co-fundadora Autumn O'Bannon, una conductora de camiones de carga por 15 años dijo, "soy una buena conductora (quality driver) me pregunté, ¿por qué? no hacer algo para que otras personas sean buenos conductores, así es como fue Concrete Rose fue fundado," dijo O'Bannon.

El evento procedió con la presentación de un video donde el padre de Autumn, Vince O'Bannon, hablo de como la idea de Concrete Rose fue inicialmente presentada por su hija quien le dijo "Papá, quiero hacer algo donde yo le pueda dar algo positivo a otras personas [los encarcelados]."

El Sr. O'Bannon, quien ha estado encarcelado por 15 años y sentenciado a cadena perpetua, recibió la idea de su hija y así fue como este proyecto comenzó.

Este programa está basado en un curso de correspondencia incluyendo un examen final que es requerido para



Photo by Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

El primer grupo de graduados del nuevo programa Concrete Rose

poderse graduar.

Según la Sra. O'Bannon, este programa es reconocido por el Departamento de Motores y Vehículos de California (DMV).

Ron Broomfield, el anterior director de CRSQ, y ahora director de todas las prisiones de California, extendió su apoyo y reconocimiento a todos los presentes, recién graduados y a la co-fundadora del programa.

El director del CRSQ Chance Andes, habló al reconocer que no es fácil poder facilitar o crear programas dentro de las prisiones. También, el admitió la importancia en poder dar la oportunidad de igualdad a la comunidad de habla hispana.

"Es mi sueño poder darles oportunidades a todos los hispanos en el futuro," dijo Andes y añadió. "Estoy

casado con una mujer hispana y queremos apoyar a todo ellos".

La Oficial de Información Pública Teniente L. Berry (PIO), felicitó a todos los graduados y les dijo que ella realmente les pide que se sientan orgullosos por ser la primera clase de camioneros. "A mi en lo personal me gusta manejar, espero que puedan obtener empleo como conductores y no re-ofendan,"

dijo Berry. "Tomen ventaja de esta oportunidad porque las administraciones cambian y no se sabe lo que mañana nos traerá."

El asistente del director Oak Smith, habló sobre cómo estos programas no son vistos en los niveles IV, ya que no hay programas como estos. Les recordó a los presentes el por que, esta graduación es especial.

Los Latinos que se

graduaron del programa con la esperanza que algún día puedan aplicar estas habilidades para la comunidad de habla hispana.

Otro residente que se graduó, Olegario Ambriz, esta pensando en poder abrir un negocio de camiones con las conocimientos que él aprendió en este curso.

El residente Misael Perez comentó, "Me da una nueva herramienta para cuándo yo salga a la sociedad".

Brooks Jenkins, la fiscal de San Francisco, felicitó al Sr. O'Bannon, por trabajar junto con su hija en este proyecto y reconoce que hay muchos hombres encarcelados quienes no son reconocidos cuándo tratan de salir adelante.

"Mi esperanza, es que esto se pueda aplicar en otras partes y no solo en San Quentin", dijo Jenkins.

Jenkins aconsejó, que cuando salgan no permitan que su pasado determine su futuro y que la pena por haber estado encarcelados les impidan salir adelante.

Jenkins comentó, "reconozco que se refieren a mi como una fiscal agresiva pero espero que nosotros podamos trabajar juntos para poder ayudar a los jóvenes en nuestras comunidades".

La exposición de arte de bordado



SQNews Archive

Un proyecto que ayuda a los residentes usando su creatividad

Por Guillermo Hernández
Y Adan Arriaga
Spanish Journalism
Guild Writers

Los trabajos de manualidades han causado un impacto positivo para los residentes en el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin.

En la biblioteca del CRSQ, se preparan para la primera exposición de arte del programa aguja de punto y serán exhibidas por 17 inspiraciones únicas elaborados por cinco estudiantes.

Este espacio, ha sido creado para canalizar la energía de los participantes en algo positivo que promueve la rehabilitación.

Charlotte Sanders, una empleada de la biblioteca de la prisión y organizadora del programa, nos informó, que este curso ha tenido un gran éxito, evolucionando de tal manera que este año se incluirá bordado y tejido.

"Tenemos un estudiante sobresaliente su nombre es Juan Rojas, él es una inspiración para sus compañeros", dijo Sanders.

Según Sanders, al inicio del programa solo contaba con seis participantes, hoy en día, cuenta con alrededor de 25 alumnos y sigue creciendo!

El curso ha inspirado a los

participantes a conectarse con sus familias y olvidarse del estrés, depresión y nostalgia. Cada uno ha creado piezas únicas que promueve un sentido de propósito y crecimiento personal.

"La clase de aguja de punto con la señora Charlotte Sanders me ayuda a despejar muchas cosas que uno pone en la cabeza... lo cual me lleva a ayudar a mas compañeros de la comunidad de San Quentin... especialmente a los que tienen hijos, los cuales son motivados para elaborar algunas piezas de aguja de punto para hacerlos llegar a nuestros hijos," dijo Juan Rojas.

En el futuro estas obras estarán expuestas en la biblioteca pública de la ciudad de Mill Valley, California y en este evento se les invitará a los presentes a donar fondos o materiales para el programa que actualmente está impactando positivamente la vida de los encarcelados.

La exposición en Mill Valley serán los días: 3 de mayo al 3 de junio del 2024 y estará presente la voluntaria Francesca Bell para atender al público, una escritora de poesías reconocida en la bahía que viene a participar en las clases de aguja de punto.

La organización sin fines de lucro, Los Amigos de la Biblioteca de San Quentin, también han donado los

materiales necesarios para estos trabajos que incluyen: tejido, costura, bordado, collares y pulseras de bolitas.

Al publicar estos trabajos en Facebook, una persona donó doscientos dólares para los materiales y así mismo, llegaron donaciones de muchas partes de los EE.UU., incluyendo material para estos trabajos, comentó Sanders.

Para el futuro, los organizadores están viendo la posibilidad de hacer manualidades de peluches para donar a los enfermos de los hospitales locales y están en espera de la autorización de parte de la administración.

La Sra. Sanders, confirmó que los trabajos del grupo serán exhibidos en la próxima feria de libros en junio del presente año y serán patrocinados por el mismo grupo aquí en la biblioteca de CRSQ.

Martin González López, dijo:

"El programa me inspira en las raíces de mi familia, porque vengo de familia con talento en el tejido. Este programa me ayuda a quitarme el estrés y de no tener pensamientos malos. Trato de ser mejor ser humano, mejorar mi vida para volver con mi familia. Mi talento está en la exposición y con Dios. Todo se puede, y yo me inspiró en mis pensamientos de talento para progresar al futuro."

Encarcelamiento masivo de mujeres en EE.UU.

Por Arsenio Leyva
Staff Writer

En EE.UU. desde 1980 alrededor de 26,000 mujeres fueron encarceladas y en el 2021-casi 160,000 en la gran mayoría jóvenes, según un reporte de Estadísticas del Buró de Justicia (Bureau of Justice Statistics en inglés).

En el 2021, las mujeres hispanas fueron encarceladas 1.3 veces más y la mujer afroamericana 1.6 veces más que la mujer blanca, encontró la organización Proyecto de Sentencia (Sentencing Project en inglés).

Después de años de la baja de las cifras, más mujeres están siendo enviadas a la prisión informó la reportera Chantelle Chandler, el pasado Diciembre del 2023.

"Hoy en día, las mujeres se están involucrando en actividades de pandillas, drogas y alcohol que terminan en encarcelamiento masivo de mujeres. Antes, este tipo de crímenes eran dominados por los hombres", dijo Casandra Evans, residente del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin.

La mayor causa de sus arrestos es por pobreza. Más de la mitad de las mujeres en la prisión estuvieron desempleadas por lo menos un mes antes de cometer sus crímenes, según la organización Iniciativa de Políticas de Prisión (The Prison Project Initiative) un gabinet estratégico sin fines de lucro.

"En realidad el sistema de agencias estatales fuera de la correccionales, es para resolver este problema, de

cómo proveer mejor vivienda, más recursos económicos para las mujeres y niños y aumento de asistencia pública acabando con el racismo estructural persistente," aclaró la co-directora de investigación del Proyecto de Sentencia, Ashley Nellis.

"A este paso, el aumento se tardara 75 años para regresar a los tiempos de los encarcelamientos anteriores", agregó Nellis.

Cuando el sistema de encarcelamiento aumenta un 500%, también aumentan un 500% las familias que han sido afectadas. Típicamente, cuando una madre es encarcelada, el hijo estará bajo la custodia de alguien que no conoce la familia y el hijo será entregado a los Servicios de Protección del Niños (Child Protective Services en inglés) que afecta a las familias, explicó Dominique Grant de la organización Mujer en Aumento (Women on the Rise en inglés).

En un estudio de Estadísticas del Buró de Justicia se encontró que más de la mitad de las madres en prisión en EE.UU. tienen hijos menores de 18 años de edad.

Lo que se necesita son trabajos donde la mujer pueda ganar un mejor sueldo y donde se puede mantener económicamente. Esto reducirá el encarcelamiento y habrá más oportunidades de reingreso a sus comunidades, agregó Grant.

Las mujeres encarceladas tienen un riesgo más alto de sufrir problemas de salud mental y asimismo usar sustancias tales como drogas

ilícitas, en comparación con mujeres que no entran en el sistema criminal, según un reporte liberado en 2014 de Mujer y Salud [Women and Health].

"Yo creo que la mujer al no encontrar trabajo comienza a usar drogas para lidiar con sus problemas ya que no buscan o no encuentra ayuda y nos refugiamos en las pandillas o en los carteles para recibir esa ayuda económica y emocional", dijo Tomas R. Ochoa encarcelado de CRSQ.

Grant compartió que sufrió bastante con su salud mental, hasta probó tratamientos psicodélicos [alucinantes] para tratarse. "Cuando pensaba que estaba bien, me encontré en el sistema carcelario cuando fui arrestada por primera vez con una felonía [grave] clase A".

Con nuevos ajustes de las leyes están aumentando las penalidades en contra de la inmigración, uso de opioides [drogas para el dolor], crímenes no violentos y de violencia domestica cuando la mujer se defiende de su atacante. Hay un incremento de criminalización en contra de las jóvenes de edad escolar y en contra de la mujer que se mantiene económicamente como sexo servidoras, agrega la organización de Iniciativa para Justicia Equitativa (The Equal Justice Initiative).

Nellis aconseja, cuando la mujer tiene contacto con el sistema legal, desde el primer momento, debería orientarse en programas que las dirige a encontrar las causas y las raíces de porque están cometiendo sus ofensas.

ANUNCIO

ANUNCIO
Atención: residentes del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin
Llegó a nuestra atención de una carta que está circulando.

Queremos eliminar cualquier rumor sobre el estatus de inmigración.
Recientemente se distribuyó un documento a la comunidad de habla hispana.

El objetivo de la carta adonde se le pidió que firmaran sus nombres como una petición, en resaltar los grupos de auto-ayuda que alega el cambio de las personas en

este documento.
El propósito de este anuncio, es de aclarar de que la carta que está circulando para pedir una segunda oportunidad en Estados

Unidos, es solamente una idea y no una propuesta de ley.
Por favor, consulten con un abogado de leyes migratorias. NO representamos ningún

caso de migración, no somos abogados y lo más importante es, ¡que no queremos que nuestra comunidad reciba falsas esperanzas!

SB 731 Ayuda a unos residentes de CRSQ reintegrarse

Por César Martínez
Journalism Guild Writer

Cientos de personas liberadas de CRSQ cada año tienen algo en común con millones de personas encarceladas en los EE.UU. — enfrentan limitaciones incontables en la sociedad aun después de cumplir sus condenas.

Al obtener su libertad física, los antecedentes penales les imponen barreras para reintegrarse como ciudadanos, de acuerdo al News Inside (Jamiles Lartey, 2023). Simplemente obtener necesidades básicas, como el empleo o rentar una residencia, pueden ser negados.

Para Felipe Portillo, residente de CRSQ, “Se requiere más para apoyar a los ciudadanos que regresan a sus comunidades”.

Bajo el Proyecto de Ley (Senate Bill) 731, los efectos del encarcelamiento ahora son calificados como sanciones y discapacidades para las personas liberadas. La ley,

presentada por el senador Durazo, tomo efecto el primero de julio, 2023. Después de cuatro años y bajo ciertas circunstancias, algunos antecedentes penales pueden ser automáticamente excluidos en una búsqueda de archivos.

Convicciones por otros crímenes, aun de felonía violenta pero no de ofensa sexual, también pueden ser excluidas en una búsqueda con petición ante un juez. La corte puede ordenar este alivio en “el interés de la justicia” y “deberá poner a lado el veredicto de culpable (y) deberá descartar las acusaciones” [SEC. 5. Sec. 1203.41(a) del código penal].

Tanto por alivio automático o por petición, el acusado “deberá a partir de entonces ser liberado de todas sanciones y discapacidades resultando de la ofensa” [SEC. 5. Sec. 1203.41(a)(1)].

Alivio automático
Los archivos de los antecedentes penales que califican serán marcados automáticamente bajo

los siguientes criterios: al completar la libertad condicional, después de cuatro años, si la persona no es condenada por otra felonía y no tiene cargos criminales pendientes [SEC. 6. Sec.1203.425 (a)1 (A), 1(B)].

Aun así, ciertas convicciones no califican. Esta parte de la ley no aplica a felonías serias, violentas o que requieran registrarse como ofensor sexual (bajo el “Sex Offender Registration Act”), y cuando la convicción no resulto en una sentencia a la prisión estatal [SEC. 7. Sec. 1203.425 (a) (1) (B) (i) (iv) (II)].

Manera de alivio
Cada mes el Departamento de Justicia revisará los archivos en la base estatal de datos de la justicia criminal para identificar a personas elegibles. Directamente al lado de los antecedentes criminales y aun los arrestos, una nota declarando “alivio concedido” con la fecha será incluida para esas personas [SEC. 6. Sec. 1203.425 (a)1 (A), (a) (2) (B);

SEC. 4. Sec. 851.93 (a) (1), (b) (2)].

Una convicción, o arresto cual no lleva a ninguna convicción, puede ser excluida. Para un arresto, de manera como que no ocurrió- la persona puede contestar cualquier pregunta relacionada con el arresto de esta forma. Para convicción y arresto, la excepción es una pregunta directa en un cuestionario o aplicación para empleo como oficial de policía [SEC. 4. Sec. 851.93 (b) (3), (d) (1); SEC. 6. Sec. 1203.425 (a) (4) (A)].

Para unas personas encarceladas, esta ley ofrece la esperanza de una vida mejor en un futuro quizás lejano.

“Antes tenías que esperar toda la vida sin opciones, [como] convicto de por vida; quisieramos que fuera cero años”, agregó Portillo.

Los cambios bajo esta ley no son completos y no incluyen a todos- son limitados a las felonías no serias o violentas para el alivio automático, y excluyen completamente a

los que cometieron ofensas sexuales. A la misma vez, el incluir (por medio de una petición) a los que cometieron felonías violentas es un cambio anormal.

Reformas anteriores sobre quienes pueden obtener la libertad han excluido a grupos de personas que cometieron ciertos crímenes. El propósito es de aplicar el beneficio de la reforma solamente a otros grupos de crímenes.

Propuestas de leyes como el Senate Bill 260 y 261, que permiten a los ofensores jóvenes llegar a la Audiencia de Libertad Condicional décadas más temprano, han excluido a los sentenciados bajo la ley de “3 Strikes”. Esta iniciativa de los votantes requiere el apoyo de 2/3 de la legislatura para ser enmendada. La legislatura no ha decidido cambiar la voluntad del público, aun con encuestas que indican que el público apoya el cambio de esta ley.

Por el otro lado, el proyecto de ley 731 sigue la práctica de la legislatura de excluir de

las reformas a los casos que involucran violencia, ofensa sexual y la reincidencia bajo el “3 Strikes”. Estas pólizas selectivas afirman una posición ideológica como requisito en el nombre de la seguridad pública, en donde la sociedad no aceptaría reformas para estas personas.

La pregunta de cómo se decide quién en realidad es un peligro, y quién merece una segunda oportunidad, tiene gran importancia para los encarcelados.

Luis Ángel López García, residente de CRSQ, apoya el cambio pero observa que la rehabilitación dentro de la prisión debería contar mucho para demostrar que una persona esta rehabilitado realmente.

“¿Que voy hacer por cuatro años? Siento que (nos) siguen viendo como un criminal, si me hacen esperar cuatro años más después de cumplir mi condena”, finalizó García.

—Miguel Sifuentes
Spanish Guild Writer
Contributed to this story

Honorando a Los Sobrevivientes de Crímenes

Por Idalio villagran
Spanish Guild Writer

En el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin, se conmemoró a las personas sobrevivientes de crímenes.

Con las presencia de diversas organizaciones y con un grupo aproximado de 70 personas entre residentes y personal del CRSQ hicieron una marcha y contaron sus experiencias como sobrevivientes de crímenes

Durante el evento se usaron pancartas con palabras como; compasión, respeto y empatía en diversos idiomas, los sobrevivientes llegaron con el propósito de hacer conciencia acerca del impacto y consecuencias de los crímenes.

“A la edad de 16 años mi madre fue asesinada, al igual que el padre de mis hijos fueron asesinados en las calles de Oakland” comentó, Latasha Spurell, sobreviviente y que trabaja en un escuela como consejera.

Ella también mencionó que aboga por todos los que son sobrevivientes como su familia y agregó. “Yo también soy una sobreviviente de violencia domestica”. Y como símbolo de respecto para sobrevivientes de violencia, se dio una vuelta alrededor del campo deportivo de la institución.

El residente y maestro de ceremonias, Marcus Henderson, le dio la bienvenida al Director de la prisión Chance Andes quien comentó

lo importante que es demostrar el apoyo a las sobrevivientes, “gracias a aquellos [residentes] quienes demuestran su obligación de dar cuentas”.

“Este evento permite una plataforma para fomentar la responsabilidad y la importancia de reparar el daño de incrementar la conciencia de que nosotros podemos lograrlo.

En el evento, Elizabeth Muñoz, organizadora del grupo Sobrevivientes de Crímenes para la Seguridad y Justicia (Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice) explicó, que para ella el proceso fue difícil en perdonar a los hombres que mataron a su hijo.

Muñoz también comentó que estos eventos le han ayudado mucho a digerir todo el dolor causado. “la primera vez que vine, aprendí de mí a través de ustedes, venir aquí vi que ustedes sufren. Aprendan a perdonarse ustedes para que sanen”, dijo la organizadora y continuó. “Es emocional y espiritual lo que están haciendo ustedes aquí para los sobrevivientes”, agregó Muñoz.

El Procurador de San Francisco Ronan Ross comentó, que el creó en el cambio y apoya a los encarcelados que están participando en grupos de rehabilitación, porque el menciona que ellos son las personas que necesita la sociedad para compartir el mensaje que uno puede sanar.

El residente Ricardo Quisquina dijo, “Yo me siento

mal por lo que hice. Mis decisiones de usar alcohol tuvieron influencia para cometer el delito que me tiene aquí y este evento me hace reflexionar acerca del daño que causa el crimen.”

En el evento los residentes dedicaron canciones como conmemoración a los invitados.

“Es mucho dolor expresar nuestros sentimientos a través de la musica y es difícil no llorar estando en el escenario frente a ellos como sobrevivientes”, dijo Gerry Muratalla residente y líder de “Banda esperanza”. Ellos dedicaron una canción dando respeto a todos los sobrevivientes de estos crímenes.

El residente Samuel Jackson canto la canción Yo Cierro Mis Ojos (I Close my Eyes) hizo que los presente se conmovieran por el mensaje de la canción.

La Sra. Maria Reynoso es trabajadora de CSSJ habló de como le ayudo en lo profesional y en lo personal y dijo “es la primera vez que vengo y es una experiencia única y muy importante, espero que siga esto y que siga la saneamiento”.

Las sobrevivientes compartieron los esfuerzos en promover nuevas leyes en el capitolio para que personas que están en las prisiones puedan salir mas pronto y así sus hijos no crezcan sin padres.

—Escritor contribuyente
Jordan Junious

Peluqueros encarcelados hicieron historia



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Previo a su corte de pelo, el oficial explico los detalles

Por Aristeo Sampablo,
Staff Writer

“Solamente eran dos personas en la peluquería, hablando, riéndose y conociéndose uno al otro, mientras le estaba cortando el pelo al oficial parecía algo normal”, dijo el residente Edgar J. Rodríguez. “Lo que antes no era permitido, ahora es una herramienta para ser pro-social e interactuar entre los Oficiales y reclusos”.

En el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin, ocurrió un suceso histórico, en el que se está viendo el cambio hacia una mejor convivencia entre los oficiales y residentes y bajo el nuevo modelo Californiano dentro de este instituto.

Algunos de los oficiales recibieron un corte de pelo por parte de los residentes: Oscar Acosta, Marcus Casillas, Saul Cedillo, Maurice Higgs, Manuel Mena y Edgar Rodríguez.

El Oficial Valladolid, fue el primero en recibir su corte de pelo y compartió que al principio estaba escéptico si debería confiar o no en alguien más que no fuera su barbero regular.

“Estaba nervioso, se mira bien, no se me metió mucho y la línea del pelo[quedo correcta]”, dijo Valladolid después de ver como le quedo el corte.

El evento llamó la atención a los residentes que con muchas expectativas se reunieron para ser testigos del evento, algunos residentes

salieron de sus celdas para presenciar como los oficiales recibían los cortes de pelo.

La idea surgió cuando el Oficial López y el residente Mena se encontraron en el edificio médico de la institución. López, miembro del equipo de Recursos del Modelo Californiano es encargado de cultivar la comunicación positiva y la capacitación entre los oficiales y las personas encarceladas. Es una buena iniciativa para que la brecha se cierre hacia en este nuevo concepto, añadió López.

Durante el evento, hubo diversos comentarios como el del residente Michael G. Navarro que mencionó, “Al tapar los uniformes con las batas, uno no podría distinguir entre un residente y un oficial y se ve como cualquier recluso”.

En este evento, no faltaron los elogios hacia los residentes y también para los oficiales al término de cada corte pelo.

El Oficial Ramírez

comentó: “yo me sentí como si estuviera en una peluquería de mi vecindario. Se siente bien cortarse el pelo, al final todos somos humanos”, Ramírez mencionó y agregó. “Para mi es difícil en confiar en alguien que me corte mi pelo, pero yo quiero tomar la oportunidad en difundir el mensaje de estos eventos y estoy tratando de romper estas barreras”.

El residente Oscar Acosta dijo, “Nunca creí que yo le cortaría el pelo a un oficial por la razón de que yo tenía la creencia de que el sistema no quería a nuestra comunidad[hispana]”, dijo Acosta y añadió. “Yo crecí en una comunidad que estaba llena de violencia, drogas y pandillas y cuando un oficial se acercaba, era para molestarnos asumiendo que todos éramos delincuentes”.

De acuerdo a Acosta, el evento le impactó en su desarrollo de la misma manera que a los oficiales, ya que todos somos seres humanos.



Conviviendo durante el corte de pelo del oficial



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

La resiliencia y la compasion, unidos en solo objetivo

SPORTS

Residents and Staff have monthly softball game

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho Sports Editor

In the second San Quentin's "Resident versus Correctional Staff" exhibition softball game the resident defeated the staff 13-6. Despite the loss, Warden Chance Andes said that he enthusiastically supported the healthy rivalry.

"I'm loving it," Andes said. "The first game was a huge success, and I'm happy with the forward progress made here as we build camaraderie. The vibe is great; the music playing to an upbeat crowd who's cheering. We have good players on both sides, but I want a "W" for the staff."

The residents overwhelmed the officers' team so quickly that the game instituted the "7 Run Rule" in the fourth inning.

"It was cool to see everyone coming together as players, where other labels do not define us," said resident and third baseman Kolby Southwood.

Correctional Officers and staff valiantly tried to come back, but the game was ended. Following game one, participants played a mixed game. Administration and residents joined forces for game two.

SQRC Health Program Manager III, Tonia W., scored after she led an inning with a sharp single to the outfield. She credited her skills when she played at San Francisco's Lincoln High and City College.

"It was amazing even



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

First base staff reaches to catch oncoming throw from teammate

though we got the pants beat off of us," she said. "I called the residents professionals and enjoyed playing against them — that included when we mixed the teams together."

Resident Lou Bernabei added, what mattered more was not who won but the game itself.

"As promised, the Warden kept his word to produce a monthly softball against the staff and incarcerated to promote the California Model," said Bernabei. "In the past, it was not often administration would even attempt to keep their word."

The games are part of the Reimagining San Quentin initiative, which aims to strengthen relationships between staff and incarcerated people through sports.

For the residents, the score was not indicative of the improved relationships between staff and residents.

"I feel it's great to see the whole camaraderie coming under one in the institution," said Correctional Officer B. Hart. "All work and no play is not so good, so having fun in a healthy way, like today, improves the moods of everyone. These events keep the spirits up so that hopefully no one feels down, especially with myself working in mental health. Everyone's health starts with the mental."

SQRC Public Information Officer, Lt. G. Berry, shared in the positive energy of the event.

"It's exciting and I'm glad it's the second softball

exhibition game," said Berry. "The vibe is different and it's great to see the smiling faces and interactions happening between both sides. We are now able to see that more participation and understanding improves overall communication and helps break down barriers."

Lower Yard Correctional Officer, E. Gonzalez, said he believed in the initiative.

"I think it's working and good to see us moving forward by making prison more humane," Gonzalez said. "When I first started, it was a different environment, so seeing the change firsthand in events like today allows us to progress towards a better future for all."

—Marcus Casillas Contributed to this story



Staff tosses pitch to an awaiting resident at bat



A. Denard looks for a pitch he can swing at and get a hit.



Error allows runner to be safe at first

Battle of the Blocks: A strong defense secures championship

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho Sports Editor

San Quentin's football season honored the California Model by competing in the Battle-of-the-Blocks round-robin championship. Each block recruited top-talent correctional officers who volunteered their time and leadership to put the teams together.

The victor secured bragging rights in a winner-take-all three-game championship series.

"Another great event today," said Warden Chance Andes. "Football is kinda scary because it's physical, but it's flag-football so that's good. I like the good music playing and great weather to go along with it, as we build bonds between building officers and the incarcerated representing their block."

The officers selected as coaches helped organize the teams. They practiced for over a month before the June 14 game day.

"Today is a good day for the population and staff to leave all the stress behind, to come outside and have a good time. The game shows we're all human beings who should treat each other with respect no matter what anyone is wearing — blue or green," said South Block Officer C. Wilson, who coached the South Block team.

West Block officer D. Evans coached his block. "I think it's awesome to be able to be outside seeing the incarcerated build camaraderie," said Evans. "It's sad we lost out, but we competed strong and I'm looking forward to next year."

Evans spoke of West Block's losses to both South Block and North Block. Their first game against South Block was a barnburner as West Block barely lost, 16-14. In



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon



Above: North Block defeats South Block, 34-20.

Left: Officer I. Hunter hoist Battle of the Block trophy.

Below: Resident Adams, North Block, throws a slant pass to his receiver who scores a TD.

Bottom: Officer I. Hunter dodges traditional ice bath.

their next game, they lost to champion North Block, 20-6.

In spite of the losses, the players gratefully participated in the California Model. "I think it was a fun day. The teamwork and communication improved connections with the staff. It's humbling because [the game is] a family thing, it's not just football," said West Block player Arron "Wobble" Moton.

West Block fell in the double-elimination tournament and South Block and North Block faced off in the finale that crowned North Block as Champion of the Blocks.

North Block's defense stuffed South Block's high-school legend quarterback Tommie Hall, while the offense garnered 34 points to win 34-20.

During the celebration, North Block's two-way player Aaron "June" Miles said, "Today gives us a different mind-set and takes us away from prison mentality by giving us some fun through

positivity."

Champion coach CO I. Hunter of North Block — the only female coach — showed the graciousness of a winner. "I'm really proud to be here and thank the North Block team for trusting me to coach them," Hunter said. "I feel great. My team knew they were going to win. We practiced hard and came back with a win."

South Block players handled the loss with dignity. "Even though we wanted bragging rights, it's about having fun in a safe way for everyone," said Keyshawn "Steez" Strickland.

SQRC Public Information Officer Lt. G. Berry summed up the day. "Everyone down here showing support is the excitement," Berry said. The loyal Dallas Cowboys fan added, "I am team South Block and I'm excited to be here. I'm a huge football fan."

—Marcus Casillas Journalism Guild Writer Contributed to this story



TIER TALK

Former incarcerated Youth LWOP enters the Q on better terms

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Sports Editor

Former incarcerated equipment manager Michael Pulido came in to film a documentary about his climb out of prison during the SQ Giants' opening day.

At age 16, Pulido received a sentence of Life Without Parole — known to many as LWOP. He came to SQRC six years ago as a leader in rehabilitation, which culminated in his resentencing to time served last year.

Incarcerated for 33 years, Pulido acquired lived experiences few people could ever comprehend. Pulido went from LWOP to home and never returned from his resentencing hearing in Santa Clara County last year, so he never had a chance to say good-bye.

Anthony Manuel Carvalho: It's great to see you! You really did get out! How'd you do it?

Michael Pulido: My main

goal was to work on myself, to get out and stay out of prison. I knew when my freedom came I'd be ready. SQRC gave me responsibility I didn't have in my life. I see a lot of guys with the same potential. I want them to know life isn't too big out there so don't give up hope.

MC: You said you could have avoided parole, but you didn't. What was your parole experience like?

MP: Parole wasn't punishment. I needed it. I acquired structure by working for H.E.A.R.T., The Homeless Engagement Assistance Response Team, which is a subdivision of Urban Alchemy.

MC: In San Francisco you can't survive on one job, correct?

MP: Yes, I work two jobs, save money, and make sure I'm set-up for the best possible outcomes.

MC: So were you ready to take on the world?

MP: I admit I couldn't do it



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

M. Pulido in a new role with the San Quentin Gaints

alone. It took a village to get me out, and a city to make me realize I have wonderful support systems that includes coworkers and supervisors.

MC: What does your village consist of?

MP: They are my extended family. They took a chance on me after I interviewed for

the job. I said, if you hire me, I'll prove I'm an asset in the community, not a liability. My circle is great and being around leaders and mentors contributed to my rehabilitation.

MC: Whom did you rely on to get out of prison and transition?

MP: Caroline, a volunteer

with the California Reentry Program, was pivotal to my release and re-entry. Now, she has helped to tell my story in a documentary after volunteering at San Quentin every Tuesday night for six years. She helped me grow.

MC: How did you get back in so quickly?

MP: I thank SQRC's Public Information Officer, Lt. G. Berry and Captain [ret.] Sam Robinson for coordinating this visit back to the prison.

MC: You've been out for one year what was it like?

MP: This is my first year out and first time coming back in. It's a humbling exercise and I feel responsibility to carry on this tradition on the inside and the outside. When I came down the hill, it was a feeling of old times. I know these guys work like I did and know they can contribute too. They will all be an asset to society.

MC: Man, from age 16 to 40, you gained wisdom beyond your years. How did you persevere?

MP: Life is a lot of choices. What helped me was learning the difference between needs and wants. I see a lot of transition homes focusing only on wants, but not understanding what's really expected of us in life.

MC: What are your plans for the future?

MP: I hope to come down SQ's hill to the Lower Yard a lot because I want to be part of this organization.

In the 120-year history of the oldest continual program at San Quentin, overcoming challenges is part of sports. Pulido stood out as the first non-resident player who left a mark of redemption that might stay unmatched.

For this day, Pulido excelled over every great athlete inside the walls of any penitentiary; and he took it all in stride as he threw out the first pitch.

While the team played ball, Pulido beat all the odds to live life.

—Marcus Casillas contributed to this story

New timing equipment to help maintain 1,000-Mile Club residents' health and wellness

By Marcus Casillas
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin's 1000 Mile Club joined the technology age of race management.

Instead of relying on outside staff to count laps manually, the May 17 race used RaceReady, an electronic system with radio frequency identification, better known as RFID, to count runners' laps.

"I think it's something that can be used to eliminate the possibility of runners' laps being missed especially for long races. I want every lap to be accounted for and this timer will do that for us," said resident Jose Fajardo, who broke last season's marathon record.

Friends of outside volunteers donated the timer equipment. Tim Fitzpatrick,

a 1000 Mile Club coach, said no other CDCR facilities have RaceReady technology.

Maloney said the club started training for the big one, the 26.2 mile San Quentin Marathon, and pointed out the club used RaceReady for the second time.

Volunteer Arron Ford who came in specifically for the implementation of the RaceReady, talked about the importance of this technology.

"Bringing this new technology into San Quentin helps us volunteers focus on the runners overall well-being in the moment of the race, instead of focusing on counting laps, and not just physically but their mental well-being too" said Ford.

Ford talked about how the timer technology would provide a more accurate



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

New RFID track clock looks intimidating but impressive

measurement of runners' times. Runners took number tags called "bibs," which contained microchips. The runners then wore the bibs on top of their shirts.

A timing strip lay on the start-to-finish mark. Every time runners passed over the strip, RaceReady counted the laps, adding the data to the 1000 Mile Club's laptop's database of names and assigned race numbers.

The technology might have one drawback. Maloney said reduced communication during the race might create some challenges to building mentoring relationships between coaches and runners.

"We build connections counting laps manually, letting runners know their lap count as they pass by. Now, we hand out water, electrolytes, and energy chews to encourage and support them

during a race," said Maloney.

The race ended with RaceReady recording Fajardo as sparking an overall win for the 10-mile race with a time of one hour, three minutes, and 33 seconds.

"I always have butterflies before a race," said resident Marko Johnson. "It sounds easy but it's really hard when you need to be at your best for that race day. I feel content and confident after because I get to check something off of my bucket list through accomplishment. Best of all, I get to tell my family I ran a 10-mile race."

Rookie runner Antonio Brown said, "I feel the excitement of accomplishing my goal of 10 miles for today, and training for the next one."

Coach Fitzpatrick said, "This club gives a sense of community. There's good

runners with good times ... we love these guys."

Resident Jose Maya talked about how running helped him to keep calm and from thinking about home, and gave him the confidence to come out and decompress from those anxieties.

"I feel the exhilaration of my spirits, its uplifting to be out participating. I feel the inner peace because when I am running, it's just me and the track, giving it my focus," said Maya.

The newer runners met the 1000 Mile Club's legendary volunteer coach Frank Ruona who retired last year. He said he still visited San Quentin for events but not for weekday workouts and team meetings.

"Race day is about camaraderie," said Ruona. "Even if old-fashioned stopwatches were used it didn't matter."

Intramural Basketball Season Championship League

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Sports Editor

Dedicated members of the Sports Ministry Basketball Program continued to hone their skills in the off-season throughout the Intramural Basketball League.

The season ended in a hard-fought playoff series through April and progressed to a championship conclusion by the end of the month. In game three, Team Greezy's Coach Ford managed his

team brilliantly after almost blowing a 21-point-lead to ultimately hold on to the victory and the championship by beating 94 Feet West with a score of 110-105.

The IBL playoffs seeded eight teams, in the end, based on the season records.

The playoff rankings consisted of top seed Greezy at 4-1, 94 Feet West at 4-1, 94 Feet East at 3-2, The Ones at 3-2, Team Pookie at 2-3, and Team Mook at 1-4.

Team Greezy and 94 Feet West both finished the

regular season with a 4 -1 record, but Greezy won the tie breaker to establish the playoff alignment.

Greezy and 94 Feet West earned byes as the first round slated two single elimination games.

The semi-finals pitted the first-round victors, Team Pookie and Team Mook, against the top seeds in best-of-three series matches, Team Greezy and Team 94 Feet West. Each series ended abruptly as top seed, Team Greezy swept The Ones,

92-41 and 80-68. Second seed, 94 Feet West did the same to Team Pookie with victories of 76-50 and 98-81.

The Greezy's leading scorer had 21 points and 7 rebounds. 94 Feet West's resident Donell "Sonic" Pimpton dominated the court with 18 points followed by Ryan "TAZ" Matlock and Toaisi "Shaka" Matagni's who had 10 boards secured the team's championship spot.

The best-of-three championship between the top two seeds went to series-deciding

game three as Greezy and 94 Feet West split the first two games — 94 Feet West won game one, 114-104 but Greezy tied the series at game two, 119-97.

The championship deciding game three was a classic that was played on May 28.

Team Greezy's Coach Ford managed his team brilliantly after blowing a 21-point lead to hold on to the victory and the championship by beating 94 Feet West by the score of 110-105.



SQNewsArchive

Warriors bounce back with win over Prison Sports Ministry after a string of losses

By Jason Satterfield
Journalism Guild Writer

The SQ Warriors lost, lost again, lost a third time, and then — finally — recovered.

The Warriors suffered three losses in May. They lost twice to PSM Green Team, and once to Town Boogie, before winning their second game of the season after avenging their losses to PSM Green Team.

The PSM Green team, led by veteran volunteer coach Bill Epling, visited San Quentin over three weeks and squeaked by each game winning with scores of 77-71 and 69-70.

The latter game ended on a dramatic buzzer beater.

The rivalry traditionally met at center court, and SQ Kings' coach Demond "Oolah" Lewis emceed the event. He thanked Epling's team and called them an extended family that brought in energy and love.

The hard-fought victories

for the PSM Green team overcame lead changes from great passes and scoring.

Examples included the PSM Green Team's Charles stealing the ball and scoring, Donell "Sonic" Pimpton's three-pointer to grab a lead, and Keyshawn "Steez" Strickland dropping treys while directing his team in both games.

Contributors to the Warriors' near-victories included David "Three" Rodriguez and Veltse "Teese" Mathis, who dished out assists to teammates like Darius "DP" Poole.

The second game turned out as a classic double-overtime buzzer beater that tested the spirit of the SQ Warriors.

Zemeaitelv "Kasper" Kaspanan, Strickland, Derrell "Saddiq" Davis, and Aoden "AD" Samad stepped up their game in the rematch to lead the Warriors to another near-victory.

The foes stayed deadlocked

for six quarters until Strickland hit a huge three to take the lead 69- 66. The PSM Green team's player Chris hit a two and the visitors' Max floated the buzzer beater to steal the victory from the SQ Warriors, 70-69.

The game-ending shot generated screams heard all the way to the baseball field and as far away as the Upper Yard.

Epling said about the double-overtime victory, "We were down the whole game, down 10 points after the third quarter. It was great as my guys battled back," Epling said.

On June 1, the SQ Warriors continued their losing streak with another loss against Town Boogie.

Both teams played a strong game as Town Boogies' Geoffrey "Free" Gary sank a three to end the first quarter tied at 21.

The second quarter included Mathis delivering a bomb

the length of the court to Evans who scored just before Strickland hit a three to end the half with the Warriors up 49-45.

In the third quarter, Boogie's Authman showed great defense by blocking the Warriors' Strickland's shot; and Derrell "Saddiq" Davis scored two, before his teammate, Evans made two free-throws.

Authman yelled, "Bulls---," making the Warriors laugh, because if they would swear, they would receive a technical foul. Authman was the top scorer with 33 points and Sam put in 27 for the victors. "Being in the moment; it's not about the points, it's about playing hard. We imagined it turning out the way it did," said Authman.

Town Boogie's Sam scored two buckets within two minutes to widen the visitors' lead 81-70 but the home team fought valiantly to bring the

deficit down to five as the game ended with another heart-breaking loss 97-92.

June 8 proved pivotal as the Warriors grabbed their second victory from the jaws of a seventh defeat.

The home team played the PSM Green Team, taking a commanding lead over the guests as San Quentin's Dejean "Duty" Evans put the Warriors up 22-11 at the end of quarter one.

The second quarter featured PSM Green Team's Masa, adding to his highlight reel by dunking on the Warriors. Masa also dominated defensively by blocking Mathis' shot as the PSM Green Team closed the gap to end the half: Warriors up 33-30.

The defense dominated the third quarter as the Warriors held on, ending the period with a 52-48 lead.

In the fourth quarter, PSM Green Team pulled ahead by

four points. Then, with only seconds left in the game, the Warriors snatched the lead by one and PSM Green Team came back to tie the game, sending it to another overtime.

The Warriors took a commanding lead in over-time and sealed the deal with a much-needed victory for the home team. The Warriors won xx-xx.

Shauna B. and Epling speculated the last game together. The all-state basketball player from Arizona High said, "I liked the competitiveness, camaraderie, and friendly atmosphere of San Quentin Warriors Basketball."

Coach Jeremiah "JB" Brown showed frustrations over a losing streak as playing had not gone well for his team until the June 8 win.

The losses and victories throughout the months dropped the Warriors record to two wins and six losses.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Change is possible all across California

SQNews, I am a sixth term inmate serving 17 years currently in Ironwood. I am writing to put a bug in your ear, Ironwood needs a makeover too!

In your October issue I liked what training supervisor said in the Norway comes to SQ article. "There's a thing we like to say in Norway; You go to court to be punished."

Six terms is no less than a tragedy turning into a novel, but we have ideas down south to assist the Governor to make CDCR a real model for improving public safety through rehabilitation, education, and vocation training.

There are hundreds of guys in this prison working their tails off because they recognize the hope in the air, but they don't have SQNews to publicize. Can someone come write what could be envisioned down here because an investment has already been made.

—Kevin Woods Ironwood state prison

Elderly incarcerated person desperately wants subscription

I am currently in Butte County MCRP program with 38 inmates. We are desperately wanting to be added to your mailing list but we are not allowed to send money.

Your paper is very informative and we could use news that effects the prison population, the new and amended laws. Especially elderly law for non-violent offenders.

—Donnie Broadway Butte County MCRP

New Yorker wants SQNews model in NY

I really wish New York Department of Corrections would do a newspaper like you guys do. Good work guys and keep it going, that's a real good thing you guys got going on over there.

—Jason Markovitz Mid-State CF

SQNews on tablet for a daily read

Good afternoon I am currently incarcerated in Tehachapi serving a 21-year sentence and I am a huge fan of your newspaper. I look forward to them every month.

If I could read your news daily I would. You are doing such a good job putting all the great news inside the paper keep up the good work.

—Francisco Mancilla CCI

Oregonian impressed

Greetings from the prison house in Ontario, Oregon. I came across a copy of sqnews. I was really impressed how much more positive the prison is.

I also a program on ESPN called "26.2 To life." It was great to see the hope and even with so much time in and time left. The prison I am in is so dead with no programs. Thanks.

—Darry Alston SRCI

SQNews provides clarity on laws

My name is Richard Vivanco and I'm currently incarcerated at Wasco State Prison. I've been in and out of this prison system for the last 40 yrs. I read the San Quentin news every chance I get. I enjoy following up on the San Quentin

Warriors' what a squad. As a result of reading your newspaper I've been fortunate to understand our laws of the state a little more clearly and not being naive to the fast changing times.

Unfortunately there has been very few of the SQNews circulating at our temporary residence so we basically wait patiently for our turn to come up as we share the only copy making its circuits. I would be extremely grateful if I could be added to it's long list of recipients so that I can continue to learn how all those new laws and old! Are affecting us and those that we love.

—Richard Vivanco Wasco St. Prison

Hope reaches North Kern resident

Dear SQNews, It's hard to see a path that leads to happiness, at least it is when you have 50 to life in front of you. So happiness, even the possibility of, seems a little out of reach at the moment here in my single cell at North Kern State Prison.

At 51, a 50 to life seems undoable. Yet after receiving your paper today, I can at least see a semblance of hope. Reading about the native Hawaiian religions group made me think of my late wife Mary who grew up on Maui, she would have found joy in their celebration. Culture, family, and community were all important to her.

Reading about Marvin Walkers second chance at life gives me hope for my own. Journalism studies, mental health, gender change, and half marathons, art work and inspiration all covered in your paper. I may not be happy with where i am but at least i know there's something else worth being, the game is not over, the day is not done and I may yet be of use in this world.

From what I've read here today all of us incarcerated still have the ability to create positive ripples. Thank you for showing me that.

—Shaun McMahon Delano State Prison

EDITORIAL



Art by Brandon Buchanan

Photo by Dante D. Jones

No tough on crime rhetoric for Trump

By Marcus Henderson Editor in Chief/ Executive Editor

Cries of it's a "witch hunt," a "scam," and the court system is "corrupted" and "rigged" were some of the comments former U.S. President and business mogul Donald Trump made after being convicted of 34 separate felony charges.

Trump was convicted of falsifying business records in his so-called "hush money" trial. Hey, but he can still run for president.

So where is the "tough on crime" rhetoric from these "law and order" Republicans when it comes to Trump's convictions? Believe me, I understand, some of us who are also convicted of crimes still have family and friends who love and support us.

However, where are all the derogatory terms of "monster," "predator," and "coward" for "the Donald?" I am not a Democrat or bleeding heart liberal and I'm not the one to put down Mr. Trump, especially now that he is also system impacted. Nevertheless, people of color and poor Whites had to endure a criminal justice system that has been stacked against them for centuries.

Some Republicans claim Democrats used the court system to attack a political rival for political gain. Is this not what happened with the passing of the 14th Amendment, which had a loophole from which the Southern states benefited, and which has kept de facto slavery on the books to this day? Basically, you are subject to slavery if you are convicted of a crime.

This led to the Black Codes and vagrancy laws of the past that were used to put Black people back into slavery — legally. Hmm, a "witch-hunt,"

a "scam" — the court system is "corrupted" and "rigged." Yeah, Mr. Trump, maybe you have a point. But Trump never had to experience a violent arrest by police, staying a night in jail, or facing a bail out of his price range. Oh, the feds (FBI) did raid his house, so he might have earned a little street cred for that.

Also, Trump didn't have to face multiple charges with an overworked and case-laden state appointed attorney, who may or may not remember his client's name. Trump had a team of lawyers and a wealth of campaign donations. It is hard enough for poor people to get a GoFundMe page for people who died, let alone hire a lawyer for good representation — go figure.

I watched Trump on TV as he sat at that defendant's table. I observed his face as witness after witness took the stand to testify. I kept thinking, Yeah, I know that feeling. But will Trump ever have any remorse or take accountability for his actions? His history has shown he has mastered the "art" of deniability with a cult of people who seem to be willing to be fall guys and not testify against Trump. Who would have thought some of these high-level conservatives would take "stop snitching" to a whole other level?

Trump still has a right to appeal his conviction, but once again, unlike other national and statewide felons, Trump is not likely to receive a blanket "Your Appeal Has Been Denied" with no other response from the courts. His case may even make it to the U.S. Supreme Court, because he is the first former U.S. President convicted of a crime. And it probably won't take decades of him sitting in prison for them to decide his case either.

The double standard some of these Trump supporters have about crime doesn't surprise me, when it comes to one of their own. I know gang mentality. I was born and raised in Los Angeles, Calif. I've been there — your "homie" (friend) is always right, no matter who it hurts. Moreover, we were willing to overlook all bad behavior and defend our agenda at all costs.

Trump is still the Republican candidate going up against Pres. Joe Biden, who has equally questionable views on criminal justice reform. But I must commend both men: Trump for signing the First Step Act and Biden for the Second Chance Act, as well as other minor legislation that affects low-level drug offenders.

However, Biden's 1994 crime bill still has disenfranchised the lives of generations of people of color. Trump's separation of immigrant families at the border and the dismantling of women's abortion rights by stacking a conservative Supreme Court will also have long-lasting effects. Both candidates more than likely will not make any significant changes to overhaul the justice system.

Nevertheless, they both have joined the reality of the other millions of system-impacted people and their families. Biden's son Hunter just recently was convicted of three felony weapons charges.

It is ironic that I remember Trump and his supporters were chanting "Lock her up, lock her up" about Hillary Clinton and her email allegations — to now claiming the system is rigged.

Yeah, maybe Trump has learned that he might can't just walk down Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and get away with it. Welcome to our world.

AROUND THE WORLD



Welcome to Australia

Allisa Greenberg

California Model Chronicles By Chuck van Vliet



ART PROFILE



Mural in San Quentin's Chapel A produced by B. Fowler and resident Scott McKinstry

All photos from SQNews Archives

Resident paroled after serving the prison community using art to release hurt in healthy way

By Michael Callahan Staff Writer

After serving 25 years in prison, more than half at San Quentin, Bruce Fowler said he looked forward to reuniting with family, especially his daughter and grandchildren.

Fowler dedicated himself to service in the community and left lasting favorable impressions on residents and staff who met him. Despite the tattoos and his 6'3" size, several residents and staff have said he has a welcoming and kind demeanor. He has encouraged many residents to pursue positive programming and never shied away from talking about insight, causative factors, or board preparation.

"It comes down to recognizing the harm you have done and making amends for that harm," Fowler said.

When Fowler spoke about the changes he made to his way of thinking and how he implemented those changes, he stressed the importance of family. He said reuniting with his daughter after 34 years had motivated him to realize those changes. "Living those changes takes work," Fowler said.

Fowler completed or facilitated many self-help programs during his 13 years at San Quentin: California Reentry Institute, Kid CAT, T.R.U.S.T., Humans of San Quentin, and Hope for Lifers, among many others. Besides



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon

Bruce at Trauma Talks event

these many programs, he worked in plant operations.

He said his work with William James Association in Arts in Corrections turned him into an extrovert and had given him a platform to release much inner hurt in a healthy way.

The CRI program and its founder, Collette Carroll, have had the greatest impact on his rehabilitation, Fowler said. "Collette provided me space and opportunities necessary to trust someone." He said the program provided all the necessary skills that incarcerated persons would need for release.

Fowler had an eye-opening moment on The Q's handball court. "In the past I used anger and intimidation. I wanted people to fear me." He said that whenever other players had seen him coming, their facial expressions had

"I knew I could change my thinking to a kind and happy person once I was open-minded and had understanding of my belief system."
—Bruce Fowler

changed and they had left the handball court. This experience prompted Fowler to change; he did not want to be "that guy."

"I thought my anger issues were terminal," Fowler said. To help turn his anger to self-worth, he constructed a portable travel workbook that contained information on his triggers, root and causative factors, and cycle of violence. The notebooks also contained relapse prevention plans, and positive values. Soon, other residents wanted personal workbooks and Carroll started to use the concept in the CRI curriculum.

"I knew I could change my thinking to a kind and happy person once I was open-minded and had understanding of my belief system," Fowler said.

After a couple of board denials, Fowler started to

look for a better understanding and definition of root and direct causative factors. The rejections inspired him to create a board preparation program with the goal to provide fellow residents with opportunities for comfort in stressful environments and the ability to speak their truths.

"I witnessed his talents as an artist and his work ethic. We became good friends and co-workers," resident Scott McKinstry said.

McKinstry said his and Fowler's interests coincided and the two of them teamed up on several SQRC art projects such as murals. They also worked on a remodeling of the Arts in Corrections studio. He said their creativity and collaboration showed on the walls around the facility, from the mural in Chapel A to the painting displayed in Arts in Corrections studio to the walls in Donner section.

Fowler said a higher power channeled most of his artwork. "My art is not of God or spirit, but of family and the victim of my crime; those are my higher power." Many of his paintings deal with nautical themes and oceanic images, reminding him of his time before incarceration.

"He is an intelligent, trustworthy, generous human who is brilliantly creative and one hell of a craftsman. I am grateful to have met him," longtime friend and fellow resident Gregory Stephens said about Fowler.



Several art pieces that were displayed during the Art Initiative Expo at SQ

