

San Quentin News

EST. 1940

PRODUCED BY THE INCARCERATED — ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE

VOL. 2024 NO. 5

MAY 2024 — ISSUE 168

SANQUENTINNEWS.COM

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION: 3,409



Courtesy of CCWF

Residents, volunteers, and administration gather in the new Media Center at CCWF.

Pollen Initiative opens Media Center at CCWF

By **Jamie R. Harrison**
CCWF Guild Writer

The first ever Media Center was opened in the California Correctional Women's Facility. Approximately 24 incarcerated persons, outside guests, and administration filled the local visiting area for the historical moment.

The March event highlighted the long awaited chance for the CCWF residents to have the platform and equipment to speak out in totality on the many events and struggles the incarcerated persons within the largest women's facility has had to endure.

"It is a great honor to support your stories. Your stories need a gigantic microphone," said Kate McQueen, Pollen Initiative Editorial Director,

in the clearest sentiment of this huge endeavor.

San Quentin Media Center and Pollen Initiative helped inspire this hope for the incarcerated individuals within the community of CCWF. The visiting room was filled with laughter, networking, and a special kind of gratitude. Emotion was evident on every face that enjoyed this moment of rejoicing.

The day begun with the speeches and resident Nora Igova, a peer in the new starting journalism guild and media center cohort was the Master of Ceremonies.

"My Bulgarian accents is a perfect way to overcome the obstacles of public speaking," said Igova, joking. She then introduced Acting Principal Michele Quintana who has been

instrumental in enriching the lives with in the community. Quintana has been a big influence over the past nine years overseeing the academics in CCWF.

Jesse Vasquez, Executive Director for Pollen, the Friends of San Quentin News, and *Wall City Magazine* was the man with a plan who had a crucial role in the structure and believing in the need to uplift CCWF residents' voices. Without Vasquez's perseverance and tenacity, the Media Center would not have been a success.

Another speaker, formerly incarcerated Richard "Bonaru" Richardson, stood with poise and power, making a point to serve the incarcerated people. Richardson's

See CCWF on pg 6

Ella Baker Center makes Spanish presentation at San Quentin

By **Edwin E. Chavez**
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights discussed the Racial Justice Act (La Ley de Justicia Racial) with over 150 non-English-speaking, Spanish language residents at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

"Wow there is a lot of people in here, for real this is a good surprise, good morning everyone!" exclaimed in Spanish, Simelia Rogers, EBC program coordinator.

Rogers, communications coordinator Norma Orozco and public policy intern Juan Flores introduced themselves to the crowd who applauded as a gesture of gratitude.

The presentation was given entirely Spanish and gave an introduction on four categories of violations of the RJA and seven steps to filing a petition.

"For us, it was important the program was originating in Spanish, conceptualized in Spanish, and not translated from English," said Rogers.

Jessie Milo, another resident, noticed that there was no one from the Latino community at the previous EBC presentation on the RJA.

"I was concerned that no one was going to show up, so I was proud when we ran out of chairs — there was so many people," added Milo. "One of the biggest challenges in organizing is getting a community to care about a system that they feel has harmed them."

This is breaking ground for a community that lacks the resources, access to rehabilitation or support from the judicial system. Access to counsel, LexisNexis and other legal

See EBC on pg 4



Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

Organizers hand out resource materials to SQ Spanish residents.

Canine Companion program holds first graduation

By **Michael Callahan**
Staff Writer

The first-ever puppy graduation at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center celebrated four resident handlers and the puppies Artemis and Wendel, whose hard-to-miss presence the residents, correctional staff, and administration noticed.

The handlers said the national nonprofit dog program Canine Companions empowered them in a meaningful and purposeful way.

"I am able to give back to a community that I took so much from.

This dog 'Artemis' is going to help a veteran or someone with a disability. He has a job to do and I had a hand in that," resident Jared Hansen said.

The dog's journey as a service animal for disabled persons began with the residents training the puppies for one year with a co-raiser—an outside handler—from the community. Upon completion of the program, the animals will go to a professional training campus in Santa Rosa.

Canine Companions CEO Paige

See CANINE on pg 4



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Managing Editor Bostyon Johnson gave presentation of newsroom to prestigious guests (front row, third from left: Warden Chance Andes, Governor Newsom, and Prince Haakon).

Governor Newsom and Prince of Norway visit the Q

By **C. K. Gerhartsreiter**
Staff Writer

Rumors of a high-level visit had haunted San Quentin all spring. Who would come? The governor?

Perhaps the Prince of Norway? No one knew for sure until Tuesday, April 16. On that cool and sunny morning, an entourage of some 30 visitors crowded into the newsroom of the San Quentin News. Governor

Gavin Newsom, with his towering height appeared impossible to miss, and Warden Chance Andes, but what about the prince?

See NORWAY VISIT on pg 4



Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

Chase Benoit handlers display training accomplishments.



GRADUATION:

SQNews HOSTS 2024 JOURNALISM GUILD GRADUATION

— STORY ON PAGE 7

AAPI STORIES:

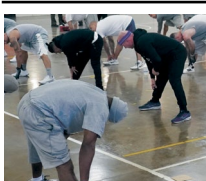
AAPI AWARENESS AND HISTORICAL FACTS

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MOTHER'S DAY:

RESIDENTS SEND LOVE AND DEDICATION TO THEIR MOTHERS

— STORY ON PAGE 12-13



SPORTS:

WARDEN EXERCISES WITH RESIDENTS AT SQ FITNESS EVENT

— STORY ON PAGE 20



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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

SQTV's Brian Asey reunites with his family

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Contributing Writer

Brian Asey, 57, paroled from San Quentin Rehabilitation Center in March, after serving 26 years in prison. Originally sentenced to 85 years to life under California's Three Strikes Law, his sojourn took him to prisons in Tracy, Centinela, Solano, and Soledad.

Under Assembly Bill 109, "Realignment," Asey arrived at San Quentin December 15, 2011. One of his first stops there was to San Quentin TV, where he immediately took an interest in videotaping, editing, and producing content for the prison's close-circuit channels.

"I started volunteering down here before there was a media center," said Asey. His 12-year tenure at SQTV, as a volunteer and worker, predates the existence of *Ear Hustle*, *Uncuffed*, and *Forward This*. Back then, *San Quentin News* was in the main education building.

Asey said he saw a fundraiser for Haiti on the SQTV station. He said the then-Inmate Advisory Council chairman, Sam Johnson, introduced him to Troy Williams who was also incarcerated at the time. The two worked together on several projects. The first unproduced video they took part in was titled "Institutionalized."

"When I first came down here, all I would do is shoot video," said Asey. "I was intimidated by the computers so I documented everything."

As time moved on, Asey learned his way around camera equipment, audio equipment, computers, and editing software. "I was down there working but I didn't have a job," he said. "After we did the TEDx project," he said a job assignment at SQTV followed in 2015.

"When Troy left, he left me in charge of San Quentin Prison Report," said Asey. "Back then *SQNews*, *SQPR* and *SQTV* had odds with each other. I don't know what that was all about."

Almost ten years ago, Asey became one of the founding members of the SQ satellite chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the first ever chapter established inside a U.S. prison.

"When we initially started SPJ, it was the newspaper and the Prison Report," said Asey. He was later elected vice chair and ultimately chairman. To keep it right, we elected a representative from each organization to head the first SPJ and do the by-laws to make it work for both sides."



Brian Asey (far right) stands proud with his family.

Courtesy of Brian Asey

In 2022, Asey earned his Associate in Arts degree from Mt. Tamalpais College, the on-site campus at San Quentin. "As a result of me receiving this AA degree, I was part of Dream Big," he said. "I was one of four recipients to receive a scholarship. Now I'm taking classes at Adams State. I've (also) been accepted to Project Rebound at San Francisco State. I meet all my requirements to attend." Project Rebound assists the formerly incarcerated in making their transition to college from prison.

In his leisure time, Asey started playing basketball at San Quentin. By 2012 he was on the 40-and-over league. "I played four years, and then I went to the front office," he said. "We created a board and made it an organization by turning it into a program. We're in the process now of trying to get sports recognized as a part of rehabilitation."

Asey left his longtime position in the Media Center to join The Last Mile's second audio video production course taught at the prison. "I went over there to enhance my media endeavors," he said. "What I plan to do with the different skills

in multimedia is podcast—the engineering side of it." One project he was working on is the documentary "Growing Up Behind Bars." "It's dealing with four guys who've been incarcerated since they were children."

"I've taken a number of self-help groups," said Asey. Non-violent Communication, Victim Offender Education Group, and Guiding Rage into Power (GRIP) are some of the major self-help groups Asey has attended during his time at San Quentin, to name a few.

"I never thought I was going home," said Asey. "The reason I started taking groups was because of Troy (Williams). I heard a guy telling a story when I was filming GRIP: He asked, 'At what point in my life did I turn left when everyone turned right?'"

Asey was resentenced to 25 years to life. Because of all the work he did on himself, he was found suitable for parole by the Board of Parole Hearings. In the end, he said "My biggest accomplishment, beside the TEDx, was creating the group that addresses childhood trauma and sexual harm."

ABE III teacher King talks about his journey to San Quentin

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

When the head of a prison asked him casually at a mutual friend's birthday party to consider teaching at his carceral institution, he replied, "What? You have a school at San Quentin?" That sparked the conversation between then-Acting Warden Oak Smith and B. King, who would become a new Adult Basic Education teacher at SQRC's Robert E. Burton Adult School.

Until the day of his interview in November 2022, King had never entered a prison. He had never even known anyone incarcerated. The teacher, in his mid-fifties, had taught in a North Bay public high school for a quarter century, specializing in teaching first-generation college-bound youth.

The day of his job interview at San Quentin "was the first time I saw a man in blue," King said, "and everyone was so respectful. They [the students] all said, 'Welcome to San Quentin,' and they said, 'Drive safe now,' when I left. That night, I told my wife, 'You would not believe the respect the inmates there showed me. I gotta go and work there.'"

Sitting relaxed outside his classroom in the Education Complex on the first day of spring, the 6'2" tall and athletic educator sported olive khakis and a black SQ Education hoodie. Facing the sun, he wore classic tortoiseshell RayBan Wayfarers and a sizable soul patch above his chin. He said that a few hours earlier, he had ridden his Suzuki motorcycle to work.

Unsurprisingly, Bertho Gauthier, one of King's teaching assistants for the last six months, thought King cool. Asked to rate the degree of coolness, Gauthier enthusiastically replied, "Extraordinarily cool." He said King taught more than academics, "he teaches us life lessons, like how to function in today's society."

King did not equivocate on egalitarianism. "Here at San Quentin, I do not



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQN

Adult Basic Education teacher B. King

forget that we are all human," he said, revealing his guiding principle. "This place taught me the great lesson that I am no better than anyone else here," he said, adding that he looked forward "to connect to guys once they walk out and support them in every way I can."

About incarcerated persons dogged by their past, King said he found seeing the process of rehabilitation fascinating. "I see lots of battle scars here, and such scars bring wisdom. It raises conversation to a whole new level."

King admitted to struggling with acculturating to the CDCR since his accession. Questions like, "How do I take attendance? How do I write a progress report? How do I navigate SOMS?" kept plaguing King for some time.

San Quentin presented some other challenges for King. He found strange the absence of umbrellas on rainy days and equally strange the prohibition of scissors in an education environment that still depends primarily on paper. Such small inconveniences do not bother him, though. "I love it here. I never look at the

clock while I teach."

A favorite story he liked to tell about San Quentin concerned an encounter with an older resident who intently stared at one of San Quentin's ducks. "That's a beautiful mallard," I said, and the old resident replied, "Yeah, I have not seen a duck in 39 years. I just got out of Death Row." King called the incident profound because of its jarring reality. "It still gives me chills," he said.

King co-teaches ABE III with Ms. H. Lucas. Of his subjects, he said, "I teach social science and RLA — Reading and Language Arts — and Lucas teaches math and science, and that mix works great for both of us." Co-teaching also means twice the students. This dynamic didactic duo has 108 of them.

King also reads the *San Quentin News*. He considers the paper "great, because it allows my family to see what I do," King said. "The paper is San Quentin's only portal to the world. It is a nice bridge, and I especially love seeing it feature my students." He added that the podcast *EarHustle* taught him much about San Quentin's culture.

In his spare time, King enjoys restoring antique cars, a hobby that includes rebuilding engines. "Everything I do is 'period-correct,'" he said of his most recent project, a 1932 Ford Roadster. "Nothing in this car is newer than 1949, so it looks like a hot rod someone would have driven in the 1950s. I love old cars. When you drive one, you are in that period."

King also has a 1922 Ford Model T that he had driven to a barbershop the previous weekend. Restoration runs in King's family: his son just bought a Ford Model A.

To King, education in prison represents the crowning achievement of a "utopia." "When you spend time with men who want to rehabilitate, that's very powerful," he said. "Today's inmate could mean tomorrow's neighbor."

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 MARIN SUN PRINTING



Residents show off their talents at CCWF's 'Got Talent' show

By Amber Bray
 CCWF Guild Writer

The Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) held its third annual "CCWF's Got Talent" show. Anyone wishing to perform had to first audition on their facility yard and for the facility captain. The top five acts advanced to perform for the institution's administration.

Once all the participants were chosen the talent show was held in late February. The Community Resource Manager's (CRM) Decorating Committee decorated the room with handmade banners, stars, and balloons. The Decorating Committee spent hours making the items and their efforts were evident in how amazing the decorations looked.

A variety of acts performed ranging from spoken word poetry with art being created simultaneously in the background — including original songs and dances. As each performer concluded their act, everyone in attendance applauded and cheered for them. There was a tremendous amount of support and positivity in the room for those showcasing their talents.

"I loved it," said My Nguyen, a first time talent show attendee. "It was so nice to see the community come out to share their talent."

After all of the acts had performed, the judges tallied their scores and the winners were announced. In first place was April Pitts who performed an original song. In second place was Faalele Patea who performed a cultural dance. And in third place was Asia Kinslow who also performed an original song. Everyone in attendance cheered for the winners, who will receive a prize and a certificate for winning.

"It was my first time going and I was really impressed by all the talent," said Coleen Torres, who is also a member of the CRM's Decorating Committee and helped set up the space.

At the conclusion of the day's festivities, CRM M.D. Williams complimented the Decorating Committee on a job well done.

The Secretary of Corrections Jeff Macomber was touring the prison that day and arrived with Warden Anissa De La Cruz to enjoy the show.

The "CCWF's Got Talent" talent show event started several years ago, when the Inmate Advisory Council (IAC) sponsored the first showcase with the various talents of



Courtesy of CDCR

Left to right. Chief Deputy Warden (A) Cynthia (Cyndi) Rojas, Incarcerated person April Pitts, 1st place winner, Warden (A) Anissa De La Cruz, Incarcerated person Faalele Patea, 2nd place winner, Incarcerated person Asia Kinslow, 3rd place winner, and Secretary Jeff Macomber.

"I loved it. It was so nice to see the community come out to share their talent."

—My Nguyen

the residents.

Then the covid pandemic hit and everything stopped. Things that had been normal became impossible. In 2022, a scaled down talent show occurred, but the event had to be outside and anyone viewing the festivities had to wear masks.

In late 2023, Warden De La Cruz asked the IAC Executive Body to organize a talent show given that the institution was back to normal operations. She enjoyed viewing the array

of acts the residents put on. Chief Deputy Warden Cynthia Rojas, who is new to CCWF, was also excited to be able to participate.

"In my 31 years with the Department, I've never seen a talent show," Rojas said. "I can't wait to see it!"

Now that CCWF is back to normal operations, residents of CCWF are eager to see what events will be held next.

CCWF is the largest women's institution in the world. It currently houses over 2,200 residents across four different facilities in Chowchilla, California. Three of the facilities house general population residents while one facility is a reception center.

Given all of the individuals sharing this space and all of the different backgrounds they have, one thing is certain: there is a great deal of talent within these walls.

CCWF residents offer support, motivation for new arrivals

How do you motivate people who come to prison with lengthy sentences to do well while they are incarcerated? That was a question that members of the Beyond Incarceration Program Inmate Leisure Time Activity Group posed to themselves when discussing some of the issues occurring amongst the population of Central California Women's Facility.

In speaking about that topic, members decided to propose an event to try to reach the newer arrivals: a Day of Inspiration and Community Building.

"The idea of the Day of Inspiration and Community Building came to fruition after discussing the different avenues BIP's leadership can take to motivate new arrivals to CCWF to be part of the solution and be agents of change within our community," said Eleonora Igova, BIP Vice-Chairperson. BIP Staff Sponsor, Melissa Untalon Espino, loved the idea and agreed to forward the request.

The proposal was granted and BIP invited leaders in the CCWF community as well as some outside guests and motivational speakers to attend this groundbreaking event on February 23, 2024. The event got off to a

somewhat rocky start in that there were a few delays, but once it began around 10:15, it was exciting.

The Day of Inspiration and Community Building began with a speech by CCWF's Warden Anissa De La Cruz who spoke about the ideals of the California Model and some of what she would like to see occur at CCWF. Motivational speeches continued throughout the day, including formerly incarcerated guests as well as a presentation on the dangers of fentanyl and spice presented by CCWF's Chief Nurse Executive Philip Mallory.

"It was such a great day," said Heather Barron, a newly sentenced lifer who was invited to attend. "I got a lot of good information, got to know some of the different staff members who were there, and was so motivated by Niki Martinez — she gave me hope that I'll be able to get out of prison one day."

"I liked that BIP invited newer arrivals to the institution so they can start their time off right," stated Naomi Heater, Chairperson of the ILTAG Helping Others with Life-Skills. "Everyone who was there came together and showed the newer arrivals that there is a better

way for them to do their time."

As the day progressed, participants were divided into six different groups so they could explore community building questions such as what keeps someone motivated to do well and what people do for self-care so that all invited could build rapport amongst themselves. After the community building questions, participants were surprised by cookies and cream cupcakes and cans of Coke, as well as freshly made popcorn. The excitement was palpable since the cupcakes and variety of soda is not something available at CCWF.

Once everyone was served and had a chance to eat, a game tournament was held so the six different groups could compete against one another and further build rapport amongst the teams. Recreational Coach Giovanni Martinelli arranged for workers assigned to the gymnasium to serve as team captains, who led participants in activities such as who could make the most basketball free throws, who could do the most squats, and who could do the most sit ups.

After the games were completed, participants were expecting to hear an announcement as to who had won... but the surprise was that everyone invited was a winner and received a backpack and stationery supplies that had been donated by the nonprofit, Exuberating Success, founded by Gerilyn Waiau Vila.

Invitees were overjoyed by the surprise and walked away feeling like part of the CCWF community. "The event was an incredible success in terms of giving hope to our new residents and inspiring them to approach education and rehabilitation," said Igova.

Without the encouragement and cooperation of CCWF's administration as well as the tireless efforts of Mrs. Untalon-Espino, this event would not have been possible.

"This event occurred because of the incredible support of the BIP staff sponsor and the belief she fosters that transformation is possible and everyone deserves a chance," Igova indicated.

Given the implementation of the California Model and the vision Warden De La Cruz has for CCWF, incarcerated individuals at CCWF are hopeful that more events like this will be possible and are encouraged that the administration believes everyone deserves a chance to succeed.

—Amber Bray



Courtesy of CDCR

Residents at CCWF motivate new arrivals to become agents of change within their community.



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQN

Governor waves to residents before making his way to the Media Center

NORWAY

Continued from page 1

Presentations of Media Center activities began and no one had introduced any European royalty, but the presence of a uniformed military officer with a Norwegian flag on his epaulettes gave everyone a hint that the prince might sit in the crowd. As the exhibition ended, the *San Quentin News*, growing increasingly desperate to interview the royal visitor, asked the military officer, who lightly tapped a nearby-standing man on the back. The man turned around and promptly offered his hand.

"Hi, I am Haakon," said His Royal Highness The Crown Prince of Norway, abeam in a spirit of friendship.

Tall — over six feet — very thin, young, with a full black beard and very dark hair, he had a broad smile that presented a bearing of good cheer. He wore a dark Saville Row-style tailored suit and wingtips.

"This is truly inspirational and exciting to hear all these stories," said the Crown representative of the Kingdom of Norway. "We are glad that we can make a contribution. We have a lot in common and we can learn from each other."

Governor and Prince visit SQ

"This is truly inspirational and exciting to hear all these stories...we have a lot in common and we can learn from each other."

—His Royal Highness The Crown Prince of Norway.

Gov. Newsom stayed a few minutes after the prince left and upon exiting, told the *San Quentin News*, "Always great to see and hear the next step, the next iteration of San Quentin. I see impressive progress since the last time I visited. You put out a great newspaper and you have revolutionized the podcast and created an iconic Media Center."

As the first-ever royal visitor to San Quentin, (and most-likely the first-ever royal visitor to any prison in the U.S.), Prince Haakon had a full itinerary. His visit began with a meet-and-greet at the San Quentin plaza, an encounter with Quentin Cooks, and a tour

of the Donner Earned Living Unit. A jaunt to Building 38, which the CDCR will transform into the centerpiece of SQRC followed. A quick stopover at The Last Mile preceded the end of the visit at the San Quentin Media Center.

A March 3 BBC news brief reported that Prince Haakon's father, Harald V, King of Norway, went into hospital to have a pacemaker implanted. This circumstance granted Prince Haakon the temporary role of Prince Regent of Norway. "Regency" describes a period in which someone other than the reigning monarch acts as the *de facto* head of state of a kingdom. In short, in the newsroom sat an acting king.

Born July 20, 1973, in Norway's capital Oslo, Prince Haakon's name came from his paternal grandfather King Haakon VII. Norwegian royals have no last names and might use "of Norway" in situations that require further identification. A story in *Business Insider* called Prince Haakon the great-great-great-grandson of Queen Victoria.

CANINE

Continued from page 1

Mazzoni said around 50% of dogs graduate to professional level. Companion dogs from prison have a success rate higher by 10 percentage points, which she attributed to the strength of the bonds built in prison. "There is a love for the dog, a care for giving back and the structure of the prison environment, which we have heard helps the focus and consistency of the handlers."

Hundreds of guests, administration, and residents acknowledged four resident dog handlers Aaron Ramzy, Travis Fendley, Jared Hansen, and Chase Benoit. They said they experienced some growing pains in the process but attributed the program's success to a multifaceted support network.

Graduates thanked the Dmarlou Foundation, puppy program director James Dern, and the northwest regional puppy manager Susan Porteous, who came in weekly to help with training. The graduates credited administration, co-raisers, and fellow residents for the program's success. "Everyone here had a part in training the dogs. Everyone honored and respected the process and training guidelines. We [handlers] get the attention but residents and staff were behind the scenes," Benoit said.

Porteous acknowledged the resident handlers and spoke about their learning of canine body language. The handlers and their service dogs showed the crowd ten commands such as dress, hip flips, speak, roll, back, touch, and lap. "These handlers exhibited heart, dedication, and commitment to making the dogs great," Mazzoni said.

"We see you as individuals, as names and not numbers, and as the men you are today, no matter what happened in your past," Porteous said.

"Being in the program has taught me accountability, awareness, and compassion," Ramzy said. He said he felt

A showcase program at the Q



Photos by Aristeo Sampablo // SQN

Graduates and their canine companions congratulated

appreciative to have taken part in the culture change at San Quentin through the Canine Companion program.

Chance Andes called the Canine companions one of the showcase programs that have brought a sense of normalcy to the carceral environment. "A number of staff go visit the puppies for peace of mind," Andes said.

Correctional officer C. Wilson, a second-watch officer in the building in which the dogs reside, said he appreciated the presence of the puppies. "It is a good way to start your day when you can come in with a smile on your face. I am carrying less stress with me." He said the communication lines between residents and correctional staff have opened up, too.

Benoit's grandfather Marv Tuttle, a Canine Companion client, visited to acknowledge his grandson's achievement. He spoke to the attendees about the importance of having a companion dog. "It is hard to lose them [the puppies] but as long as you know what you are doing is life-changing for someone like me, it is worth it. We [disabled persons] respect forever more what you have done for us."

"My favorite thing about a companion dog is the socialization," Tuttle said. He told a story about how people would avoid and walk right by him because he uses a wheelchair.

"People may not be looking at me, but at my dog, which gives me a chance to engage and socially interact with them."

Benoit's grandmother Connie Tuttle also attended the event and told San Quentin News how the program has deepened the connection between Chase and his grandfather. "Knowing what the companion dog does for his 'poopy' makes Chase think and do his best."

Fendley said the canine program has made him pro-social, patient, polite, and provided him with an effective coping mechanisms for stress management. He said he has a disabled relative and now understood the importance of having a companion dog in times of need.

"I am professional when it comes to the dog's success," Fendley said.



Grandfather of Chase Benoit speaks about the importance of having a companion dog.

Ella Baker Center Spanish Presentation

EBC

Continued from page 1

resources are not available in Spanish.

The system is not designed to offer these accommodations that are necessary to achieve equity in advancing social justice.

Many attendees came forward and vocalized their past experiences. They believed their rights were violated simply because of their race, and language, during their arrest and criminal proceedings.

According to Gerardo S. Muratalla, currently incarcerated at SQRC, the Spanish-speaking community has been marginalized for over a century when their rights are not explained to them in their language.

Many in the audience considered the future impact on citizens if judges and district attorneys administer justice in a race-neutral manner.

The law still requires petitions to be filed in English. However, thousands of incarcerated men and women struggle with reading and writing Spanish, let alone with understanding how to file this petition in English.

According to longtime resident Rodney "Pitt" Baylis, he himself struggles with understanding how everyone fits in the categories of the law even though English is his primary language.

"I see that Ella Baker brought relief to the non-English speaking community here at SQ," added Baylis. "I think that they got their questions answered to laws that have been changed here in California."

EBC listed four categories under California Penal Code Section 745 are:

Any party — judge, district attorney, defense attorney, police expert, juror — exhibited bias against you because of your race, ethnicity, or national origin (745(a)(1));

Any party used discriminatory language about your race, ethnicity or national origin, whether or not purposeful or explicit (745(a)(2));

The prosecution sought more severe charges against you than against members of another race, ethnicity, or national origin (745(a)(3));

The court imposed a longer sentence on you than against members of another race, ethnicity, or national origin convicted of the same conduct (745(a)(4)(A)).

According to the Ella Baker representatives, the steps needed to make an RJA claim after being sentenced are:

Use the document HC-001: Petition for Habeas Corpus

Describe the violation in detail under question six on the petition: Grounds for Relief

State that you require a lawyer.

Include documents that support your case.

Make copies (save the original document and a copy)

File with the Clerk of the Court in the county of your conviction.

The court will appoint an attorney for your case or will deny your petition within 45 days.

Bobby Armendariz, a resident of four months, feels that it is a proven fact in the judicial system that other races get less time than Brown and Black people. For Armendariz, the RJA pertains to his case.

David Guerra, one of the attendees, stepped to the front of the room and spoke assertively and with emotion.

Guerra wondered how far are we from taking up legislation to punish the lawyers, district attorneys, judges and any other public servants who are violating these rights?

"Why do I have to wait 10, 15 years to appeal my case for an excessive sentence that violated my rights, based on being Hispanic?" added Guerra. "Now I can bring this petition, but during this [wait] time, to how many others has this judge done the same?"

Some attendees didn't know what the RJA was until this day, or that they even qualified for such relief. They also expressed how the passage of such reforms was not enough to address the injustices they have experienced.

EBC intern Flores, himself formerly incarcerated, was able to relate with the



Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

Ella Baker Staff talk with residents during the first-ever Spanish Racial Justice Act presentation.

incarcerated who were seeking answers for a law that went into effect in January and yet, that they were just learning about.

"Since the law is new, we will see how the system receives the petitions in cases like the officers in Antioch, CA which offer examples and evidence," observed Flores, referring to the recent investigation of Antioch police for racist texts.

The largest group of incarcerated people are African Americans and they are over policed, and it was important to also make this remedy accessible to Latinos, added Flores.

EBC's Orozco, who has come into SQRC since 2016, reflected on how in the past there was hardly any Spanish-speaking programs or even a presentation like this one.

"I have seen the diversity in the population changing. This is the first time that I saw faces I had never seen, as if



Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

Resident asking about laws and resources available to them

they were invited and before they had not been invited," said Orozco. "Today we saw that perhaps they hadn't had access. Even my own job, I was the only person working in Spanish."

For resident Tony Tafoya, Anglo-Saxon and Latino, this event represents a major change in the system.

"This workshop is being held for a vastly undeserved and marginalized population, which just so happens to be the majority ethnic group in CDCR's custody. These

humans are generally ignored and thrown away," Tafoya concluded.

The community expressed a sense of hope that the law will potentially offer to reunite them with their families.

"I feel so gratified for how people showed up. We at Ella Baker are so grateful for the people who do the work in providing resources and making them available for all," said Rogers.

—Miguel Sifuentes
Contributing Writer

Death Row transfers:

Residents in SQ's Death Row are transferred according to governor's plan

By Marcus Henderson
Executive Editor/
Editor in Chief

CDCR is in the process of phasing out its Death Row units at San Quentin and the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF). San Quentin's Condemned Row residents are housed in the rehabilitation center's East Block. These residents are locked up in a 4-by-10-foot cell for 20 to 24 hours a day and are handcuffed every time they came out of their cell.

Some condemned residents welcome the transfers, where they would be able to go to the recreational yard, get a job, receive regular visits from family, and go to the chow hall. But also some victim advocates are against the transfers, saying the condemned individuals are still a threat and could hurt other residents in general population, reported NBC Bay Area news.

Currently, there are 644 people serving a condemned sentence within CDCR, according to a CDCR memorandum. There are still some San Quentin condemned residents waiting to be transferred, but transportation buses are leaving weekly. The youngest condemned person is 24 and the oldest is 93. The 20 condemned women at CCWF have been placed within there general population, notes the memo.

The transfers is aligned in part, with Proposition 66, a statewide ballot measure approved in 2016 that allows for the transfers of said residents.

The Condemned Inmate Transfer Pilot Program (CITP) has transferred at least 104 people sentenced to death from San Quentin to eight other institutions. The CITP was expanded in Jan. 2024 after regulations was approved by the California Office of Administrative Law.

In late Feb., CDCR began transferring condemned residents to different prisons based on their individual case factor, said the memorandum. There have been

Currently, there are 644 people serving a condemned sentence within CDCR, according to a CDCR memorandum. There are still close to 400 San Quentin condemned residents waiting to be transferred, but transportation buses are leaving weekly.

more than 100 condemned residents transferred from San Quentin to other institutions.

As per the regulations, the CITP residents will be transferred to other prisons with at least a Level II security level and an electrified fence. The condemned residents will be designated as "Close Custody" for a minimum of five years, while being integrated into general population, noted the memo.

Each individual will be assigned to different security levels based on a behavior-based system and the risk they pose to others. The Institution Classification Committee will review each person's case before a transfer location can be recommended. The transfers are scheduled to be completed by late summer.

Santa Clara County's District Attorney Jeff Rosen has petitioned the Superior Court to resentencing 14 San Quentin condemned residents to the terms of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Also in the motions, one filed for every condemned man convicted in Santa Clara County has to agree to being taken off death row, only one has refuse and has opted out to continue to challenge their case as a capital defendant, reported to Bay Area News Group.

The next phase for San Quentin's East Block is to be transforming into a rehabilitative housing unit.



Courtesy of CDCR

Death Row woman being transferred



Illustrated by J. Salvador // SQN archive

A flag representing the LGBTQIA+ community is placed over the door of condemned row

Condemned Row LGBTQIA+ residents hold nation's first annual interfaith banquet

By Michael Lamb
Contributing Writer
Condemned Row

Earlier this year, San Quentin's The Sound Mind Company group held the nation's first Annual Interfaith Banquet for its Condemned Row LGBTQIA+ Residents and Straight Allies Group.

The program, written in 1999 by condemned resident Floyd Smith, suffered from years of delays and after Covid, the group finally returned.

The banquet took place in a San Quentin Rehabilitation Center hospital group room. The rooms are currently outfitted with single person

management modules to prevent cross-unit, cross-exercise-yard-group pollination per condemned unit compatibility regulations.

Several residents voiced interfaith recitals and poetic digressions with ethnographic-type background beats. Transgender resident Ms. June Robinson delivered the keynote address.

The gay resident R&B singer and songwriter Parallaxboi performed original music.

Smith relayed a presentation that highlighted how the exacerbating underlying childhood trauma still holds true especially for a large "private expression community and incredible PFLAGs

[Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays] like our [resident] co-founder Johnny Avila."

Seven residents received certificates of participation for the condemned innovative recreation and wellness media program. For their co-founding of the original version of Acting With Compassion and Truth, SMC recognized Michael "Yoshi" Nelson, an executive director at Restorative Justice, and Jarvis "Lady Jay" Clark. SMC, the nation's first LGBTQIA+ innovative rehabilitation program presented honorary flowers to the honorees.

Finally, The Sound Mind Company (SMC) has created

The Sound Mind Streamer, an incarcerated LGBTQIA+ Affirming Rehabilitation Institution television channel for submission into the Free App section as a part of the GTL tablet program.

The Sound Mind Streamer's primary content has roots in education, in queer presence in ancient history, and in social and economic autonomy. It would provide a safe space for persons who would want access to queer-affirming rehabilitation programming.

SMC would like to thank the Warden, PIO Lt. G. Berry, and CRM Lt. Gardea for making the event possible. All SMC volunteers and supporters received flowers.

Death Row author overcame dyslexia, published ten books

Living on California's Condemn Row also known as Death Row and being locked-up 24 to 20 hours a day in a tiny cell, condemn resident Albert "Ru-All" Jones overcame three different types of dyslexia to self-publish 10 books in one of San Quentin's darkest places.

Jones, 59, said he has been locked up for 30 years with 27 years on the "Row" and 24 and a half years in the same cell.

"I had to keep busy — when I knew that I was going to be here a long time," said Jones. "I had to use every minute of my time here. I wrote these books so that I can leave a history for my grandbabies and leave a legacy in this dark place."

Jones' books consist of some autobiographies about his life in gangs, his religious faith and even a couple cook books title "My Last Meals?"

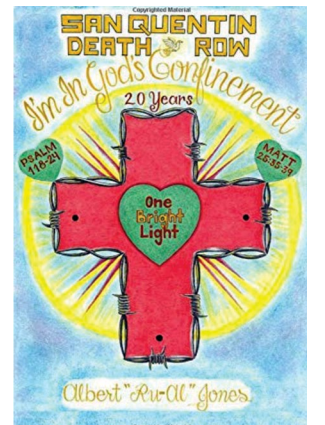
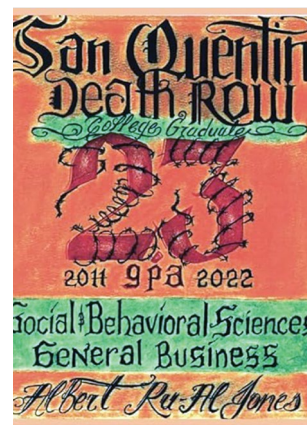
"Trust me, this did not happen easy, being in this cell all these years. I had many neighbors and some would bang on the wall all day and night. Some that screamed all day and night," said Jones. "I had to stay focused in order to get the job done on my education and book writing. The good thing is that I am in the cell by myself so that has a lot to do with my success."

"But I can say this: I am living in a real hell hole of a place. I can say this: being locked up for ... 24 to 20 hours a day in a cell — no night sky and handcuffed every time I came out of the cell. Did this have an effect on my mental, yes it did. But, I turned that negative into a positive and stayed busy," he reflected.

Being on condemned row, Jones witnessed a lot of his fellow resident succumb to



Albert Jones in cap and gown, proudly holding up his college degrees and puts on display two of his book covers



Courtesy of Albert Jones

mental health issues.

"I have seen some good guys kill themselves or they are on some kind of medications that help them deal with this living nightmare," said Jones. "Some of these guys sleep 18 hours a day that is how they deal with this and that is their way to escape this place."

Jones added that there are a lot of mental health doctors to help the guys with mental health issues. But those on medications look like zombies with glossy eyes, which is scary."

"They are not the same," said Jones. "I get it because being in this cell all them years and hours, TV and radio can only help so much. I can feel that pain of not being loved by the outside world because I have very little family support and yes, it hurt like hell, but I knew that I had to survive and keep my sanity."

Jones credits his daughter and four grandchildren and his ambition to prove his innocence as a man on Death Row.

"But, when I walk out of

here as that innocent man, people are going to say, he was telling the truth," said Jones.

Jones used education to flourish while housed on the "Row." He expressed that he has earned religious studies degrees in Protestants, Catholic, and Buddhist studies. He graduated from Coastline Community College with a AA degrees in Social and Behavioral Science and General Business.

"That was a moment where I just cried at that accomplishment," said Jones. "It took me 11 years to finish and that's the main word, 'I finished.' And I did it with a learning disability. Three different types of dyslexia. So I say to all that have this learning disability, don't stop I know it is a struggle but you must stay in tune to do it."

Jones added that it took 24 years and many book agencies that wouldn't write him back, but he didn't get discouraged. He said he just kept on writing. He did receive some support from the outside from people who saw his vision.

"I am doing my marketing

from the cell," said Jones. "I write to public places and send a flyer to sell my books until the right person sees what I have done and see the unique and special thing I have done."

Jones' goal is to get into the Guinness Book of World Records as being one of the only Death Row residents to self-publish 10 books.

"These books are going to be best sellers," said Jones. "That's how confident I am about this. I call all this the J-plan' and that's the Jesus plan because my plan didn't work. I know that my faith has kept me on point and protective."

Books: Our Last Meals; Put on the Shelf to Die; Behind These Walls; Toez Down; I Survived COVID-19; I'm in God's Confinement; So Death Row Spiritual Testimonies; College Graduate 2.3 GPA; My Last Meals?; 2nd cook book; I Thank You.

These 10 books and my Christian Children's Books are an eight book series of bedtime stories I've don all in this cell.

—Marcus Henderson

North Block residents start in-block self-help groups

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

In the midst of reimagining San Quentin, self-help groups are made available in North, South, and West Block housing units, due to long waiting lists.

According to the Reimagine report dated January 2024, SQ is highly recognized for its current rehabilitation programs, but there is a need for space and shorter wait lists.

In NB, second watch Correctional Lieutenant Reynolds sponsors positive programming. The programs in NB are led by mentor Rodney "Pit" Baylis, and co-facilitators for the groups are Marcus "Mo" Washington, Thai Hieu, and John Czub.

According to Baylis the groups developed when a tour group came to NB, and saw people running around "rapid" within the building, one tourist said, "Don't they have something to do?"

"When residents aren't able to access any of that programming—sometimes after working hard to be transferred to the facility [SQ], they sometimes feel tricked and frustrated," stated in the report.

Baylis said he and his fellow peer mentors developed a curriculum for Criminal Thinking, which is held in the dayroom, Saturdays and Sundays from 8:30 — 10:30 a.m.

A NB group participant told *SQNews* about the significance of a self-help program. "Regardless of what an inmate is in prison for, we are all in here for some type of criminal or addictive thinking," said resident Ellis Lockett. "They go hand in hand with each other, we should be involved in these groups, and they're very informative."

According to the CT



Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

Left to right: Program facilitators John Czub, Thai Hui, Alex Ross, and Marcus Washington.

curriculum, the group sheds light on how to manage CT. Subjects covered are self-disclosure, conveying information about your past instead of disclosing information about others, and countering the minimization of past criminal behavior.

The group also teaches participants to be receptive to suggestions about bad habits made by responsible and accountable people.

Correctional Lt. B. Haub told *SQNews*, he sponsors the programs in SQ's South Block, and Lt. K. Mok in West Block so residents can go-between housing units for groups.

"When I first got here [SQ] I tried to get into groups, other people felt the same, therefore I started Victim's Awareness," said Larry "Ali" Deminter group facilitator.

The Victims' Awareness group is held in SB's dayroom on Wednesdays from 10—12 p.m.

"The process for learning about and signing up for programs is opaque, manual,

and overwhelming," specified in the report. "Access to programs support rehabilitation and reduces recidivism."

According to Deminter, he facilitates Victims Awareness using the "Six Victims' Rights" based on the Prison of Peace, co-founders Laurel Kaufer, and Doug Noel of Pepperdine University. The rights include:

- Vindication
- Validation
- A right to create meaning
- A right to be heard
- Safety
- Vengeance

A SB resident expounded on his experience with VA, and how it brought him awareness of the impact of his criminal behavior.

"By taking Victims' Awareness it helped me understand the magnitude of my actions," said resident Charles Williams. "My behavior has had ripple effects; I now see the impact of my criminal behavior."

Group co-facilitator John Czub conveyed to *SQNews*, the participants partaking in

these groups deserve credit because they have an open mind to adjust their belief system. The incarcerated facilitators came from a pro-social perspective and not an authoritative one, something their fellow residents can relate to.

"The feedback I have gotten is I don't tell them, I ask them to prove their beliefs to me," said Czub. "The real reason why I facilitate is to give people space to explore the understanding of their own belief system."



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews
Lead facilitator Rodney Baylis

Prison art exhibit gains traction

By Jason Satterfield
Journalism Guild Writer

Prison art exhibitions bring public awareness to incarcerated people's experiences and are truly worth more than a thousand words, according to The Marshall Project.

One art exhibition included an "Federal Prison Inmate Activity Book" that resembled a child's activity book. The book included word puzzles using terms like "larceny" and "embezzle."

The book was not published by a correctional facility; it was a project between the minds of artist Daniel M. Clifford and an unnamed incarcerated source.

One of the book's drawings showed a panda and a one-eyed snake, and displayed this instruction: "With so many gangs in prison, it's hard to keep track! Circle the tattoos that might be found on gang members."

Clifford attempted to send the activity booklet to federal prisons, but officials rejected it, saying it was a security threat. Clifford found the decision to be absurd censorship, particularly when some prisons are letting in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, noted the article.

The booklet was displayed in August 2023 at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, in New York City. The center also displayed other exhibits such as "Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration," curated by New York University Professor Nicole Fleetwood.

"Marking Time" has been displayed at numerous galleries since 2020, and was one of four exhibits in New York City in 2023 that featured artists with prison experiences. The exhibit visited California, Arizona, Florida,

erase some of the darkness of my past... with his artwork and "to bring some beauty into the world, while I can."
—Michael Tisius

Michigan, Wisconsin, and New Mexico. Most of the art featured social commentary, noted the Marshall Project.

The Schomburg Center exhibits included Jesse Krimes' psychedelic quilts and Gilberto Rivera's three-dimensional smears of paint and prison uniforms.

Native American artist Henry Frank constructed a miniature prison visitation room using Legos. As a child, sculptor Sable Elyse Smith spent time visiting her father in prison; she used prison furniture, stools, and tables to construct a structure that would look natural on a playground, proving that a child's gaze can foil the somberness of a visitation room, and at the same time emphasize the effect of incarceration on loved ones.

Michael Tisius published his artwork in an effort to stop his execution, arguing that he had reformed after killing two jail guards in 2000.

In his clemency request, he said that he wanted to "erase some of the darkness of my past" with his artwork and "to bring some beauty into the world, while I can."

Tisius was executed in June 2023. His murals are still displayed on the walls of a Missouri prison. He said he wanted "to brighten the environment."

CCWF

Continued from page 1
speech had a huge impact on the importance of the ceremony. He spoke highly of his peers. It was a real and an emotional highlight.

"We need people to see the B.S. that's going on inside of here, so we can get the stories out," said Richardson.

He spoke inspirationally of how important it was to him to get all CCWF residents out of prison and continue to spread their voices. Residents Amber Bray and Othelia Pineda were two special speakers.

Both incarcerated individuals are starting the first cohort of the Journalism Guild and Media Center. Each spoke of the impact they wish to have on their community using their voices to empower and to embrace. Bray is the prison's Executive Chair on the Inmate Advisory Council.

She wishes nothing but to highlight all the great things

CCCWF residents celebrate long-awaited Media Center opening

that are done within the institution. For so long, she has worked hard to be a voice for the inside community.

Now with hope for change and the Media Center, Bray was excited to have an outlet to spread the change and not be overlooked. "What we do matters and the people here matter," said Bray.

Pineda shared the same sentiment for reaching out to her Mexican American people. She expressed the importance of "providing a voice to those who often feel ignored and forgotten." Her goal is to bridge the gap of culture to gain mutual respect within and outside of the community walls.

The rest of the evening was a great surprise as the guest and participants were all escorted to "D" yard, through the work exchange for the ribbon cutting ceremony on the

new Media Center. During the walk, everyone was filled with excitement and questions. All the outside guests had questions about the program and how it was in a women's facility.

The sun was warm, but it was a nice day out. For a moment, the residents felt like they were not in prison. It was like a walk in a park and talking to people interested in their daily lives.

But it was the sound of keys from a correctional officer opening the gate that caused a rude awakening for most of the incarcerated participants as everyone awaited to proceed to the new Media Center.

Everyone reached the big red bow that shimmered down the center's doors. It was a slight delay as people patiently awaited the big silver scissors so Warden De La

Cruz could cut the ribbon. All heard the "snip snip" of the scissors as the attendees waited in anticipation enter the building. It took a minute but the Warden did succeed.

There were cheers and claps, as people started to walk over the threshold. It was oohs and aahs as they entered. The smell of fresh paint was appreciated as proof of the time spent to prepare for this moment. Blue streams of ribbon hung from the door, as the crowd entered the new room. There were brand new computers and inspirational quotations that lined the walls. It was a priceless moment.

The little room was filled to capacity with individuals and a small bookshelf of great resources courtesy of McQueen. It was a moment of sheer joy. All the attendees gathered around to take pictures under the Media Center's

banner.

Each participant was excited to take in all the glory of what is now a start to freedom with the power of voice. The moment was special in so many ways as residents and supporters shared their hopes for the future.

"I never thought this would be possible," resident Kristen Rossum said, as a friend with tears in her eyes stood in awe taking in the new journey that awaits.

CCWF's Creative Director Jesse Delgado, said something that struck the most endearing of statements throughout the journey of this historic day.

"Maybe we can teach film throughout the country, CCWF being the foundation of what possibility brings," Delgado said. "I never knew this was the largest women's facility and I now realize how forgotten the woman are and

how the men always pop up."

Delgado said he almost knew what it was like to be incarcerated. At the age of 16, he felt the turmoil of what could have been and almost found him faced with jail. He learned to appreciate prison because of his experience. This is the reason why he believes so much in the power of film, as well as in giving back.

As the end of the day drew near, the excitement was still high. People were having fun, talking media and taking pictures. Some people stood off to the side to observe. It was a feeling of sharing. Public Information officer, Monique Williams circled the room snapping pictures. It is an awe-inspiring moment to see everyone networking within the environment.

There is hope that this is just the beginning and a journey that will provide a voice for all.



Courtesy of CDCR

Administration, advisers, volunteers, and residents stand outside the new Media Center at CCWF.



Courtesy of CDCR

CCWF Warden De La Cruz in company with administration, advisers, and residents host a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the beginning of the new Media Center.

SQ 2024 GUILD GRADUATION CEREMONY, STAFF AND ADVISERS RECOGNITION



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

The English Guild members stand with instructor Lisa Armstrong and Guild Chair Jerry Gearin

By **Anthony Manuel Carvalho**
Staff Writer

The fifth annual San Quentin News Journalism Guild Graduation took place in the Garden Chapel on March 15. Forty graduates from the 2024 class and dedicated volunteers received acknowledgment for their commitment and hard work as *San Quentin News* anticipated to continue its growth.

The day started with a mingling of attendees and the graduates.

"The writing process was the most challenging thing I've ever done. I was attracted to the class to learn writing formats, but considering other classes available, the Guild is the most legitimate class I've seen," said 75-year-old graduate Brian Joy.

Managing Editor Bostyon Johnson emceed the event and began by welcoming those in attendance for the Fifth annual ceremony that recognized advisors, administration, and the English and Spanish Graduates of the SQNews'

Journalism Guilds.

SQRC's new warden, Chance Andes, attended the event to congratulate the participants. Andes took a flight to South Korea three hours later, but still made it a point to attend the event.

"We can't do this without everyone of you. I frequent the Media Center and see all the magic that goes on. It is truly amazing," Warden Andes said.

"SQNews is our showcase. When I was at CSP-SAC they urged me to start a one-page paper but we could never match what was done here. My first visit at SQ included the Media Center and it was amazing to see all the wardens who supported it," said Andes.

Andes quickly left to catch his flight, and Managing Editor Johnson took over to emcee the event. He showcased a video called *Changing Lives*, which highlighted persons in the Media Center and the all-important volunteers who helped the newsroom to grow.

Keynote speaker Professor Lisa Armstrong addressed the graduates.

Armstrong, a professor of UC—Berkeley's Masters' Journalism Program, served as instructor of the SQNews' English Journalism Guild, working with resident and SQNews' Guild Chair Jerry Maleek Gearin for the past cycle.

"Last year was personally a tough year and I looked forward to class each Friday as it was the highlight of my week," said Armstrong.

She then spoke about the reasons she dedicated years to covering marginalized communities.

"I started covering incarceration for the same reason I cover most things. I wanted to know why—why this country incarcerates more people than any other," said Armstrong. "I talk to my students about the power journalists have to impact how our audiences see the world."

"Student-writers changes the way I see others and myself," said Armstrong.

At the end of her speech, Jesse Vasquez, Executive Director of SQNews' parent company, the Pollen Initiative,



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

SQNews staff gather on stage to be recognized for all their hard work in the newsroom.

appeared in the crowd and was asked to take the stage.

Vasquez arrived late because of his traditional commitment to feed the entire graduating class, which has now become a tradition at SQNews graduations.

The executive director then spoke of his passion to take care of what he was a part of as a formerly incarcerated individual.

"Why do I do what I do?" asked Vasquez. "I learned journalism from Yukari Kane, Monica Campbell and other great mentors like John Eagan. They, our volunteers, made us more than writers, they made us better individuals through the time and patience they gave us," said Vasquez.

"SQNews gave me a purpose and a method and allowed me to find a way to be about hope and purpose, because that is what kept me going while I was in prison."

Vasquez said he visited other prisons throughout the country, trying to enlarge prison journalism. "Wherever I go, they always say, Wow, you're from SQNews?" said Vasquez.

English Journalism Guild Chair, Jerry Maleek Gearin, and the Spanish Guild Chair, Edwin Chavez, then took the opportunity to praise the graduates.

Gearin spoke about his class and the benefits he received leading the English Guild.

"It is a great honor to acknowledge those who have stood by us," said Gearin. "When meeting someone, if we choose to acknowledge them, we say Hello. What are we really saying when we say Hello? We acknowledge there is a body and a personality in front of us," added Gearin.

"Imagine what our lives would be like if every time someone greeted us they said,

"I see you," honoring the true self. [They would be affirming] your goodness, your strength, and your brightness," said Gearin.

Gearin thanked the following volunteers, past leaders, and current volunteers by saying:

"Jan, Alastair, Amanda, Meredith, I see you; Joan, Monica, Yukari, Lisa, Mo and Maria, I see you; Lt. Berry, I see you; Professor Drummond, I see you; The Berkeley Students, I see you; John "The General" Eagan, Stuart Wagner, I see you; Jesse, I see you all the time; Arnulfo Garcia, Elmo Chattman I see you may you both rest in peace. And for those who are not present, I will always see you through memory and to the 2024 Journalism Guild Graduates, I see you," said Gearin.

Outside attendee, Stephanie Stubbs, who teaches court reporting at the College of Marin, said she was crying the entire time. "The integrity of the News agency is beyond belief," said Stubbs.

After Gearin congratulated the 20 English Guild graduates, Spanish Guild Chairperson Edwin E. Chavez stepped up to the podium.

"We let SQNews' largest Spanish Journalism Guild Class represent the voiceless in spite of language barriers. For this reason, I am proud and honored these brothers will represent the largest ethnicity that is imprisoned in this country. We will continue breaking barriers," said Chavez.

After Chavez congratulated the Spanish Guild, San Quentin Public Information Officer Lt. Berry took the podium.

Berry urged the graduates to hold those in power accountable and continue giving a voice to the voiceless. She also

asked the graduates to shine a light in the darkest corners and to challenge the status quo to inspire change. She then congratulated the graduates.

As the graduates, volunteers and donors mingled, the new writers and guests in attendance shared their joyful perspectives.

Sarah Short a journalist, and podcaster who has expanded into the field of independent filmmaking and who produced a documentary called *Solitary Confinement*, was in attendance.

"Being at the graduation helped me see how much impact SQNews has on incarcerated lives in spiritual, emotional and practical areas- its just a positive experience and amazing how completely powerful all the news the men cover," said Short.

Short's documentary was inspired by her own experience of living in solitary confinement in an Iranian prison for 13 months.

Donors Peter Fletcher, Matt Cameron, and Mitchell Marriott all said the ceremony was inspiring, heartfelt, transformative, and encouraging.

Mitchel Marriott said it was the most inspiring few hours he had spent in a long time. He said the speakers were articulate and he was surprised by the genuine happiness displayed in a prison environment.

55-year-old Spanish Guild graduate Ernseto Fuentes summed up the celebration.

"It was wonderful, I'm very emotional! I learned how to write better, it was exciting, and I've never worked like this before. The instructors were very patient, and were good communicators and instructors. SQNews is a very special place," said Fuentes.

—**Martin DeWitt**
Contributed to the Story



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Spanish Journalism Guild graduates excitedly gather for a photo after the recognition ceremony.

San Quentin News honors advisers and volunteers



Top row from left to right: Warden Chance Andes gave opening speech and words of encouragement to graduates. Adviser Amanda Weitman was recognized for her dedication to the professional development. Adviser Wendy Medina works with the Spanish department staff editing. Yukari Kane, former guild instructor and co-founder of PJP recognized for her contributions.



Bottom row from left to right: Instructor Lisa Armstrong gave speech about professional journalism as the keynote speaker for the event. Adviser Alastair Boone is recognized for her dedication to SQNews and the Wall City magazine. Meredith Ackley and Jesse Vasquez are recognized for their work expanding Media Center to other prisons. Retired journalist John "The General" Eagan is recognized for his contributions over the past 16 years.

Below: Professor William J. Drummond is recognized for his efforts in bringing his class from the Berkeley School of Journalism to help edit stories from the Journalism Guild students and staff.



SQ residents show their commitment to 64 days of nonviolence

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Residents in San Quentin embarked on a 66-day journey to nonviolence by focusing on 66 principles of nonviolent choices and actions. The concept originated with the grassroots campaign by the Association for Global New Thought.

Recognized internationally, the season of nonviolence commemorates the period of 64 days between the anniversaries of the death of Arun Gandhi (January 30) and Martin Luther Kings Jr. (April 4). According to AGNT, habit formation takes 66 days, and so they added two days to their program.

“Nonviolence for me means giving up the need to be right,” resident John Goldberg said.

Residents who participated said each of the 66 days highlights a specific personal characteristic, action, or skill that emphasized simple acts. The implementation of these practices brought them healing and transformation while strengthening community, they said.

According to AGNT, these peacemakers had a vision for an empowered and nonviolent world that moved in a direction of peace through daily nonviolent choices and actions. The journey took place in three 22-day sections of personal change, interpersonal change, and community.

By first focusing on personal change, residents said they learned to show compassion within themselves and to build purpose to speak and act with respect and honor.

One of the values—integrity—AGNT defined as “if faced with a choice, listen to your conscience.”

Resident Dennis Jefferson said nonviolence to him meant to act in a certain way that would help persons around him to feel safe—not just physically but by upholding boundaries, wellness, and peace of mind. “I try to be mindful of how I come across with people.”

He said he felt committed to service for anyone, regardless of race, because of our common humanity. The principles of equality, service, and acceptance resonated with him the most. He said he focused on equality because he believed that many underrepresented persons here deserved respect, appreciation, and acknowledgement.

AGNT said the day 23 to 44 focused on interpersonal change through respect, generosity, listening, patience, and mindfulness.

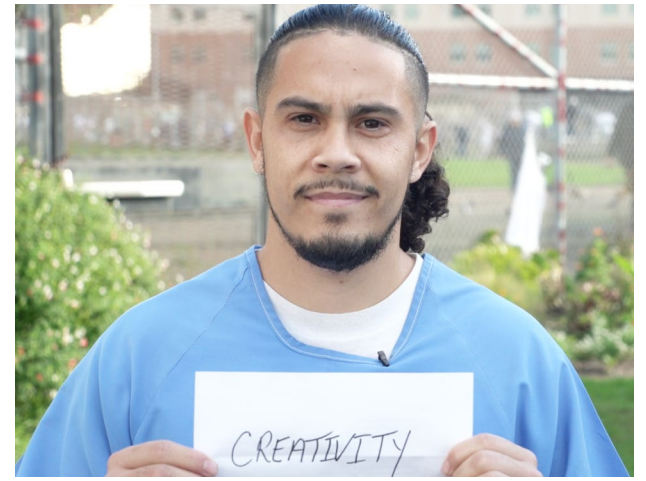
For two days during the month’s long journey, Goldberg embraced humility and forgiveness. He said he used to struggle with resentments and grudges, often wanting to exact revenge. He said he believed nonviolence provided him with a resolve to absolve persons who he felt had harmed him.

“Humility is important because I have always worried about what others thought of me,” Goldberg said. “Now the name calling and challenges to fight end with me, the violence stops here.”

By focusing on community, the third sequence of principles challenged participants



Ken Osaka holding up his principle "Humility"



Eliazar Guerra holding up his principle "Creativity"



Dennis Jefferson holding up his principle "Appreciation"



Sheb Isbell holding up his principle "Simplicity"

to stand for truth through honor and dignity, according to AGNT. Some of these principles embraced responsibility, intervention, respect, and equality.

Resident Ramon Fritz said the principle of integrity

resonated most for him because he used the value as a tool to hold himself accountable. He said he used to deflect blame and disregard his fault in actions that affected others. “Now I recognize the ripple effect and the harm of my

actions, which impacted others in my community and those I have victimized,” Fritz said.

“Nonviolence is based on the assumption that human nature... unfailingly responds to the advances of love,” said Gandhi.

Residents talked on camera about what the word meant to them.

Photos by Ryan Pagan//ForwardThis

1 Utah (*The Hill*) Transgender women in a Utah facility were discriminated against according to a complaint filed by The Department of Justice. The lawsuit claimed the women were denied access to healthcare services and medical treatment for gender dysphoria. The medical condition is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act including for those incarcerated in detention facilities. “People with gender dysphoria, including those held in jails and prisons, are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and are entitled to equal access to medical care just like anyone else with a disability,” said Assistant Attorney Kristen Clarke of the Civil Rights division at the DOJ. Utah’s department of corrections executive director said “We fundamentally disagree with the DOJ on key issues, and are disappointed with their approach,” he said.

2 Illinois (*Associated Press*) A new proposed legislation seeks to require 20 years of experience in criminal justice before being appointed to the Prisoner Review Board. The legislation was created after a man was released from prison and attacked a pregnant mother and fatally stabbing her 11-year-old son. “I don’t know why it’s taken a dead child for people to finally recognize some of these people are not qualified to serve on the board,” said Sens. Jason Plummer. The plan is to have each appointee attend annual training on pinpointing the warning signs that precede attacks of domestic violence and sexual assaults. “We must take politics out of the appointment process to create a qualified board with a deep understanding of the

NEWS BRIEFS BY BOSTYON JOHNSON MANAGING EDITOR

criminal justice system,” said Republican Leader John Curran.
3 Florida (*USA Today*) A new training program in Florida teaches beekeeping to people in detention facilities. The goal of the six-month program is to equip participants with skills they can use in society. The Ecology And Reentry Training Hub Haven program also called EARTH Haven is in Leon County and is available in the community if a participant is released before completing the program. One incarcerated father, Donatarius Gavin, is a father of five and would love to teach what he’s learned to his kids. “It’s teaching me how to wake up all the time to go to work,”

he said. Participants earn beekeeper apprenticeship certification and can go on to become master beekeepers.
4 Philadelphia (*WHYY*) The 180-year-old prison will open its doors for families with children during a weeks-long exhibit displaying the history of sports behind bars. “Visitors will have the opportunity to see original copies of the ‘Umpire’ and the ‘Eastern Echo,’ which were magazines that were written and published by incarcerated people at East State,” said Damon McCool who is the senior specialist of research and public programming at the facility. The goal of the event is to teach visitors about the history of liberty

and incarceration noted Kerry Sautner, president and CEO of Historic site at the facility.
5 New York (*The Washington Post*) Six incarcerated people at Woodbourne Correctional Facility filed a lawsuit against the facility because of a planned lockdown in early April during the eclipse. The suit claimed discrimination depriving the incarcerated people of their religious rights and accommodations. The state planned to distribute glasses for viewing the eclipse from housing units and work locations inside the prison for staff and residents. Attorney Christopher L. McArdle who represents the plaintiffs said “We are pleased that, in response to

our lawsuit alleging religious discrimination, New York State has entered into a binding settlement agreement that will allow our six clients to view the solar eclipse in accordance with their sincerely held religious beliefs,” he said.
6 Delaware (*Associated Press*) A wrongful imprisonment lawsuit was thrown out by a federal judge who said that the defendant did not prove police fabricated evidence against him and could not show facts warranting a trial. Elmer Daniels spent 40 years in prison and after a task force was formed to review his case revealing that the evidence gathered against him had “exceeded the limits of science.” This resole in turn dismissed his

case based on the “interest of justice” and his current length of sentence. The federal judge, Stephanos Bibas said “courts cannot right all wrongs”. Daniels filed a lawsuit against the state and federal officials in 2020, but later dropped his claim.
7 Massachusetts (*The Hill*) Teachers, case managers and secretaries have been filling in as the vacancies of congressionally-funded corrections officers continue to rise. There is access to learning programs, but the goal is to learn about shifting prison culture to solve staffing problems. “Transforming the culture within prisons starts with those in charge,” wrote Dan Kingery who contributed the story for The Hill.



SQ residents commemorate departed with third annual Mourning Our Losses ceremony

**By Bostyon Johnson
Managing Editor**

San Quentin held its third annual celebration of life, circumstance, brotherhood, and legacy. In the Mourning Our Losses event, residents and staff took turns celebrating the lives of persons lost within the San Quentin community. Spoken word and musical and theatrical performances depicted human connections and experiences.

"We witnessed their journey and we forged a brotherhood, but their lives are much more than the legacy they carry," said the emcee and event organizer, resident Michael Shukry. The event, which took place in Chapel B, created a platform for residents and staff to process grief and loss and showed that grief is not something that they have to process alone.

One resident said, "We didn't know how to process grief and loss when we were on the streets; we would just pour out a little liquor and go out and shoot at other people we felt were responsible."

Bobby Ojeda delivered a rap performance explaining his life, people who influenced him, and his adaptation to change and transformation today. In his journey he recognized the effects of rap music on his life and the influence it carried in the lessons and experiences he faced.

A performance by residents and SQ staffers showed a live theatrical performance that reenacted the ripple effect on a family after the murder of their father. At one point during the performance, the daughter stood over the dead body and said everything she had never told him while alive.

"Experiencing death and processing the loss of life within the walls of confinement where the effects are different than in the free world."

Resident Mark "Stan-Bey" Stanley talked about his experience as an ADA worker. He elaborated on the trials and rewards of the experience of caring for persons in one of their most vulnerable stages of their lives. "As an

ADA worker, I experienced a lot of loss," he said about a client named Mr. Nixon who had signed a declaration that requested not to resuscitate him. Incarcerated for 40 years, Stanley had lost many people, including his mother. He said he remembered how difficult that time was for him.

"It kind of gave me that solace after she passed," Stanley said. "Even though we are mourning our losses, this is about us."

Stanley said he wanted to be a person who can spread positivity during the vulnerable stages in other persons' lives. He said he realized the reward of the history lessons and the advice he had received from persons for whom he had cared. "When I get in a situation, I remember the words (of advice) that they said," Stanley explained.

Michael "Egypt" Shukry who works with the MOL committee and had organized the event talked about being approached by persons affected by loss. He recognized the 21 fallen friends honored during the celebration. Resident veterans honored four of their fallen comrades. San Quentin's Imam Muhammad Fasih shared the importance of understanding the path of life and that life provides opportunity for accomplishment.

"Every single person on this world for something. Right now is the time to mend relationships and to be a good human on this earth," he said. Residents related stories about people whom they've done time with in prison and ways that they have been coping with that loss since. Resident Jesse Milo talked about hearing from a corrections officer during Covid-19 about being scared of death. In that moment he Milo said he realized the similarities between the officer and himself. "Crying is a universal thing that happens inside and outside of prison," Milo said.

Dr. Shannon Harrigan and Rufael Henok discussed the role of the Lightkeepers group at San Quentin, a group of incarcerated people who train in suicide prevention

THOSE WE LOST:

- Michael Antrobus
- Kenneth "Musa" Bailey
- Jerome Carpenter
- Thomas Ciplickas
- Douglas Clark
- Dennis B. Cresta
- Hugo M. Cruz
- Dudley R. Day
- Neal Dennis
- James "Shorty" Bryant Dunbar
- Enemecio Garcia
- Jesus Guzman
- David Inocencio
- Juan Pablo Ortiz
- Stephen M. Redd
- Edward Renteria
- Max "Midget" Romero
- Allan Roper
- Anthony Starks
- Anthony Sully
- Diana Williams

techniques and empowers people in blue to support one another.

"If you're uncomfortable talking to Mental Health, there are people in blue that you can talk to," Henok said. Dr. Shannon also noted the importance of recognizing a person who needs help. She talked about the benefits of coming together with others to participate in the celebration of life.

Other residents related stories of losing parents, children, and close friends.

San Quentin's Catholic Chaplain Father George Williams read a poem about faith and said that he believed that persons whom one has loved and cared for, one would see again.

Many residents played music including Banda Esperanza, Samuel Jackson, and Anand Alexander, who honored lost lives.

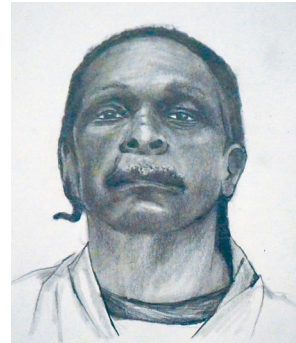
Brian Conroy and Patrick Piceno dedicated songs to their loved ones. Piceno's sang about being alone on the specific date of December 12. "Everyday feels like the last, what I wouldn't give to hear you laugh," he sang, "We will always remember the 12th of December."

"If you could take the Bible and reduce it to five words they would be 'Love is stronger than death,'" said Father Williams.

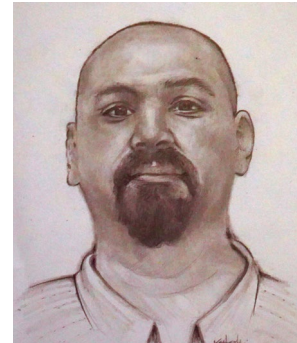


Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

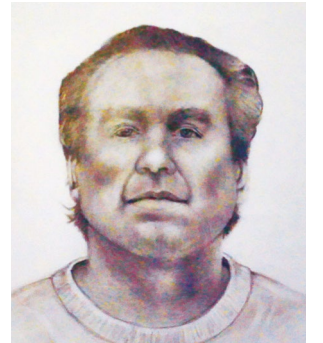
Bobby Ojeda raps about his life's journey.



Anthony Starks



Max "Midget" Romero



Thomas Ciplickas



SQ residents and volunteers put on a live performance depicting the ripple effect of losing a life.

Research finds little hope for returned citizens searching for love with online dating sites

**By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer**

Josh Miller, 27, considers himself "a laid-back person who enjoys meeting new people," his online dating profile said. "Spending time with my family and friends is very important to me, especially since I missed so many years with them while I was in prison," the profile continued. Then Miller wrote, "I always try to remain positive and be in a good mood, despite my experiences being incarcerated."

Miller's education includes some college; he works as a bartender, and he likes to work out. The photo shows a white man with a big smile, but in reality, Miller only exists in "Vignette Profile Shown to Women in Condition 3W" of the research paper "Love at First Profile: An Experiment Exploring if Previously Incarcerated Individuals are Less Desirable While Online Dating," by Carina L. Perrone from West Virginia University.

Perrone's paper set out to find whether former hard timers have a hard time on the dating scene. Her research attempts to fill a gap in literature on the subject and

explore the extent to which "dating might be considered yet another casualty of mass incarceration."

"The purpose of this study is to determine if incarceration has a negative effect on dating," Perrone wrote, and the study used "men and women in order to gain a better understanding of whether gender has an effect on dating when it is attached to an incarcerated background."

To clarify, this research paper deals with single heterosexual returning citizens who would like to engage in activities with someone of the opposite sex. The paper does not discuss returning citizens who have returned to their partners after incarceration. It discusses finding dates online, which Perrone calls the dominant mode of finding dates. It does not discuss returned citizens who acquire dates through friends or at work.

In short, the paper talks about men and women who left prison, do not know anyone, and go online to meet someone of the opposite sex with whom to go to a bar or a movie.

The study acknowledges the important limitation that "most online dating platforms prohibit felons from creating

profiles and using the sites." Anyone with misdemeanor or a minor convictions may still participate in online dating, said the paper.

The researcher worked around this limitation by having the fictitious profiles omit either the reason or the length of the incarceration. The person in the profile might have spent 10 days in jail for petty theft or 10 years in prison for manslaughter. Viewers of the profile would not know unless they would contact the persons in the profile, which would indicate interest in dating them.

Perrone's study had a limited age range (22 to 35 years old) for respondents and only accepted respondents that identified as either woman or man and as heterosexual.

The results look less than encouraging. A table that showed "Acceptability of Incarceration Length for a Potential Partner by Gender" answered the critical question of "how long is too long for a potential partner to be incarcerated for before they were considered 'undatable'" and the results put a cutoff of datability at months of incarceration for both men and women respondents (see graphic). More than 35% of women

would not consider dating a man with an incarceration history at all. Datability declines sharply after three months of incarceration from 60% to 46%. Anyone in prison for longer than three years might expect a response of 25% and anyone in prison for ten years might expect a response of about 10%.

The dating scene for previously incarcerated women looks marginally better. About 23% of men would not consider dating a former

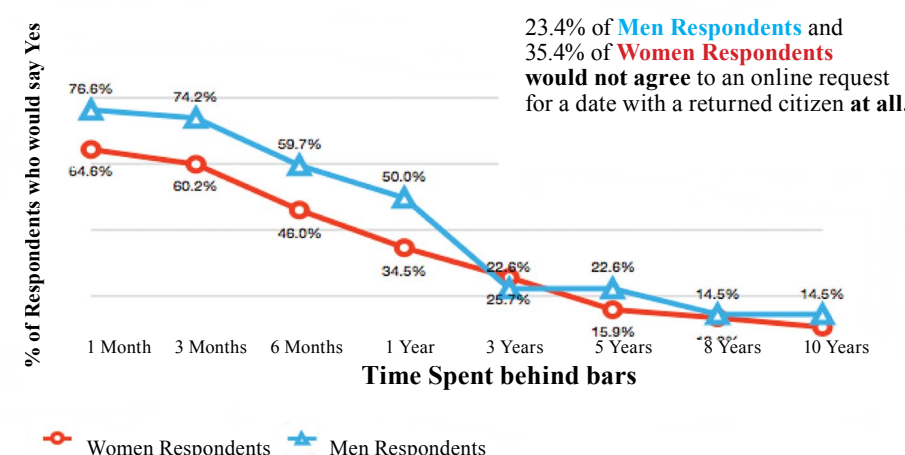
woman prisoner at all, but half of all men would consider dating someone in prison for a year. For women incarcerated longer than one year, chances of finding a date online declines sharply by 28 percentage points. Only about 22% of men would consider a woman released after three years and a mere 14.5% would consider a woman who spent eight years in prison.

Because of high rates of incarceration, the researcher said, "The goal of this

research is to help de-stigmatize perceptions surrounding incarceration because the likelihood of coming in contact with someone who was incarcerated is relatively high."

Residents found the results of the study disappointing. "It's not fair," said Donald Thompson, a Donner Section resident. "We have served our time and bettered ourselves, and we are not our crimes." He added, "We deserve a chance."

Men and women who would date a returned citizen



23.4% of Men Respondents and 35.4% of Women Respondents would not agree to an online request for a date with a returned citizen at all.

Source: Carina L. Perrone, West Virginia University, 2022

ASIAN-AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

Highlighting individuals and organizations pushing for social change



Courtesy of APSC

APSC organizes in front of the State Capitol to support bill



Courtesy of API Rise

API Rise members sit in a circle for discussion



Courtesy of APSC

Members from APSC gather for event

ROOTS program cultivates cultural healing across prison walls

By David Ditto
Associate Editor

Incarcerated and free members of the Bay Area Asian community met to build a shared vision of comprehensive community safety and healing.

The two dozen outside guests included elders and representatives from organizations connected with Oakland Chinatown. With the goal of making their neighborhoods safer, they came into prison for open discussions with two dozen members of the San Quentin ROOTS group.

The ROOTS program, Restoring Our Original True Selves, is a group of SQ residents led by community volunteers in weekly classes that explore the history and culture of Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities to learn and practice cultural healing.

The inside and outside groups got together in the SQ chapel March 25 for the "ROOTS Community Safety Conversation."

To break the ice, Kenneth from the Asian Pacific Environmental Network led an animal showdown, with everyone striking poses of rabbits, tigers, snakes, and dragons until only one remained victorious.

is prominent, informative, and transformative. So much true community healing starts with ROOTS inside San Quentin," Tan added. APSC is the outside organization that created and sponsors the ROOTS program.

"Our goal is a safer, more vibrant Chinatown," said Janie Chen, a founding member of the Oakland Chinatown Community Coalition. OCCC is a broad neighborhood-based alliance of community organizations and residents that created a community education series of events, including this day's conversation inside The Q.

APSC Development Manager Hien Nguyen helped to coordinate and facilitate the event. Ben Wang, currently with Asian Health Services, returned to SQ for the first time since Covid for the event. Wang was a co-founder of the ROOTS program, which started in Solano State Prison and then began in SQ in 2002.

Kamsan Suon said, "I started with ROOTS in 2013, sitting in the back and listening to others' stories of family and cultural trauma. Within the safety of this group, I became able to share my own stories and heal together. Now I'm in the front seat." He is now a member of the ROOTS leadership.

A Bay Area volunteer originally from Hong Kong named Harvey translated in Cantonese for several monolingual guests.

May, a patient of AHS, introduced herself through the interpreter. She said that for more than seven years she has been part of a group

with members from different countries that provides services to the community like the Wilma Chan Park food program and cleaning up Chinatown.

"Each one of us is here today to process our shame, guilt, and anger we've experienced from our cultural and intergenerational trauma," said Taiosisi "Sisi" Matangi, a first-generation Tongan and member of the ROOTS leadership. He moderated a panel of two other ROOTS members.

Panelist Jonathan "Jay" Huynh described growing up with domestic violence between his mom, dad, and siblings.

"I was beat up by White kids all the time, but couldn't tell my family because it was seen as shameful in Asian cultures," he said. "I would get in trouble for getting beat up."

The other panelist, "John" Liu, described living in Oakland as the man of the house because his father had returned to China.

"I felt unsafe outside the Asian part of the neighborhood and even at home at night because of guns and gangs," he said. One Saturday, 20-year-olds kicked in his neighbors' door and robbed them — a red door, with shoes outside. "That could have been us," said Liu.

"A better understanding of my roots would give me more courage. We need more engagement like this dialogue with elders today to understand and be proud of our cultural differences."

The 50 participants then separated into smaller groups to delve deeper into how

intergenerational trauma — trauma passed down from one generation to another within families and communities — can be cured and prevented through cultural healing.

One group had people from Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Puerto Rico, Europe, Japan, Guam, and Hmong cultures.

Through the translator, one outside community guest named Lily said, "I listened to the stories and feel that parent relationships at home are very important. Especially with immigrants in a new place, we want to make sure the children know they have a safe home where they belong." She asked if there are programs to support people like the panelists when they leave prison and return to their communities outside.

Nguyen answered that APSC is near Chinatown, employs formerly incarcerated people, and provides other support to graduates of the ROOTS program when they parole. Some returning graduates engage with Chinatown through direct services and advocacy.

Another guest, Lisa, was visiting prison for the first time. Through the interpreter, she said, "I learned about different people and different races coming together to help each other heal. You guys went through lots of trauma when you were younger and didn't really know what responsibility was. I feel you are pure of heart. Your past failures don't matter. Once you are ready to return home, when you decide to make amends, one thing is for sure: We will accept you unconditionally."



Courtesy of Wikipedia

Grace Lee Boggs (June 27, 1915 – October 5, 2015)

American author, social activist and philosopher Grace Lee Boggs died at the age of 100. She was one of the nation's oldest human rights activists. She founded "Detroit Summer," an intergenerational multicultural youth program that has received numerous awards.



Courtesy of APSC

Ny Nourn, Co-Director of APSC

Co-Director of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee organization, feminist organizer, and strategist for the intersection of criminalization, immigration and gender based violence. Ny began advocating when she was still serving a Life Without the Possibility of Parole sentence in California women facilities.



Courtesy of Wikipedia

Yuri Kochiyama (May 19, 1921 – June 1, 2014)

A Japanese American activist whose early political awakenings came while incarcerated in the concentration camps of World War II America, Kochiyama dedicated her life to social justice and liberation movements. She held the head of a dying Malcolm X at his assassination in New York City only highlights the courageousness of this Japanese-American activist. "The legacy I would like to leave is that people try to build bridges and not walls."



SQNews Archives

Eddie Zheng

He is a grassroots activist and youth organizer who focuses on the impacts of criminalization and immigration enforcement on Asian and Pacific Islander communities. He works across racial and ethnic lines to bring Asian diaspora and immigrant experience into a dialogue on mass incarceration.



Courtesy of API Rise

Billy Taing, Co-Director of API RISE

He was incarcerated for more than two decades. After his release, he successfully received a full and unconditional pardon. He worked to serve his brother and sisters in the API community. He is also the co-founder for the Black and API Solidarity group.



Courtesy of APSC

Nate Tan, Co-Director of APSC

He brings experience working with incarcerated and the formerly incarcerated, ICE detainees, and impacted families. He continues to work at APSC in bringing people home and reuniting families.

US v. Wong Kim Ark 169 U.S. 649 (1898)

"jus soli - of the soil"
"jus sanguinis - of the blood"

Perhaps the most significant historical event in the Asian American history is Wong Kim Ark's courage to challenge the US government's enactment of the 1880 Chinese Exclusion Act. He claimed his birthright by filing a writ of habeas corpus issued October 2, 1895, by the District Court of the United States for the Northern District of California to the collector of customs at the port of San Francisco. Although his parents were not US citizens, Wong was born in the United States. According to the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, Wong automatically is a U.S. citizen by "jus soli." Justice Horace Gray authored the opinion on behalf of a 6-2 majority, in which the Court established the parameters of the concept known as jus soli—the citizenship of children born in the United States to noncitizens.



Wikipedia

Wong's Passport photo at the time he filed his writ



Courtesy of CERl

Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants work to supporting APPI community by holding events and honoring ancestors

SQ residents share inspiration

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Many San Quentin residents may draw inspiration from role models to stay positive so to achieve their rehabilitation goals. What would help them find a sense of belonging? Celebration of one's culture would go a long way.

During Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Month in May, San Quentin residents recognize and celebrate AAPI cultures, which would give their descendants a sense of inclusion.

In 1977, Congress recognized AAPI heritage as a week-long event, which was later extended to a month-long celebration in the 1990s.

Since then, Americans have honored and observed Asian actors, journalists, musicians, and activists as role models.

San Quentin residents of the AAPI community talked about the inspiration they had drawn from such personalities and the ways in which they had contributed to their personal growth.

"In prison I had to flow with the prison setting, but I did not change my element," resident Khiem Tran said.

Tran drew inspiration from actor Bruce Lee's words, "If you are water you are water, if you are water in a pot you become one with the pot, meaning when you transfer yourself into the environment you can adapt and flow."

Tran said that after many years of incarceration, he accepted himself and stayed focused on everything that he could control, despite tough prison conditions and circumstances.

Resident Ricky Kong said he enjoyed watching Jackie Chan movies as a child and from them drew inspiration to study karate. He said he learned the sport for self-defense and not for aggression. Chan's phrase, "Find that peace within yourself" resonated most with Kong.

Kong, who has been incarcerated for 14 years, said he used the quotation to live nonviolently. "I know I am the person in control of my peace," Kong said. "Before, I thought everything around me affected me. Now I live life peacefully and in the moment, embracing life."

San Quentin resident Kha Sok said Junior Seau, the football star of the former San Diego Chargers, had reached out to provide sports programs and alternatives to violence in his community. "I appreciated Junior Seau and his brother for reaching out to the troubled youth in our neighborhood," Sok said.

San Quentin residents also found inspiration from writer Celeste Ng, actor Dwayne Johnson, and Emmy award winning CNN chief medical correspondent, Dr. Sanjay Gupta.



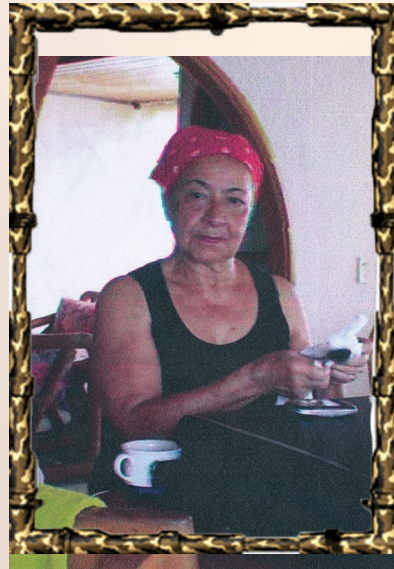
Momma, because of your educational values, I am now a college graduate, R.I.P. your spirit lives forever, love Mateek.



"Momma, I feel your spirit whenever I lose focus thank you, love Glen R.I.P."



"My mother will be 91 this month [March]. She has a generous heart and always wants to help people. I Love you mom."



"The Generosity of the years, Happy Mother's Day."



"The most amazing person, mother, and grandmother! I love you mom, Happy Mother's Day!"



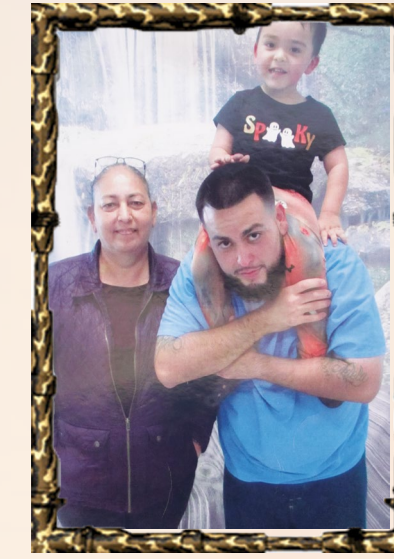
Mom, I want to send you best wishes, and I want you to thank you for your conditional love and support, Junious.



"I Love you Mom, R.I.P." Love, William



Edwin's Grandmother "On April 10, heavens gained a new angel, Abuelita Lala, gracias for your love, until we meet again. Happy Mother's Day," Edwin E. Chavez.



Thanks for all the love. Your son, Aldo



"My Mom is and has been the rock of the family, I honor her on this day, Happy Mother's Day."



Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised," Proverbs 31: 30



"To my twin Mothers Errastine, and Christine Happy Mother's Day. I love and miss the both of you."



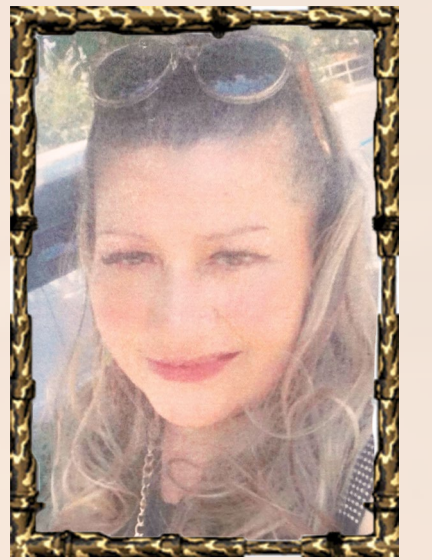
"As a kid my mom always had to tell me to do my homework for school. Today I show her that I do my homework in life every day."



"Thank you mom. You have always been present, supportive, and a role model for me. I



"These words are for the special person that God has blessed me with - lots of love and kindness. Happy Mother's Day!"



"There is one mother in life who loves us with unconditional love. I would be anxious to see you, hug you when I get out."



"Brooke is a beautiful loving wife. With a heart of gold, who put her kids need first"



"My protector from heaven" Love your son, Raymond



I am bless to have two Mothers in this world, Happy Mathers' Day, A. Sampaablo



Má las palabras que necesito para decitte cuanto te amo, aun no existen. I love you Má, eres mic Corazon. Daniel Garcia



Mom, my words will always fall short of expressing my gratitude and love for you. We are doing it! Thanks for believing in me, even when I did not believe in myself, I love you Mom. Love Nic.



"I love you Mom," Yanci



Dear Amma, God's will, I'll be home soon from the world literally, your son Anand.



The two most important mothers in my life, I love you."



Noj qab nyob zoo txog kuv cov muam zoo nkauj. Kuv hlub nej tagnrho. Hlub Pheej



Anita Milosavjevic Thank You for giving me, Tina and Matthew life, you'll always be my favorite girl, love your son. Jesse Milo

Happy Mother's Day

San Quentin residents comment on how relationships with their mother are unlike any other

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

Mother's Day should be acknowledged every day of the year. Residents of San Quentin Rehabilitation Center (SQRC) are grateful to have their mothers as part of their lives. Even in prison, our mothers have helped us stay strong and connected with family values. According to the late author and Rev. Dr. Myles Munroe, 95% of incarcerated people in the U.S. came from a single mother. A mother's love is immeasurable. Some will travel any distance to see their child - even for just a few hours. As she enters the rusty gates of San Quentin, no rainy or stormy days, no distance will limit even an ill mother from giving a hug and love to her child. Saying goodbye to our mothers after a visit can leave us with the worry of not knowing when we will see them again. "Is this the last time that I am going to be able to spend time with mom or grandma?" I ask myself. I wrote this with a heavy heart as my 91 year-old grandmother, whom I love dearly, was dying in the hospital. It was unlikely that she would be with us on Mothers' Day. Enulalia "Lala" Chavez Baires was my mother's companion everywhere she went. Lala

passed away on April 10, 2024. I was able to say my own goodbyes in person last August at a visit.

To those mothers who have passed on to the next life, we salute you, for all your unconditional love towards your sons, daughters and even grandchildren.

Jose Alfredo Lopez, who has been incarcerated since the age of 16, now at 35, remembers the love and support from his late mother.

Even after having open heart surgery and undergoing dialysis, she traveled approximately 13 hours, one way, to make sure that her son was able to hug her one more time prior to her passing.

"Out of all the visits that I had [in juvenile hall], in CDCR this was the first one in person and the one I cherished the most - I told my mother for the last time that I love her," Lopez added. Being able to not only say his goodbyes, but was also able to amend his wrongs to his ill mother was significant for Lopez.

Miguel Sifuentes sees the impact on his mother of a lifetime his incarceration. "She's visited me in 22 different visiting rooms over 25 years and never left me alone.

"I would like to tell my mom thank you, you are the best person I have in my life," —Ben Shua

Last month I was overwhelmed with anxiety when a guard was clicking his handcuffs over and over in front of us [during our visit]. I could see her pain in not being able to take away mine. I just wish I could take away hers everyday," said Sifuentes. We celebrate and embrace Mother's day in our own ways, based on our beliefs, traditions, and cultures.

For Anan Jon Alexander, being incarcerated gave him gratitude for having been born into a spiritual culture and raised by a single mother who taught him to never give up.

In India, there is a mother who misses her child and will do the impossible to make sure that she is able to hold him in her arms again even if it is in prison - her name Shashi Abraham, 72.

In Filipino culture, mother's day is as her day to rest. The family takes her responsibilities by doing her chores, cooking their favorite meals and making sure that she enjoys herself while being pampered.

According to resident Ben Shua, in African-American culture, they celebrate mother's days by gifting cards, flowers and taking them out

to dinner. "I would like to tell my mom thank you, you are the best person I have in my life," Shua said.

In Latino culture, we like to spoil our mothers with a big party, celebrating as if it was her second birthday. We give gifts, flowers, "serenatas," ("songs of appreciation") and even kitchen utensils, knowing our mothers show a part of their love through cooking.

We will never stop loving our mother's love and their sacrifices, never stop enduring the pain of physical separation.

"My mother is 90 years old - I want to say happy Mother's Day, I love you more than life itself, I am sorry I put you through all this, you deserve better, I am going to strive to be a better son," said resident Caleb "Cay" McClelland.

Lets not forget all those that have been sentenced to death. We salute all of their mothers as well. On behalf of these men and women, "Happy Mothers Day." We celebrate you in solidarity and harmony.

To all the incarcerated mothers, we also wish you a happy mothers day and pray that you will soon be reunited with your children.

Our relationships with our mothers have a sacred bond unlike other relationships that cannot be severed - no matter what the circumstances. Our mother is our primary connection and soul-mate, the one who nurtured us. It is an honor to be able to give back to them.

SQ residents bridge the generational gap through social justice and Hip-Hop

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

San Quentin residents made efforts to bridge the generational gap between young and elder offenders, with a series of conversations that took place on Fridays earlier this year.

The discussion was the first attempt to bring a perspective of understanding between young and older people of different eras.

The theme of these discussions is called "Bridging the Generational Gap," by using the commonality of social justice, and Hip Hop, as a foundation to build on.

SQ residents Marcus "Wali" Henderson and Richard Bhimji collaborated on the idea to bridge the generational gap; the event was sponsored by SQ Muslim Chaplain Muhammad Fasih.

On the first day, 25 of SQ's older residents gathered for the discussion of social justice. Bhimji lectured on the social impact of Dr. Martin Luther King's Jr. vision.

He told attendees most people only knew of King's non-violent civil rights movement. He spoke about King's economic ideology, stating he went to Tennessee in an effort to unionize the black sanitation workers.

Bhimji also relayed that King's greatest accomplishment was the eradication of legal discrimination, such as Jim Crow laws. King's movement eliminated regulations that White and Black people could not gather in the same venue.

The attendees discussed civil and human rights, agreeing, "We still struggle with discrimination," adding that there is a need for more

Black institutions that revolve around stable economics, and social justice.

In the next three meetings, SQ's young people attended, they found an interest in the discussion of Hip Hop, and what influenced their generation.

Henderson, 51, hosted the next discussion. He asked, "What is your favorite rap artist?"

Participants replied, Eric B and Rakim, 2 Pac, Grandmaster Flash, The Notorious B.I.G., Kendrick Lamar, Jay-Z, and the Wu-Tang Clan.

A Young participant added, Nipsey Hustle, J. Cole, Lil Baby, Lil Durk, and Drake.

Adrian, a young resident, said his favorite rap song is "Triumph" by the Wu-Tang Clan, which had an inspiring meaning to him.

Dante D. Jones, 41, said that we could not forget about the women who pioneered Hip Hop.

According to Jones, old school rap artists, Roxanne Shante, MC Lyte, Queen Latifah, contributed to rap music's success, including today's female artist, such as Rhapsody, Cardi B, and Latto.

"It shows they [women] are powerful, it provided society an opportunity to respect women, and what they brought to the Hip Hop culture," Jones said.

An older resident said they preferred the early Hip Hop, because of the positive messages that influenced them.

An elder called current rap music "trash." In response, a young participant said, "Rap music is about what going in our neighborhoods."

Sammie Nichols 33, conveyed that the older generation



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

The youth and elder offenders sit down for positive reflection between different eras.

needs to show how young people can be vulnerable, getting away from being emotionally withdrawn, in setting an example for young people.

"I cannot show weakness, if someone slaps me and I do nothing, what will I tell my son," said C.J. a young resident. "I grew up on Hip Hop; my favorite artist is based on how I am feeling at the time."

He also said that he does not listen to older people who try to be a father figures, or a big brothers, and is still involved in illegal activity. He said that sometimes he would acknowledge the wisdom of the elders.

Henderson asked a young participant, "what do you need youngster?" He replied, "discipline."

"The program [Bridging the Generational Gap] brings light to the problem, basically for the older generation not understanding the young people," said Michael "Luqman" Russell 30.

He says the older generation should ask the young people how they can help. The older generation grew up with tough love, they were taught not to wear emotions on their sleeve.

"It's easier for the young generation to express our emotions, today it's okay to cry," said Russell.

Another young resident added the new generation music [rap] has a lot of influence on the kids; they want to try what they hear.

KG 31, responded by

saying, kids were influenced by TV shows that showed children behaving badly, "[influences] that's not an excuse, at the end of the day be your own man," he said.

TJ 44 conveyed that he watched new generations let entertainment educate.

"If you see something more than twice it's a coincidence, if it's more than that, it's a program, if more than that it's a plan," he said.

BB told the participants to practice what you preach, saying he has a son, and he asked his son why he cusses, he replied, "because you cuss."

In the final meeting, the topic "identity" was discussed. Some residents say they go by names with a more

positive meaning, while other take on less meaningful ones.

"It's time to tell the younger generation who they truly are, it is about changing the narrative," said Randall Lawrence age 38.

SQ resident Michael Walker 46, guided an identity discussion, he elaborated that titles of gang, and criminal cultures are misleading terms, not a description of the authentic self.

He continued by saying labels give people a false sense of character, people act out this false identity which are not their true self.

"No matter if you're White, Black, or Brown be your true self," Walker told the young people.

Kid CAT Juvenile Lifer Support Group



By Pheng Ly
Staff Writer

The Kid CAT Juvenile Lifer Support Group (JLSG) at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center began in 2013. The program was created from Michael Tyler's vision of providing safe space for juvenile offenders to share their life stories without the fear of being judged, or having their vulnerability used against them in a negative fashion. JLSG was created to provide support for youth offenders, including giving positive guidance for others to foster growth and create awareness.

A central focus of JLSG is to teach youth offenders how to be responsible adults who can have healthy relationships regardless of their backstories.

Kid CAT group facilitators, alongside outside volunteers, hold workshops at least three times a month to educate youth offenders about the pitfalls they all faced in life and the ways they are able to pull themselves out of those pitfalls. Topics discussed and covered in class curriculum include masculinity, causative factors, relationships, emotional intelligence, relapse prevention,

victim impact, criminal thinking, leadership, triggers, personality traits, remorse, responsibility, and amends.

The JLSG curriculum is a 52-week program consisting of twelve modules. Each module requires two weeks to complete. These modules are designed to help youth offenders recognize the effects of their childhood traumas, gain insight into what lead them to commit their crimes, bring awareness and shed light on the impact of their crimes, and help them develop coping skills to address their triggers.

JLSG's curriculum serves a dual purpose. As these youth offenders learn about themselves, they will effectively be preparing themselves to be found suitable for release when they appear before the Board of Parole Hearings.

These modules may have been created for youth offenders, but they are also tools that can be applied to everybody one way or another. The curriculum begins by helping participants create their own timelines.

A timeline is an written assignment and exercise a person does by identifying traumatic events or experiences that happened to them at specific points in their developmental stages, starting from childhood.

The goal is to isolate these traumatic events and dissect them in order to learn what each person had felt, thought, believed at that time in their lives, and discover what types of behaviors developed as a direct result of the harmful incidents.

The logic behind these modules is that in order for a person to correct their behavior, they must first understand what caused these maladaptive behaviors to emerge.

Youth offenders interested in JLSG must submit a 22 form to Mikko Valdez, Kid CAT Sponsor.

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

PAROLE HEARING PROCESS HANDBOOK



Board of Parole Hearings The California Parole Hearing Process Handbook

March 8, 2024

This handbook is now available for the incarcerated residents on the GTL tablet. It can be accessed by first logging into the "Free" app, second, select "Facility Information" app, third, select the "Newspaper" app, then lastly, select Parole Hearing Process.

For those of you who are housed in a facility or institution that does not have the GTL tablets, you may be able to obtain a printed copy by requesting it from the following organizations: Life Support Alliance, Prison Legal News, and BPH Desk.

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SQ closes historic PIA mattress factory as part of changes

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Mixed emotions arose as Prison Industry Authority's (PIA) Mattress factory closes shop in San Quentin. The closure is part of the new Rehabilitation Center's move toward a technological and educational campus.

The mattress factory has been in San Quentin since moving locations in the mid-eighties and is moving again, this time to Mule Creek State Prison.

"Working for PIA provided a place to build character, it is a place that gave me the sense of a real work environment," said PIA mattresses leadperson, Larry Dixon.

PIA's mission is to provide quality products, change lives and create a safer California. Many of the former employees of the mattress factory said they attained various employable skills while working for PIA.

"I am grateful to have received training from PIA," resident Mark Tedeschi said. He said he acquired multiple certificates on machinery in the shop, conducted and prepared audits for inventory; log formed and documented work instruction procedures. Tedeschi believes he gained hard and soft skills while working for 14 years in PIA.

Resident Kenny Kim said he appreciated being in a space outside the building, which allowed him to take his mind off his small cell. He said he is looking forward to sleeping until a normal time, because the factory shop hours start at six in the morning.

Kim prided himself on trying to be the fastest sewer in the building and he said there was a healthy competition between himself and other employees. "I worked daily



Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Residents displaying teamwork in making mattresses

to be effective and time efficient," Kim said.

Some of the employees said they appreciated the teamwork, camaraderie, and work ethic each person brought to the shop.

According to shop manager Kevin Kelleher, his crew had manufactured hundreds of thousands of mattresses a year for all prisons across the state of California. "I would put my PIA crew up against any in state of California, the crew produced daily for me," Kelleher said.

In his 16 years with PIA at San Quentin, Kelleher told *SQNews* his greatest joy was hearing from former employees. He said they expressed their appreciation for teaching them a good work ethic, which helped them stay on track once outside the prison. "To touch someone else and hear how they took what you taught them to the streets gave me a sense of pride," Kelleher said.

Many former employees

said the work environment provided a familial atmosphere, which allowed them to establish healthy relationships.

Some of the residents' retained their positions in the mattress factory well beyond a decade, and are heartbroken by the closure.

"Working in PIA, I established relationships with fellow residents, it felt more like a family to me," 17-year employee Ron Joffrion said. "I wanted to come to work every day."

Joffrion said he took working with free staff seriously, and working in a production type of environment meant he could work on the product from "A to Z." He said there were good and bad experiences but the work permitted him to get more in touch with himself.

Dixon spent 17 years with the mattress factory and said San Quentin PIA Furniture and Mattress factories were a vibrant place not too long ago.

He said there were plenty of joint-venture trades such as upholstery and dry cleaning.

One former employee said change is good and it forces people out of their comfort zones, acknowledging how society is moving to a computer-driven workforce.

Several of the residents said PIA representatives provided support and helped their transition into another work position within the prison.

Resident Yoga Sandher said he appreciated being a right-hand guy someone who got done whatever needed to be done.

He said he was devastated because he put so much effort and work into the mattress factory, but he is appreciative for landing a position in the maintenance and vocational building.

"I look in there now and say I miss that place. I invested so much into the mattress factory," Sandher said.

Fiscal watchdog tells Calif. to close five more prisons in report to legislature

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

California should close five more prisons to give taxpayers a potential \$1 billion in annual savings, said the Legislature's fiscal advisor, as reported by Bob Egelko of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The closures would not compromise public safety, the recommendation said.

According to the article, a report to legislators by the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office estimated savings through closures of five more prisons at about \$1 billion annually. The CDCR countered the proposal, saying California prisons "remain substantially overpopulated beyond their design capacity, and the closure of an additional five prisons will exacerbate the problem."

Supporting the closures, Assembly Member Isaac Bryan, D-Los Angeles, said in the article, "We can go down the mass incarceration road where we've been before, or we can do the fiscally responsible thing, save resources and invest them in the community." The article said Bryan and fellow lawmakers would argue for the new closures during budget negotiations.

According to the *Chronicle*, Gov. Gavin Newsom's 2024-25 budget proposals call for \$291 billion in spending, \$20 billion less than the current year, but still at a deficit of almost \$38 billion. The CDCR would see its budget cut by \$493 million for a total spending of \$14.1 billion.

Gov. Gavin Newsom's 2024-25 budget proposals call for \$291 billion in spending, \$20 billion less than the current year, but still at a deficit of almost \$38 billion. The CDCR would see its budget cut by \$493 million for a total spending of \$14.1 billion.

—According to the *Chronicle*

These numbers do not take into account any additional prison closures. In this budget, prisons cost taxpayers 4.85% of all state spending.

The article quoted Amber-Rose Howard, the executive director of Californians United for a Responsible Budget, as strongly supporting the five closures so to "direct those savings into community-based resources to increase safety, reentry programs and supporting towns where prisons close."

The current prison population stands at 93,900, while 15,000 beds remain empty, the article said. The Legislative Analyst's Office predicted additional closures would lead to another 4,000 vacancies within four years. The Newsom administration said the additional closures would only produce 2,500 vacancies.

In a recent statement, the CDCR said it "balances the need for cost-efficiency while maximizing public safety and successful rehabilitation," reported the *Chronicle*.

Incarcerated women residents uses vocational training from prison to obtain jobs

By Jason Satterfield
Journalism Guild Writer

Three incarcerated women who graduated an apprenticeship program while serving time found jobs once released, according to an article in *The Seattle Times*.

Brittany Wright, 30, successfully completed Trades Related Apprenticeship Coaching (TRAC), a vocational training program that helped her develop job-searching skills,

including networking. The 16-week state program teaches incarcerated people to overcome obstacles they may face when they return to society. The goal is to help people with a prison background to secure jobs with decent wages.

Eventually she landed a job, earning \$31 an hour, at a light rail expansion project with a firm named Kiewit. She became a cement mason apprentice, a job which put her on a sound financial footing. She told *The Times* that

the TRAC training made her much better than she was the first time she left prison 10 years ago.

"The last time I got out everything was so much harder. Finding a job was harder, getting my life together was harder, finding a place to live was harder. All of these things that you would do to re-enter society just took a long time," said Wright, who said she feels more confident now facing the future.

In the past 10 years, 250 women have graduated from

TRAC. Approximately 80 of the women entered the apprenticeship program while serving time. They picked up skills and knowledge about a variety of vocational trades.

Heather Kurtenback also served a prison term, but now she's the business agent at the Ironworkers Union Local 86 in Tukwila, Washington, the article said. She was released in 2005 and struggled to find employment that would give her a stable life. Research shows that a stable job is an

essential factor in the success of returning citizens and reduces likelihood of recidivism.

"It's important that we get the women working right away when they get out. Nobody would freaking hire me, not even to flip burgers," Kurtenback told *The Times*, adding: "Once you check that box 'yes I am a felon' that pretty much closes the door."

Aubrey Russell, an apprentice iron worker, was released in 2019, when she

was 34 years old. It was hard for her to get to work even with a free bus pass.

"So I'd take an \$80 Lyft ride there in the morning and an \$80 Lyft home at nights," she said.

Nevertheless, she persevered. It paid off. Over a span of four years she worked on various projects, such as the light rail and Interstate 90. She succeeded with hard work last April, working her way up to a journeyman level, now she is able to work unsupervised.

SB731 helps returned citizens find sense of normalcy with expungements, record sealing

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

SB 731, in effect since 2023, gives Californians the safety valve of expungement, which state law calls "records relief," said an article by Jeanne Kuang in *CALMatters*.

Although it excludes sex offenders, it regards most felony convictions eligible for records clearance, even convictions for violent crimes. To apply, returned citizens only need to have served their sentences, completed their paroles and probations, and remained arrest-free for two years.

Elizabeth Tüzer, the expungement legal project manager of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, said in the article, "They served their time, and they've done their own internal work and diligence to come out the other side ... It doesn't mean they

shouldn't have a job, or be able to survive or have housing."

Tüzer's nonprofit organization, a provider of prison re-entry services, has facilitated some 200 records relief applications, the article said. Tüzer reported a success rate of 50%. Since the law took effect, Sacramento County has seen 26 felony expungements, Kern County 72, and Riverside County has seen 48, said court spokespersons quoted by *CALMATTERS*.

In *Federalist Paper No. 74*, Alexander Hamilton wrote, "The criminal code of every country partakes so much of necessary severity that without an easy access to exceptions in favor of unfortunate guilt, justice would wear a countenance too sanguinary and cruel."

Written in 1787-88, Hamilton foresaw that the "necessary severity" of law would look too drastic and too

divisive if it did not include ways that would allow society and offenders to reconcile after punishment.

As envisioned by Hamilton long before this state existed, the California state law has a rather generous quality. Californians for Safety and Justice called it "among the broadest expungement laws in the nation, including about one million residents with felony convictions."

CALMATTERS said coming in July, a second feature of the law directs the state Department of Justice to seal from public view non-serious, nonviolent, and non-sexual felony convictions. Returned citizens must have completed their sentences without reoffending in four years.

The automatic aspect of sealing does not require returned citizens with lower-level convictions to find an attorney, pay filing fees,

or appear before a judge. *CALMATTERS* said the state regularly scans all criminal records to identify eligibility for sealing. The state sends a monthly list of the cases to the county courts that had brought charges. The state does the same for some arrest records.

As of July, the state will identify newly eligible felony convictions. The article quoted Californians for Safety and Justice as saying that in July, some 225,000 Californians would qualify for records sealing.

CALMATTERS said since 2022, California has automatically sealed old misdemeanors. Within six months after the law took effect, the law served six million returned citizens by sealing 11 million cases. The Department of Justice called the effort "the largest record relief carried out over such a short time

period in U.S. history."

Tüzer, from the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, encouraged returned citizens who do not qualify for automatic expungement to preserve documents for a potential hearing; letters outlining their personal changes since their crimes; support letters from family, community members and employers; and evidence of employment or educational achievements since release.

The Anti-Recidivism Coalition said granting of requests may take anywhere from three months to more than a year. Violent convictions may require hearings; judges may take longer to decide.

For all exoneration requests, judges have the ultimate decision power. They have the latitude to consider evidence of rehabilitation, but may also consider prosecutorial opposition.

The expungements do not delete the cases completely. The state justice department still stores records and would share them with other government agencies, police, and prosecutors in case of rearrests. The department would also share the record with the state Department of Education if the returned citizen applies for work at a school.

Expungements also do not restore the right to own firearms. Under the law, returning citizens running for public office must disclose convictions or apply to work in law enforcement.

Attorney General Rob Bonta said, "Automatic record relief is ultimately about equity." He added, "Individuals who have served their debt to society deserve a second chance, and they should not have to hire an attorney to get that second chance."



Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Father Williams gives surmon to SQ Catholic community on Easter for their exemplary service to the Richmond community

SQ church forgoes their yearly banquet to support unhoused

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

San Quentin's Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, in lieu of a food banquet for Easter on Palm Sunday, held an "un-banquet," where residents donated food items and toiletries.

The donations collected were given to the Missionaries of Charity Sisters who live in Richmond. The Sisters were able to give these gifts to people who are struggling with hunger and homelessness.

"God makes sure I have what I need and more. I thought here was an opportunity to pass these blessings onto someone who needs them more than I do," resident Kelvin Ross said.

The Lenten season is a time

to take a long look at our lives and often persons practice giving up something that is earthly and bounding. A more fundamental obligation is to make Lent a penitential season and one of giving. Three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (acts of charity), which SQ's Catholic Chaplain Fr. George Williams was hoping to accomplish with an "un-banquet."

"Our Catholic community did something beautiful this Easter season. The best way to give glory to God is to serve one another and those who are in need," Fr. Williams said.

The idea for an "un-banquet," in which residents make a sacrifice and give to others, was proposed to the Catholic community at Masses. The conversation

started when Fr. Williams and the Catholic clerk Arturo Melendez were discussing recent hygiene donations and decided it would be good to do something different this Easter.

"When I reached to give, I saw all that God has blessed me with. It was then others' needs came to the surface," Melendez said.

"There is a time and a place for banquets here, but sometimes I think it is helpful to step back and ask ourselves how we are caring for people who are suffering more than we are," Fr. Williams said.

Most of the residents said giving is a way of making amends and said it feels good to be doing something for people fighting to live outside the walls.

Resident Luis Lopez, on his way to church, was questioned by a person on his tier in the housing unit who wanted to know where he was carrying canteen items to on a Sunday. When he told neighboring cell residents the Catholic Church was doing a donation, dozens did not hesitate to contribute. He said this donation since has established a connection with fellow residents.

"It was awesome to be able to give back. It was the highlight of my day," Lopez said.

"We have to be aware of others who are struggling and try to connect in some form," resident Delfino Verdun said. "It feels good to be responsible, in a way to give back to community and share what we have with people."

Christian Science practitioner Mark McCurties visits The Q to discuss God's love, healing

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center hosted Christian Science practitioner Mark McCurties from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to speak with residents and guests about understanding how God's unconditional love can propel meaningful change in the world.

McCurties travels worldwide to instruct on Jesus Christ's life, his healing works, and how everyone has divine rights. He shared his concept of repentance and how God's love, healing, and power are the greatest agents in bringing change to the world.

"Understanding more of how God's saving and healing love is available to each of us and how there is a greater power and force that can bring healing, change, and transformation," McCurties said. "His love changes the way we think."

McCurties said Christian Science is a Bible-based religion that is devoted to the teachings of Jesus and ideas from Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science. He said he hopes people walk away from the seminar with a better sense of God's love and a better sense of their ability to feel God's love in their hearts and lives.

Outside guest Barbara Hurwick said she enjoyed McCurties tell of Joseph's story from the Bible and how he endured hardships and found his way to freedom, connecting his story with those incarcerated at San Quentin. She said, "Regardless of your challenging life situation, God can work miracles."

The lecture included personal testimony of why he believes the power of God's love brings healing and helps in everyday experiences. Having suffered a heart stroke, feelings of disorientation and an inability to speak had led him to thought, prayer, and repentance.

After overcoming unconsciousness and fearing for his life, McCurties recognized that God's presence and strength were his divine right. He said this recognition came through the power of repentance, which led to him sharing his healing experience with others.

Resident Eric Phillips was moved by McCurties' testimony. He said "It showed me how healing goes beyond



Wikipedia

Mark McCurties

science, how one's positive thinking can bring healing and change, not only spiritually and emotionally, but physically."

McCurties said the word "repent" in Greek means to change the way you think, which is not what he believes people think the meaning of repentance is today. He said Jesus preached these changes and his ministry was challenging misconceptions, helping people know God's love is unconditional.

"The concept of repentance is an everyday thing. Am I letting my thinking be guided by God and informed by Christ's love? Or am I thinking humanly?" McCurties asked.

McCurties told the crowd that this thinking and repenting can change your life, character, and health. He believes by acknowledging others and changing the human thinking, the more you can experience God's healing power and love, the more you can help change those around you.

"The single greatest expression of God's love for humanity was Jesus' resurrection," McCurties said. He said to go through that experience was shameful, but provided a clean slate for humanity, and it was part of what was needed to wake us up.

Resident Harvey Brooks attends the Christian Science services weekly in the prison and said he appreciated how the church does not preach, but they educate.

"Think of Christian Science as a study, a pursuit, and a demonstration of truth. What Jesus did, changed the way we see reality," Brooks said.

—Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Wisdom for Healthy Re-entry from Community Health Workers



Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) is a network of community health clinics that serve returning community members. TCN clinics are led by Community Health Workers (CHWs) with lived experience of incarceration who support people with their health care and reentry. TCN hosts a monthly Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column to empower individuals to prepare for healthy reentry. This month we are hearing directly from TCN CHWs who are sharing about their personal experiences with reentry and their words of advice for success.

What was your greatest reentry challenge and how did you overcome it?

"Believing I had value was my greatest challenge. The stigma of incarceration/addiction had me believing no one saw me as [anyone] other than a felon/drug addict. I've overcome that by education and learning how to use my voice to advocate for those like me. I must also add therapy! Talking through my trauma and pain transformed my self-concept and ideas regarding my worth." — Cynthia, Minneapolis, MN

"My greatest reentry challenge was myself. Sticking to the goals I set for myself. I opened my mouth, cried, and got help. Short term goals for long term success." — Monique, San Francisco, CA



Courtesy of TCN

A TCN CHW meeting with clients at a community clinic.

"Getting employed. I was older when I paroled, [so] persistence and a willingness to start anywhere allowed me to keep growing into my current position." — Jim, San Diego, CA

"Trying to get meds. I went to the community clinic and asked for help." — Dwight, Charlotte, NC

"Staying clean and sober. I had to go through enough drama and lose everything to finally surrender." — Alisha, Vallejo, CA

"Rebuilding relationships with family members strained by incarceration and separation. Adjusting to societal norms, technology advancements, and cultural changes during my absences. How did I overcome the challenges? By asking for help - No question is dumb!!! Reaching out to those that support my goals and desires." — Sharon Fennix, San Francisco, CA

What is something you want to share about reentry & health with someone still incarcerated?

**"Don't give up!
...Kindness,
accountability,
determination are
three tools for long
term success."**

—Monique, San Francisco, CA

"Don't give up! ...Kindness, accountability, determination are three tools for long term success." — Monique, San Francisco, CA

"Health is wealth! Prioritizing health care is a choice, a proactive step you can take to gain control over your mental, emotional, and physical well-being." — Cynthia, Minneapolis, MN

"I have known people who have died following release, I personally nearly died of a heart attack. Your health is your most important asset!!!" — Jim, San Diego, CA

"It gets better if you stay off the drugs. It's tempting to want to see old friends, but it's

easy to get caught up." — Alisha, Vallejo, CA

"There is support and resources available to make sure you have all you need to succeed, but 90% of the work is done by your decision and willingness to do what's needed for yourself." — Bryan, Los Angeles, CA

"Health clinics are available to establish primary care and you don't have to rely on Emergency Departments to be seen." — Juan, Durham, NC

"This will work for you if you trust that you don't have to do this alone. We have [an] awesome team that will help all areas." — Keith, San Jose, CA

Thanks for reading! If you have healthcare-related questions about reentry, feel free to write us at: Transitions Clinic Network, 2403 Keith Street, San Francisco, CA 94124. Or call our Reentry Health Hotline today at (510) 606-6400 to speak with a CHW and to see if there's a TCN program in your community of return. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

SF Salvation Army runs recovery program

By Vance Eugene Sams, Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

The Salvation Army runs a recovery program in San Francisco's Mission District at the Joseph McFee Center.

"The Way Out Program" houses at least 50 men living in the facility, according to *KTVU Fox News 2*. Participants can live in the treatment center up to two years.

The "goal is to get people off the streets, into treatment where they can stabilize and heal and begin to learn how to live," said Steve Adami, the program's executive director.

The Salvation Army fully funded the facility.

"I knew that I was going to have to go through a lot of pain and misery but I knew that if I could stick it out you know, there was light at the end of the tunnel," said Joshua Brathwaite, a recovering

heroin addict. The program has helped him find a way into his seventh month of sobriety.

Because of his sobriety, stability, and healing, Brathwaite learned how to live again and currently attends school at San Francisco Community College where he studies drug counseling.

"I got into heroin because, I didn't have no drive", "I didn't have no purpose, I just didn't, care, you know. It's kind of a suicide mission," he said.

Sticking out the recovery program taught Brathwaite to own his faults, to get a job, to save his money, to work with his peers, to share a room, and to do his laundry, noted the article.

"So if I could do it, they can do it," said Brathwaite.

The program plans to house more than a 100 men and intends to open a space for women in summer.



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

SQ residents and staff continue to bridge the gap as they engage in cordial conversations during haircut

Incarcerated barbers give haircuts to correctional officers

By Michael Callahan
Staff Writer

Residents and correctional staff at the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center are taking steps to break out of their comfort zones and breach long-standing systemic barriers with barber shop talk, laughter, and normalization to the prison environment.

Dozens of residents watched from the tiers in SQ's Alpine housing unit as correctional officers received free haircuts from resident barbers Oscar Acosta, Marcus Casillas, Saul Cedillo, Maurice Higgs, Manuel Mena, and Edgar Rodriguez.

"I have wanted to show I have grown and that correctional officers can trust me. This opportunity proves we [incarcerated individuals] are trying to change for the better and build trust," Mena said.

The idea arose when Correctional Officer Lopez and resident Manuel Mena had crossed paths during a medical call in the building. Lopez is a member of the

California Model Resource team, which correctional staff formed to improve positive communication and education between officers and residents on the California Model. Lopez's energy and enthusiasm allowed residents to approach with fun and exciting ideas to help normalize the prison environment.

The overall consensus among the correctional staff who received haircuts was the interaction and professionalism of the barbers was similar to a barber shop outside.

During the haircutting, a few residents stepped out of their cells to see correctional officers watching persons getting "faded-up." Some asked, "Why all the attention just for haircuts?" It was not until one of the individuals de-smoked that the resident realized it was a correctional officer receiving a haircut from the building's barber.

"It is good to break down barriers," resident Thompson said. "To see staff being instrumental in making change possible is a part of

history. They need this just as much as we need it."

Resident barber Higgs said it starts with incarcerated individuals and includes correctional officers to accomplish an environment geared for rehabilitation. "Only way to accomplish this is to interact with each other, without seeing uniforms and blues but seeing each other for what we are: humans."

The first correctional officer on the hot seat was Officer Valladolid from the infirmary. He said that at first he was skeptical about whether he should trust someone other than his regular barber. "I was nervous," said Valladolid. "It looks clean and he did not push back the hairline." He said if a barber messes his hairline up he would not revisit them but he said he would allow resident Edgar to fade him up again.

"It was just two people at a barbershop, talking, laughing, and getting to know one another," resident barber Edgar said. "While I was cutting the officers hair it seemed normal."

He said if an event like this is not bridging the divide between incarcerated individuals and correctional staff, what else could. "It breaks down stigma and stereotypes and instead focuses on rehabilitation and restorative justice."

"It took a little getting used to but it felt like I was just cutting a regular person's hair. I forgot about my client being a C.O.," Cedillo said.

Officer Ramirez said it felt like he was getting a haircut in his neighborhood. "It felt good getting a haircut. In the end we are all human." He said to trust someone to cut your hair and get close to you can take a lot, but he could see something like this expanding in the future. "We are trying to break those barriers."

"Thinking it through, they are just as human as me, so why wouldn't I be able to give back and be in service today for them or just anyone in general," Casillas said.

—Randall Lawrence
Contributed to the story



Photos by: Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Residents Oscar Acosta, Edgar Rodriguez, Saul Cedillo, and Marcus Casillas talk shop with corrections officers as they fade-em up.

Kairos 57 honors volunteers in celebration of Living Water

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

Kairos celebrated its 35th year at San Quentin with Kairos 57, a celebration of Christ, called Living Water.

John, Chapter 7 verse 38 says, "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

At Kairos #57, water from Christ's followers flowed with grace and mercy.

Kairos San Quentin started when a correctional officer partnered with a chaplain who was a victim of a shooting. In 1989, the two started a spiritual retreat which happens at San Quentin on the three-day holiday weekends, joining Kairos' worldwide Christian faith which has remained SQ's sponsors since.

The weekend's message to the new incarcerated participants informed everyone that God's Living Water runs through every creature on the planet.

Instead of focusing only on the new participants, the program leaders acknowledged the outside volunteers, whom spent seven months preparing for the retreat.

"We owe these Christian men on the outside our new lives," said server leader Kenny Rogers.

"The dedication they give to San Quentin will hopefully transfer to these new Christian's walks with Christ," said co-server leader Ammen Shinti.

Kairos' mission is to introduce the concept of agape love to the new members, through life-changing events they experience during the four-day retreat.

The spiritual retreat has introduced interdenominational faith to over 2,480 incarcerated people at the prison over the years.

Outside Rector, Max Dreyer shared his witness from participating in SQ Kairos for twelve years. "Kairos is everything to me! It completes me," said Dreyer.

Martin Coyne and Larry Fitch spend every first and third Friday with the inside leadership team coordinating monthly reunions, writing Christmas cards to residents, and attending the four-day retreats expressed

their agape love for the men.

"The love of God fills my heart with joy when we are in the midst of a room filled with men-in-blue. I feel lifted by the faith and hope that comes in our retreats," said Coyne.

Fitch, a volunteer with Kairos SQ for 21 years, said, "Kairos has taught me what heaven will be like. I work in an outside ministry called Eikow, where I witness an inmate of 22 years working with a retired sally port guard — WITH EACH OTHER! That's how it will be in heaven," said Fitch.

A first time volunteer, a regular volunteer and the longest tenured volunteer shared their insight of the weekend as well.

Matt Duffy partook in his first Kairos as a SQ volunteer. "Those hot dogs we received in Chow Hall, were very curious things but I felt the acceptance of the residents as we shared common ground, and I now pray SQ is not the end of these Christian's stories," said Duffy.

Eight year volunteer, Frank Woodstock, hoped the participants received a deeper love for Christ and their fellow man. "I appreciate immensely what the prison administration has done for our organization over the years; and the CO's like Davy and Huey's who assisted were fabulous," said Woodstock.

Vic Perrella one of the original volunteers 35 years ago and an ardent member of SQ's Catholic Chapel with his wife Judy gave praise to the "Cadets of Christ."

"I hope our new members understand God's forgiveness is always present and He never forgets His love for anyone," said Perrella.

The initiation weekend happens twice a year — on President's Day weekend and on Labor Day. Leadership from SQ's Catholic and Protestant churches select forty-two residents to attend and the entire retreat team consisted of 47 community volunteers.

After the retreat, incarcerated resident Gabriel Ordenain said, "This is a true blessing to experience the Love from the brothers in Christ from Kairos #57. It is something I will never forget."

FACTS AND STATISTICS: Measuring recidivism countrywide becomes daunting task with varying data

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

The meaning of statistics can vary greatly according to their definition. A multiplicity of meanings applies to the metrics of recidivism, too, and such interpretations have vast implications on the lives of incarcerated persons, for they reflect on the success or failure not only of their rehabilitation but also on the justice system as a whole.

An article by Amanda Hernández in the *New Jersey Monitor* elaborates on the variety of data gathered and says suppliers of these data do not use uniform metrics. Recidivism statistics have two common elements: numbers of persons released from incarceration and newly committed infractions by these persons that lead to return to incarceration. Some statistics go one step farther and measure the time elapsed between release and new infraction.

"It is one of the metrics that state correctional leadership and state community supervision leadership pay close attention to," said Evan Green-Lowe of Recidiviz, a tech nonprofit that works with state criminal justice agencies, according to the article.

The article says the statistics evaluate corrections system performance and show the effectiveness of rehabilitative programs, reentry programs, and post-sentence probation programs.

Low rates of recidivism may indicate that rehabilitation efforts by prison staff and probation or parole officers do actually work, the article said.

Some advocates call the statistics ambiguous and less-than-accurate, says the article. Ann Fisher, the executive director of the nonprofit organization Virginia CARES, which supports formerly incarcerated persons, says, "Recidivism by itself is not a true measure of the success

of reentry programming or of incarceration rates. It's just not a true picture."

Recidivism data typically quantify returning citizens released from state prisons or facilities who return to incarceration within three years, but an absence of national standards makes comparisons a challenge, according to the article.

Recidivism studies use a variety of definitions for the act of reoffending. Some include parole violations, arrests, criminal convictions, or re-incarceration, the article said. "Some studies consider all these outcomes as recidivism, while others count only one or two," said the article. States inconsistently measure time intervals in recidivism studies. "Most include new offenses within three to five years; others examine a much shorter time frame, such as six months to a year," according to the article.

The degree of the offense

varies, too. Certain states use only commission of new felonies in their calculations of recidivism and they exclude misdemeanors and offenses resulting in local jail time. The way states categorize crimes as felonies or misdemeanors adds yet more complexity, the article says. Some states include in recidivism data even non-criminal offenses, such as missing a meeting with a parole officer.

Statistics also do not count formerly incarcerated persons whose newly committed criminal acts remain undetected.

Charis Kubrin, a criminology professor at the University of California, Irvine, cautions, "You have to be very, very careful. You have to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges."

Iowa, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia have pointed to reentry or other rehabilitative programs for their success in lowering rates of recidivism,

the article said.

Iowa reported 2023 recidivism at 34.3%, down 2.7 percentage points from 2022. The state defines recidivism by counting persons released from an Iowa prison who returned to incarceration within three years for any reason.

Kentucky announced its lowest recidivism rate in history at 27.15% and defines recidivism as a return to state custody within two years of release, either due to committing a new felony or a technical violation of supervision.

South Carolina said in 2023, the state achieved a recidivism rate of 17%, one of the lowest in the country; South Carolina defines recidivism as formerly incarcerated persons re-incarcerated within three years of release.

Recidivism in Tennessee declined to 29.6% in 2023 for incarcerated persons released four years earlier in 2019, the lowest rate in more than a decade. The state defines

recidivism as re-arrest, re-conviction or return to prison within three years after release.

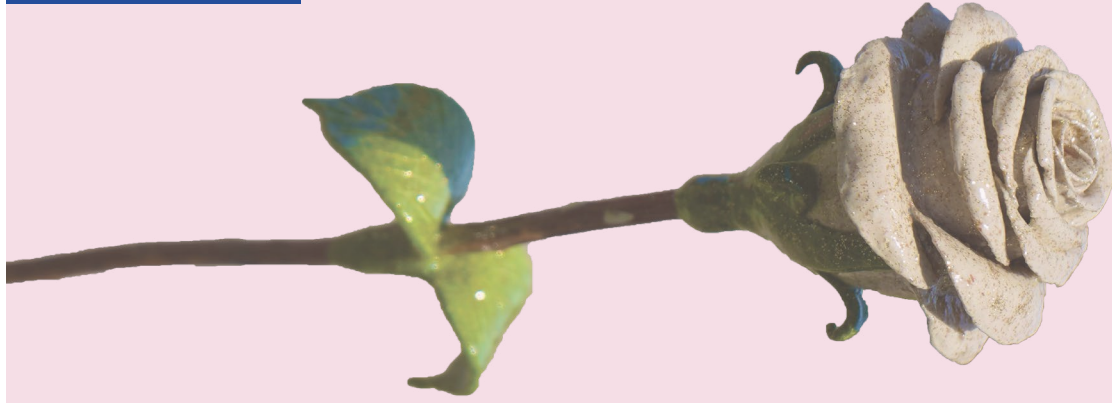
Virginia's 2023 recidivism rate dropped to 20.6%, but that rate measures persons released from incarceration in 2018 and re-incarcerated within three years.

The quotes Elsa Chen, of Santa Clara University as saying, "State officials should specify how the rate was calculated, what type of offenses or acts count as recidivism, potential limitations, such as incomplete data, and the frequency of reoffenses."

It cites a 2022 report that recommends the development of new metrics of post-release success that include "factors such as personal well-being, education, employment, housing, family and social supports, health, civic and community engagement and legal involvement."

Chen called such metrics "much more nuanced."

ESPAÑOL



Feliz día de las Madres

“A mi madre que ya paso: perdóname por los sufrimientos que te hice pasar. Gracias por los buenos consejos que nunca agarre”,

— **Efraín Rojas**

“Mamá en español, Umi en árabe, Ima en hebreo, Eomma en coreano, Uma en zulu, Mom en inglés y Mamma en italiano. En el idioma que sea, estoy seguro que esta es o ha sido la palabra más importante en la vida de muchos de nosotros gracias por todo mamá”

— **José Ramírez**

“Que en paz descanse, me acuerdo de ella cuando estamos reunidos con la familia y que la tengo en mi corazón y mente”,

— **José Nieto**

“Gracias a mi hermana porque me sigue queriendo no importa que este en la cárcel ella me sigue queriendo, ella es una excelente madre”,

— **Walter Calmo Perez**

“Maria de Jesús Rivera Felicidades por el día de las madres y para todas mis nueras”,

— **Bulmaro Valencia**

“Con mucho amor te mando besos y abrazos y espero que se alivie pronto tu hijo”,

— **Blas Frank Chavez**

“Gracias por el amor condicional que me da a pesar de que estas lejos estas en mi corazón y donde la vida comienza la vida nunca se acaba”,

— **Ismael Partida**

“Madre te doy gracias por haber me criado y por siempre dar me el apoyo y por eso estoy muy agradecido contigo y espero un día estar contigo y que Dios te cuide”,

— **Cristian Domínguez**

“Primera mente que no pierdan la fe y la esperanza que pronto estaremos festejando con ellas”,

— **Alfonso Mejía**

“Para las mamas de todos los

compañeros de SQ que las goce y las disfrute ahora que están con vida”,

— **Javier Majillon**

“No nomas en este día especial que reciban bendiciones sino en todos los días de su vida”,

— **Javier Hernández**

Madre!, Madre lo es todo Amor, pureza, protección, humildad y los valores del hogar en donde crecí”,

— **Aristeo Sampablo**

“El día de la madre para mí es un día de recuerdo de su amor de sus cariños y su ejemplo de humildad”,

— **Felipe P.**

“Para mi preciosa madre la Sra. Celia Valenzuela García. Mamá, quiero decirle que usted es el ser más maravilloso del mundo, gracias por darme la vida. Feliz día de las madres, su hijo”,

— **Aristeo Hernández V.**

“Oralia abuelita, gracias por todo tu apoyo y el trabajo duro al criarme. Después que 25 años ha pasado todavía recuerdo las aromas de tu comida, te extraño mucho”,

— **Jessie Milo**

“Eres la mejor madre del mundo y que Dios te bendiga. Su hijo, Jorge Arturo Partida”

— **Jorge Arturo Partida**

“La única manera de describir a mi mama, es solo decir que te amo con todo mi corazón. Eres la mejor mama del mundo para mí”,

— **Delfino Verdín**

“Mama siento que usted es como un rayo de luz que Dios ha puesto aquí en la tierra para mí”, — Nelson Escobar Medrano

“Madre, para mi eres como el agua, da vida y tus palabras penetran como la humedad de la misma”,

— **Cesar Hernández**

“Para todas las madres del mundo, les deseo muchas facilidades por todo sus esfuerzos

que hicieron desde el momento que nos trajeron a este mundo. Feliz día de la madres, especialmente para esas que ya no están con nosotros”,

— **Rubén Rodríguez**

“Si tuviera mi mama la trataría con mucho amor y le diré que la amo mucho. A donde sea que estés, la extraño mucho”,

— **Tranquiliano Figueroa**

“Agradezco a Dios porque hizo que fueras mi madre, gracias a ti fue formando mi carácter. Así conocí el amor de una madre”,

— **Luis Ángel López García**

“Estas palabras son para el ser más especial que Dios me ha dado, con mucho amor y cariño yo y mis hermanos Leidy y José le damos las gracias por ser nuestra madre. ¡Feliz día de las madres!”

— **Wilmer Martínez**

“Le doy gracias a mi madre por la vida que me dio, Que Dios la tenga en el cielo con todas las bendiciones. Gracias por todo lo que tengo ahora en mi vida. Gracias por la educación y la religión que me dio. Felicito a todas las madres del mundo”,

— **David Moreno**

“Gracias madre querida, por su presencia en mi vida y por las bendiciones que me das todos los días. Le dio gracias a Dios por haberme dado una madre tan hermosa”,

— **Olegario Ambriz**

“Gracias madre por haberme concebido la vida, gracias por ser mi madre y por todos los consejos que me ha dado”,

— **Saúl Cedillo**

“Mi madrecita santa, cuando más ocupaba de usted siempre estaba allí por mí con un gran amor de madre que ningún hijo se le olvidará. Gracias a Dios por darme una madre como usted. Que Dios siempre la bendiga y que le de muchos años más de vida”,

— **Israel Ordoñez García**

“Desde pequeño mi madre ha

sido el ejemplo número uno que ha tenido de lo que significa el amor, compasión y todo sentimientos buenos que uno puede tener. ¡Gracias por todo madre linda! La mejor madre del mundo”,

— **Idalio Villagrán**

“Mamá, desde el primer día que nació, usted ha sido mi inspiración más grande. Usted me ha enseñado lo que significa el verdadero amor. Gracias por hacer la mejor madre del mundo”,

— **Mike G. Navarro**

“Gracias mamá, por el hijo que soy y por darme la vida. Siempre estás en mi corazón. Gracias por todo mamá”,

— **Armando Mata**

“Le quiero dar las gracias por ser la madre que me ha dado amor, apoyo y cariño durante todo los años de mi vida. No fuera la persona quien soy hoy sin usted a mi lado. Estoy agradecido que tengo una madre así como usted. ¡Feliz día de las madres!”

— **José “Chepe” Fajardo**

“Gracias madrecita por todo el gran amor que me has dado, y por estar conmigo en las buenas y en las malas. Por apoyarme en la situación en la que me encuentro. Porque el amor de madre no se compara con nada. Te amo mamá”,

— **Jorge Cuevas**

“Recuerdo y extraño la comida de usted madre. Deseo que estés con mi padre allá en el cielo felices juntos. Gracias por todo su amor de madre y por su paciencia con nosotros sus hijos y también por los buenos consejos que nos dio durante la vida. Feliz día de las madres, la amo y extraño”,

— **José Gutiérrez**

“Significa amor que yo tengo para mí mamá. También agradecimiento por todo lo que ha hecho en mi vida. Eres el amor de mi vida”,

— **José Maya**

“Hoy en este día tan especial para ti y todas las madres del

mundo, quiero decirte felicidades y recordarte hoy, mañana y siempre que te amo”,

— **León**

“Mamá, le quiero felicitar por este día tan especial. Aunque ahorita ya no está con nosotros, pero está en espíritu y en mis buenos pensamientos y en veces en mis lágrimas”,

— **José Magaña**

“Le agradezco porque en las buenas y en las malas jamás me distes la espalda, hoy le confieso mi orgullo que usted sea mi madre y que me haiga dado a luz en ese pueblo que tanto quiero. Feliz día de las madres C.G.G.”

— **David Guerra**

“Mamá la extraño, como deseo que podría ver todas las cosas correctas que estoy haciendo en la vida ahora. Yo me ha ofrecido para la comunidad hispana porque queria ayudarlos. Que Dios te bendiga y te veo algún día en el cielo”,

— **Michael Beaudette**

“Tu amor y sacrificio de madre me ayudado a no perder la esperanza, sueño en el día que estaremos juntos de nuevo. Primero Dios pronto estaré en la casa. A mi abuelita Lala adonde este la quiero mucho y extraño gracias por las gaciosas de mi niñez.”

— **Edwin E. Chavez**

“Recordando tu día Blanca Romero con bendiciones, feliz día de las madres”,

— **Alex Hernández**

“Madre mía perdóname por todas esas noches que se desveló, y perdóname que llegara de la calle. La quiero mucho”,

— **José Cisneros**

“Por todos tus sacrificios, siempre tendrás mi amor”,

— **Alejandro Loera-Gutiérrez**

“Se levantan sus hijos y le llaman: Bienaventurada, Prov. 31:28 Mamá, la amo”,

— **Manual Dorado**

“Una mujer dijo; bienaventurada el vientre que te trajo, y los senos que mamaste. Jesús dijo, bienaventurados los que oyen la palabra de Dios y la guardan. Lucas 11:27-28”,

— **Julio Rivas Rodríguez**

“Le mando saludos a mi santa reina Ana Contreras de parte de su amado hijo. La amo mucho”,

— **Regalado Bulmaro**

“Querida madre, la amo y la extraño mucho”,

— **David Silva**

“Mamá tu eres lo mas hermoso que Dios me pudo brindar. Te amo y te extraño y deseo pronto mirarte y abrazarte como nunca lo he hecho”,

— **Guillermo P. H.**

“Jackie, te extraño y quiero que te sientas orgullosa de mí. Te amo mucho y espero verte pronto”,

— **Jordan Junious**

“Quiero darte las gracias por todo lo bueno que me has enseñado en mi vida, estoy muy orgulloso de ti. Te amo y te extraño mucho mamá”,

— **Marco Serna**

“Para ti mi adorada y bella esposa Thelmita no sabes cuanto te extraño mi amor solo pienso en ti para esperarme. Sinceramente tu esposo”,

— **Otto Del Cid**

“Madre, luchastes hasta el cansancio, para que yo fuera alguien. Pero te fallé. Hoy te valoro, hoy que ya no estas”

— **Efraín Rojas**

“El 10 de Mayo es muy importante, porque madre es una persona que está para sus hijos sean buenos o malos. Ella siempre es madre los 365 días para apoyarnos en todo momento”

— **Luis Muñiz**

“Dalia, eres la mejor persona y muchas gracias por entregar tu vida para que puede yo vivir la vida”

— **Rene Lorenzo**

El día de las madres es celerado 365 días del año

Por **Edwin E. Chavez**
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair

Los Hombres latinos del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin Conmemoran el Día de las Madres.

Para mucho prisioneros el amor de una madre es la antorcha que les da esperanza en sus vidas.

Conforme al difunto reverendo Dr. Myles Munroe, estadísticas han demostrado que 95 por ciento de las personas encarceladas en EE.UU. fueron criados por madres solteras.

Por décadas, miles de madres han atravesado por los oxidados portones de San Quentin; demostrando el amor por ver a sus hijos, sin importar cualquier problema—desde la distancia a las lluvias.

Ser un prisionero extranjero lejos de la madre es muy

difícil.

Isaac Linares, recluso y nativo del El Salvador, no ha visito a su madre en 15 años. El desearía poder verla y darle un abrazo, con las siguientes palabras. “Madre perdóname por escoger este camino, espero muy pronto en poder salir de esta prisión y buscar el camino correcto que tu me enseñaste cuando era joven”.

En diferentes culturas la día de madres es reconocido en distintas maneras.

En la cultura Latina, nosotros resaltamos este día como si fuera el segundo cumpleaños de la mujer que nos dio la vida, dándole toda clase de regalos.

Según Linares, los Salvadoreños celebran con una cena, un abrazo, dándole flores, y comprándole bajillas de porcelana para la cocina. También les dan vestidos que le gustaba, sus maquillajes,

zapatitos, y su carteras. Le ponen musical alegre; cumbias, rancheras, y hasta reguetón.

De acuerdo a Linares no poder estar con su mama en este día le quiebra el corazón y lo hace sentir triste, porque su mama ya es de mayor edad y el quisiera estar a su lado para cuidarle en su estado de salud.

Para las personas encarceladas, el amor de una madre es un lazo sagrado, y muy distinto a otras relaciones. No importa cuales sean las circunstancias, no se puede romperla.

Nuestras madres son la conexión mas importante y son nuestras almas gemelas quienes nos cuidaron desde nuestro nacimiento. Es un honor en poder reconocerlas a cada una de ellas en todo del mundo.

En India se encuentra una madre extrañado a su hijo, ella es capaz de hacer todo lo

imposible para poder verlo y darle ese abrazo tan deseado a su hijo, aunque sea detrás de las rejas — el nombre de esta madre es Shashi Abraham de 72 años.

Para Anand Jon Alexander, un residente de CRSQ estando encarcelado. El comparte su gratitud por haber nacido en una cultura religiosa y ser criado por una madre soltera (Shasi) que le enseñó que nunca hay que darse por vencido y que siempre sea justo con todos.

No nos olvidemos de todos las personas condenas a pena de muerte y también a las mujeres que son hijas y madres y están cumpliendo condenas en alguna prisión. Ellos y ellas también nacieron de una mujer; de parte de todo estos hombres y mujeres, que fueron sentenciados(as) al Corredor de la muerte:

Feliz día de las madres de

parte de toda los residentes del corredor de la muerte, nosotros celebramos tu día en solidaridad y armonía!

Para la madres que ha pasado a la otra vida, te saludamos a ti, por todo el amor incondicional hacia tus hijos, hijas, y también nietos/as.

Traquilio Figueroa, un residente, reflexionó, “en el día que mi madre falleció yo no pude estar presente para poder despedirse ‘mama’ si me escuchas te digo que te amo mucho ya que no puede estar presente el día que tu partiste”, Figueroa añadió. “Pero hoy te quiero decir lo mucho que te extraño”.

No importa adonde nos encontramos encarcelados. El amor de madre no tiene limites.

Jose Alfredo “Fredie” López, ha estado encarcelado desde los 16 años de edad. Hoy tiene 35 años y recuerda

su madre Estela, que siempre lo apoyo en todo momento.

Después de la cirugía de corazón y diálisis de Estela, ella viajo aproximadamente veinte seis hors de y de vuelta. Así ella podía asegurarse dar un abrazo a su hijo antes que falleciera. Según López, en los ojos de su mama, siempre era su bebe.

La verdad es que nosotros encarcelados nunca dejaremos de amar a nuestras madres por sus sacrificios y el dolor permanente de la separación física.

Vivimos por el día que podemos verdaderamente honrar a nuestros madres y dar alivio al sufrimiento pasado, trayendo un futuro mas brillante en el mundo por nuestras madres.

— **Escritores contribuyentes**
Clase de periodismo en español.



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

La nueva clase de graduados juntos con los alumnos anteriores cual ya han sido liberados

Cuarenta-cuatro residentes de CRSQ se graduaron en diseño grafico y audio en computadoras

Por **Aristeo Sampablo**
Staff Writer

La autoridad industrial de California, conocido como CALPIA, en ingles celebrar los nuevos logros de los residentes que a lo largo de 20 meses dedicaron su tiempo y esfuerzos en el aprendizaje de diseño gráfico y audio.

El impacto social que logro este programa llamar la atención de algunos medios como KQED, KCBS, KRON y KTVU.

De acuerdo a CALPIA, es una entidad independiente del Estado, que provee verdaderas habilidades para los trabajos del mundo real. La organización sirve a un aproximado de 5,700 personas encarcelados en todas las prisiones del departamento de correcciones y rehabilitación de California.

Según este programa, reduce la re-ofensa por la provisión a las personas encarceladas con oportunidades de entrenamiento que les cambia

la vida y los prepara para tener un regreso éxitos a sus comunidades.

CALPIA, ofrece más de 134 certificados acreditados y reconocidos nacionalmente en conjunto con aprendices que ayudan a las personas encarceladas a encontrar un trabajo significativo a su salida.

“Esta habilidad afecta mi rehabilitación de una manera buena y productiva. Porque, es otra habilidad la cual me asegurara mantenerme

empleado, una vez que salga de la prisión y me ayude con mis habilidades sociales” comento el residente y graduado de la programa, Sergio Argueta.

En el transcurso de la ceremonia, el personal de la última milla, conocido como last smile en ingles, hizo su presencia en el escenario para expresar unas palabras de motivación con todos los graduados al igual que miembros de la administración de San Quentin.

“La última milla, me ha dado herramientas”, expreso el residente y graduado Daniel Newman. “Ya esto demasiado viejo para hacer trabajo manual, el estar sentado en un escritorio y poder obtener un mejor estilo de vida que me garantice el excito a mi salida”.

En el evento había un aproximado de 150 personas, incluso a los graduados, familiares y el personal de CALPIA. Los cuales reflejaban una gran felicidad por

ser parte de este momento tan especial que festejar el logro de todos estos residentes.

“Hoy se presentó la oportunidad de poder estar con nuestro hijo (Moisés Ramos) en su graduación, nos llena de alegría y nos sentimos muy orgullosos”, compartió Julio Ramos, padre de uno de los graduados. “Yo espacialmente como papá me siento muy orgulloso, de que mi hijo este logrado su meta que, sin duda, de alguna manera le beneficiara en el futuro”.

Defensores Públicos de SF ofrecen ideas sobre la libertad

Por **Miguel Sifuentes**
Y **César Martínez**
Spanish Journalism
Guild Writer

Abogados defensores públicos de San Francisco visitaron la sala de periodismo de SQNews en el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin (CRSQ).

Los residentes compartieron sobre el impacto del sistema actual de la Audiencia de Libertad Condicional (conocido en inglés como Board of Prison Hearings o ‘BPH’). Se consideró la disponibilidad real de esta libertad bajo el nuevo modelo “californiano”.

Edwin E. Chávez y Michael Callahan, miembros de SQNews, invitaron a los participantes del evento a formar un círculo para facilitar el dialogo.

Por ejemplo, uno de los abogados señaló el bajo porcentaje de las audiencias que conceden la libertad, cual se representa como un 40%, en realidad puede ser solo un 14%.

Según Marisa Harris, una abogada de la unidad de post-convicción, BPH no está contando cuando no hay audiencia por las estipulaciones al tener una infracción de las reglas reciente, aun por romper reglas no serias (CDC-128).

Se habló de un caso en donde un reo pudo obtener la libertad, pero después se le negó porque dos años antes él subió contenido en la red social de Facebook.

“Sugiero que los reos pongan peticiones para que los jueces miren las razones por la cual la ‘BPH’ niega la libertad”, dijo Harris. “La única manera de hacer cambios es publicarlo. El público no sabe las cosas arbitrarias que están pasando”.

Un residente ofreció su experiencia distinta al ser negado ante la BPH por haber presentado una petición bajo una nueva ley.

“Es lo más bajo que una persona fue negado por poner una petición ante la corte. No debería ser penalizado por ejercer sus derechos legales”, añadió Harris.

Eliot Hosman, de la unidad de post-convicción, ofreció



Photos by Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

San Francisco Defensores Público visitaron la sala de Periódicos de SQNews

una advertencia profesional sobre los abogados privados en asuntos de la BPH y peticiones de re- sentencias.

“Sabemos que unos abogados toman el dinero de las familias y no ayudan a las personas encarceladas”, dijo Hosman. Elle enfatizo el tener cuidado de tres abogados específicos demandados por fraude.

Chavez propuso el tema de la desconexión entre las personas y el entendimiento del proceso legal en su idioma.

El traducir las palabras no necesariamente explica el significado. Aun la falta de traducir las palabras adecuadamente e interpretar el significado correcto, es un problema.

Los dos elementos se requieren para que los residentes puedan comprender sus derechos. El acceso inadecuado al sistema legal, es un obstáculo no solamente ante la BPH.

“Es importante crear métodos y que los intérpretes expliquen con conocimientos legales al momento de cualquier etapa del proceso legal,” dijo Chavez.

Hosman reconoció que las personas encargadas en traducir no están capacitadas y no interpretan correctamente durante los procesamientos. Elle puso en claro la dificultad con la cantidad de idiomas que se habla- eso sin incluir los distintos dialectos.

Chavez pregunto sobre el efecto del centro de rehabilitación.

Un residente habló del programa Guiando la Ira Hacia el Poder (GRIP). Le ayudó identificar como sus detonantes promovieron los comportamientos violentos en su vida.

Para Noah Winchester, un militar veterano en CRSQ, el programa (Veterans Group of San Quentin) le ayudo procesar su desorden de estrés postraumático (PTSD) y sus traumas.

El aprendió a perdonarse, enfrentar sus remordimientos, y saber que él no es lo que creía que era.

Según Jared Rudolph, especialista en litigación, la BPH fue creada en el año 1901 para cubrir el gobernador de consecuencias políticas al dar clemencia y cuando la persona cometiera un nuevo crimen.

Rudolph añadió que los que obtienen la libertad ahora tendría que ser cincuenta por ciento o más, y esta meta se trata de ejercer el poder de la gente, incluyendo al CRSQ.

“Sugiero que trabajemos juntos para cuestionar la manera que el sistema está implementando el nuevo modelo de rehabilitación, y asegurar que resulte en la libertad de los que ya no demuestran ser un peligro para la sociedad”, añadió Harris.

Rachel Stober, especialista en mitigación (Case Mitigation Specialist), ayuda a los reos crear su historial social y reintegrarse con la sociedad. Ella presento varios documentos para la población encarcelada sobre casas de transiciones y como obtener otros servicios en la comunidad.

Los residentes se comprometieron para ayudar a los defensores públicos poder representar a los reos mejor ante la comunidad. El vivir los valores cual demuestran verdaderamente el remordimiento y las enmiendas, se ofrecieron como la manera más poderosa de contribuir a la sociedad.



La abogada Marisa Harris, comparte informacion con el Sr. Bojas

Colombia Propone Legalizar las Drogas

Nuevos metodos para combatir las drogas ilegales

Por **Arsenio Leyva**
Staff Writer

La Guerra se está perdiendo en contra el consumo de drogas en las Américas.

Los países de latino américa consideran legalizar las drogas para luchar en contra la violencia, el trafico transnacional, homicidios y adicciones informa Raúl Zepeda Gil del *The Conversation*.

La fuerza militar no es la solución, desde los décadas de los 80's los países como México, Colombia, El Salvador y Honduras han confrontado los carteles de drogas sin prevenir el incremento de la violencia en sus regiones, asegura Gil.

De acuerdo de los tratados de las naciones unidas, obliga estos gobiernos a perseguir judicialmente la producción y el uso recreacional de drogas ilícitas. Los tratados son conocidos como, “régimen de prohibición de drogas.”

El reportaje asegura que es el gobierno americano que promueve estas leyes regidas para tratar con mano dura en contra los carteles de drogas con el intento de acabar con el tráfico de drogas y la droga adicción.

Los investigadores de estos tipos de operaciones, han relacionado el incremento de homicidios desde 2007 cuando se utiliza la fuerza militar con el apoyo de la agencia de fuerza y drogas de estados unidos.

Sobre todo que estos esfuerzos no ha reducido la droga adicción en los estados unidos, que se esperaba con esta “guerra en contra las drogas” asegura esta investigación de Gil.

De acuerdo con un reporte de 2023 de la oficina de las naciones unidas de drogas y crímenes, (UNODC por sus siglas en inglés) américa latina y el caribe son las regiones más violentas del mundo.

Treinta y cuatro por ciento de los homicidios en el planeta sucedieron en las américas, quienes están relacionados con la guerra global en contra las drogas, confirma el reporte de UNODC.

Algunas administraciones de américa latina ya están rechazando estas políticas promovidos por las naciones unidas y estados unidos, asegura *The Conversation*.

Por ejemplo en Bolivia ya legalizaron las cosechas y producción de coca para las indígenas en 2011. Uruguay y Jamaica ya legalizaron algunas compras de cannabis en 2014 y 2015 respectivamente. México y Colombia ya están en pláticas sobre la regulación de cannabis, asegura el reportaje.

Algunos gobiernos como Colombia, México y Bolivia han tratado de promover la dis-criminización de todos los tipos de drogas, pero no pudieron convencer a otros países en una asamblea especial de las naciones unidas en 2016.

Pero si se pudo llegar a un acuerdo para permitir algunos países regular como el uso médico algunas drogas ilícitas, como el cannabis, confirmó Gil.

Colombia desde los 60's, ha sido el centro de la guerra mundial en contra las drogas que se conoce como “el centro de producción de cocaína” está en proceso de mantener la paz en dos frentes, con las guerrillas y con los carteles, menciona el informe.

El Presidente Petro de Colombia fue elegido con la promesa de reducir la violencia. En Septiembre de 2023, le pidió al presidente Mexicano Andrés Manuel López Obrador que le asistiera convocar una nueva junta de las naciones unidas para una nueva propuesta de como resolver el problema del consumo de drogas.

SPORTS

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Sports Editor

In March, the California Model moved forward as administration, staff and residents participated in an intense, hour-long workout in the gymnasium at the San Quentin Sports Complex.

SQRC's Physical Fitness Training has started a new program and participation on Saturday and Tuesday training class has grown to include three correctional staff members, one free staff supervisor and 45 residents in all.

"I know everybody is in a hurry to get this California Model going, but slow is fast, right? It starts with people's slow interactions in leading the way," said Warden Chance Andes, who participated with the group.

Andes provided leadership and vision as he highlighted the Physical Fitness Training group event that is sponsored by the No Matter What Club, in partnership with the Community Amends Project (CAP).

Before the program started, Andes gave a motivating speech to the residents and staff who were about to sweat in the gym right along with him.

"Thank you for being leaders in your community. My staff is willing to come out here and help lead the way too and this is what we want [the California Model] to look like," said Andes.

Line captain and trainer Dave Richard shared his excitement as Warden Andes spoke. "We're trying to invite everyone in our community to participate [because] fitness improves our mental health,"



said Richard.

Warden Andes continued.

"I often refer to us doing time together, ...I'm in my twenty-first year... been down 21 [and have] evolved a lot," said Andes. "When I started 21 years ago I wasn't who I am today...if I'm dead honest with you, I wouldn't work out with you 21 years ago. I'm pretty sure you wouldn't workout with me 21 years ago if I walked onto a level 4 yard, [trying] to shake somebody's hand. They wouldn't shake my hand, right? So we're different here; leading the way and this is where [the California Model] starts with events like this," said Andes.

Maurice Higgs, another line coach for Physical Fitness Training said, "I've been doing fitness training, and sports all my life. I feel this is a good platform because I like staying in shape [and] I like to see people live in a positive way."

CAP chairperson Roland Cardiel said, "The purpose of the PFT program is based around the somatic experience which is the body's experience, to release long-term and

short-term trauma-shock. The body doesn't distinguish if you're in crisis or working out, so we use positive cadences to rewire the brain through group fitness."

Andes said spreading the word in the community would help healthy programs gain traction.

"I tell everybody to be patient. Great things will happen and when you leave this event, we're going talk to our people, and say it [the event] went really good. When you leave, talk to your people and say it went really good, [because] when you talk to ten people maybe two [will] get that; and those eight who don't get it yet, they eventually will," said Andes.

Chairperson Cardiel said CAP and No Matter What would continue to use fitness to improve community.

Currently PFT has a group Tuesday mornings in the gym and Saturday mornings in West Block's yard.

"Studies have shown that if you get out of your cell, the brain will crave more human

interaction. In turn, we assist in the training of the brain to be pro-social instead of anti-social," said Cardiel.

Warden Andes closed his speech just before the workout began.

"I appreciate you all and got a real workout in. I have a lot to do, because all of you ask a lot of me. I'm trying to make movements for San Quentin so I can't be here a whole lot, but I think it's important for both of our communities to see I am involved and we have buy-in, ... I have a lot of plans for San Quentin.

We have two major things going on right now. We have the Condemned Row being closed down, which gives us a new building that we can turn into something very special. And then we have a learning center that's giving us an opportunity no one else has. I'm open to all new programs [and] we're pushing forward. [The California Model] starts with little stuff like this so I appreciate you all."

After the applause faded, Warden Andes participated



Photos by: Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Above left: California model, staff and residents participated in first ever physical fitness training debut. Above right: Warden Andes gave thanks to participants.

with the participants in workouts that included a line-up consisting of ten stations that lasted one minute each with intermittent breaks of 30 seconds. The exercises included:

Standard Jumping Jacks.
Mountain Climbers, which emulates a mountain climbing position while moving non-stop.

Front/Side Lunges, which moves one leg in front of the other to stretch out the groin area.

Windshield wiper Push-ups, where residents and staff alike do the complicated exercise, taking deep breaths and having to pause so they can continue the task near an exhaustive state.

Jumping Squats, each line performs this exercise by jumping as a single unit.

Planks, as a group staying as still as possible so as to not break the plank position.

Pushup-Crab.

Sit-ups; that incorporate a hand clap behind the leg as they bring their legs up.

Shoulder Tap push-ups, demands the hand touching the opposite shoulder with each push-up.

Abdominal rotations.

Stretch Out to cool down.

Confidence and strength are built each day as participants workout in unity and fellowship; and on occasions they will be working out with the leader of the California Model, Warden Chance Andes.

CAP started in 2022 at CCI-Tehachapi and began at SQRC in 2023. No Matter What was founded in Calipatria in 2018 and is currently in six prisons including serving the women at CIW.

—Cassandra N. Evans
and Jason Satterfield
Contributing Writers

Poor shooting performance leads to opener loss

By Jarrod "Deuce" Williams
Journalism Guild Writer

On March 23rd, the SQ Warriors began their season with an opening day game against their outside archrival, Town Boogie.

The official start of the season was scheduled for April 27th, but Town Boogie didn't want to wait and decided to schedule games so they could come down the hill ready to take on some new faces and old faces of the residents.

Music by Jamal "Mal" Harrison accompanied everyone entering the gym in anticipation of the first game of the season.

Jamal "Mal" Harris spoke on the mic as fans and the teams stood in honor as the color guards held each flag as a

tribute to those who gave there life for our nation.

Before the "family affair" SQ Warriors' trio of guards, "Duty," Keyshawn "Steez" Strickland, and Donnell "JR" Pimpton expressed the team's enthusiasm. "Excited and anxious to see this new team ball together," said "Steez". "Duty" added, "I was nervous, but ready to see what we're going to do."

The trio hoped the team would be similar to last years and would continue to play hard, stay together and keep everyone involved. The SQ Warriors' primary focus for the season remains beating the Golden State Warriors organizational team during their annual visit.

Town Boogie's outside sponsor, Geoffrey "Free" Gary

didn't play in the game as he usually does but he talked smack about the first game. "I'm excited about this new roster and we came ready," said Gary.

"Free's" confidence proved warranted as Town Boogie went on a 9-0 run to start the game and the SQ Warriors did not score until Darius "DP" Poole made a free throw.

The rhythm of the game picked-up after nerves and rust wore off by the end of the first quarter after Town Boogie took a 20-10 lead.

In the second quarter, the teams traded buckets before the half ended with Boogie leading 42-43 at halftime. Boogie's star point guard, Autumn continued his personal onslaught totaling 18 points and the SQ Warriors' "Steez" led his team's scoring

with 17 points in the first half.

Momentum shifted at the beginning of the third quarter as Duty, Steez, Toaisi "Shaka" Matagni, DP and JR swarmed Town Boogie with a defensive intensity that allowed the SQ Warriors to streak to a 9-2 run in the first three minutes of the period.

After a jump ball and quick timeout, the SQ Warriors went on another 5-0 run to take the lead 47-44 with 6:48 left in the quarter. This was the last lead the home team would have.

Town Boogie went on to completely dominate the boards, allowing them to tie the game 54-54.

With 2:10 left in the third quarter, the entire game flipped after a monstrous fast-break dunk by Town Boogie's center caused the gym to explode.

The poster dunk made the gym erupt so much that Head referee Ish Freelon was forced to call an official's timeout to clear the court of spectators who ran to hi-five and chest-bump Colin.

The center's dunk gave Team Boogie a lead they'd never relinquish as the third quarter ended with the SQ Warriors down 57-54.

Town Boogie continued their barrage, storming out to a 7-0 run to start the fourth quarter.

SQ Warriors' Head Coach, "JB" called a timeout, but the team did not regroup because none of the SQ Warriors' big men had an answer for the force that was Sam.

Sam controlled the paint and dominated the game after his dunk, becoming Boogie's lead scorer with 25 points and eight rebounds as he dictated the tempo of the game. Boogie's offense ran through him and eventually took away The SQ

Warriors' speed advantage.

The SQ Warriors never got back into the game and the final score was 82-70.

The score did not reflect rivalry.

Town Boogie coach "Free" said, "Basketball is a game of runs, and, luckily, we had the last run." He also added, "The Warriors were fast and physical and I was relieved Boogie won."

SQ Warriors captain, "Steez" led the SQ Warriors with 30 points on an 11-25 shooting night; "Duty" contributed 17 points on a 7-15 shooting night, and had a game-high 11 rebounds, five assists and three steals.

As a team, the SQ Warriors had 16 turnovers and shot a dreadful 34% from the field.

"Free" agreed with the fans that Colin's dunk changed the game.

Jason Satterfield
contributed to this story

Kings' new uniforms look good, too bad game didn't

By Jason Satterfield
Journalism Guild Writer

On March 25, the San Quentin Kings donned new "unis" as they opened their season playing SQRC's archrival team Town Boogie. The jerseys presented to each player on their chair would be the last gift the King's received all day.

Town Boogie led by Geoffrey "Free" Gary destroyed the San Quentin Warriors during their opener the (day/week) before, beating the SQ Warriors by 20 points.

The Kings' sneakers squeaked during the traditional warmups that included lay-ups and mid-range shots, as team Town Boogie strutted in the gym fresh off the pounding they gave to the SQ Warriors.

The fans loved their

impactful, cocky entrance and gave them a warm reception as they have been accepted as a vital part of the athletic community at SQRC; a part that volunteers love and support for the Basketball program.

Town Boogie warmed up for the game as the Kings huddled up, inspiring each other to outdo the Warriors who lost their opener to the same team.

The SQ Warriors sat as a large part of the fan base that was there to cheer on the Kings as electricity filled the air. Excitement was running high in anticipation of ending SQ Basketball's losing streak.

Head referee Ishmael gathered the players at center court amid a thunderous applause, and to the surprise of all in attendance, the Kings suited up in their retro "unis" of their traditional white, gray, and

gold, embossed with a silk-screen crown on the front.

Town Boogie, in black and white "unis" won the tip, moved the ball up the court as they broke down the Kings' defense and started the scoring as the ball snapped the bottom of the net. On the Kings' trip down the court, Town Boogie stole the ball and dropped two free throws to set the tone for the first half.

Town Boogie owned the boards and systematically broke down the Kings' defense throughout the first half, while taking a commanding 44-31 lead at half-time.

During half-time, both teams went to the mid-court and circled up as everyone in the gym joined in clapping in sync to raise the roof.

As the second-half got under way, the Kings picked

up a little steam with back-to-back three pointers by Bird and Lanzo, who took more control of the court.

Unfortunately, the Kings' front court failed to box out Town Boogie's two big men as the visiting team dominated down low. Town Boogie's second chance points and uncontested layups allowed Town Boogie to pull away for good as the Kings' took a loss that made the SQ Warriors look like a close game; TTown Boogie won with a final score of 93-64.

As the SQ Kings humbly took their defeat, both of the teams celebrated.

"I've played against 'Free' when he played for team Bitterman," said SQ Kings Assistant Coach Jamal "Mal" Harison. "He is an intelligent coach and player and I've

learned a lot from him over the years."

Harrison said he expected his team to come out with the jitters, but he thought as soon as they got into the flow of the game everything would be alright.

"This is one of the most powerful Basket Ball experiences I've ever had," said Troy #21 for Town Boogie. This is his fifth time coming in to play and he is looking forward to coming back.

He said it's different playing in here because no matter what, the guys in here are not going to back down from the challenge, in here size don't matter.

Fellow Town Boogie stand out #0 Hathman, said it's the physicality in here that makes it different from playing on the outside and that's one of the reasons he will keep coming back.

"Scratch whatever ideologies and or beliefs that you have, come in and see for

yourselves... Yes, it's prison, but it's not what the movies paint it out to be, it's a complete 180," Hathman added.

The Kings suited 10 players for the game and all got playing time, but the size and speed of the visitors proved to much to overcome.

"I can see the growth of the Kings this year, in the past whenever they were hit by adversity they would bicker and argue, this year was different they kept playing and showed great sportsmanship," said Coach "Free" for Town Boogie.

He fully expects the Kings to get better the more they play together, noting a lot of new faces to the team. Town Boogie have been playing together for two years, so the chemistry showed on the court.

"First of all I miss Bryant, he has been the heart and soul of this program for so long. This game wasn't a fair fight, we brought young guys in." "Free" said.



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Administration, Corrections staff, and residents gather on the Lower Yard, revisiting their inner child through remote control car racing.

SQ's Daytona at the Lower Yard: Officers, residents race remote-controlled cars

By Jason Satterfield
Journalism Guild writer

Residents, staff, and administration of SQRC got together on a warm March morning to continue bridging the gap of rehabilitation as the morning turned into an exciting day for some good, old fashioned childhood remote control car enthusiasts.

Named the First Annual SQRC Car Race, the event was organized by Correctional Officer S. Lopez.

"We wanted to bring the inner child out of people," said Lopez, who owns two of the three cars that were being used during the event.

Lopez, a member of the California Model implementation team, bought his first remote car 16 years ago. He enjoyed it so much that it became his hobby.

Free Staff Coach K. Bhatt lent his own remote truck to add variety to the event.

Lopez and Bhatt designed a road similar to a s-curve track, or what is seen throughout formula car racing. The chalk-lined track zigzagged in the infield of SQ's Field of Dreams baseball field and scaled the pitcher's mound to ascend to loftier heights.

The road race was designed to establish healthy and fun competition for the staff and residents in a rehabilitation manner. They operated three remote vehicles in a healthy, competitive fashion.

Residents of SQRC spoke of being able to "hang out" with staff while having fun and enjoying themselves.

"When the officers turn came, they were allowed to test out the



Officer S. Lopez geared up for some good ol' fun racing in the field.

cars by spinning donuts and trying to launch them at high speeds off the hill, formerly known as the pitcher's mound," said resident Lou Bernabei.

Correctional Officers M. Howard and R. Kruse watched the various cars and the remote drivers who were learning how to maneuver the course.

The duo remembered the older styles of their youth, and the little race cars that had cords and joysticks attached to them before they spoke about their observations of the event.

"I was hoping for a bigger turnout, but I am still thinking about different ideas for future events," said Howard, a Correctional Officer for 17-years.

Correctional Officer Kruse, a



Residents and correctional staff prepare remote control cars for a day of off-road racing on the Lower Yard

nine-year employee of the CDCR stated it was a great way to spend time with the residents. "Never in a million years did I think they'd be hangin' out with us," said Kruse.

The California Model attempts to integrate administration, correctional officers, and residents to increase rehabilitative efforts and normalize residents before residents return to society.

"Integration at the newly designed 'raceway' showed it was possible to have fun together, side-by-side, appearing united as guards and residents, being equal. There was no fear today, only solidarity and unity as residents and staff got together despite being on opposite sides. Today, division went away," said resident Donald Edge.

Even the "O.G.s" [elder residents] came out for a day of recreational activity to feel young again as they remembered the days they owned model cars, like pine wood derby cars, Johnny Lightning Cars or Match-Box Cars, most in attendance claimed they had owned a memory or two.

Sergeant Rael who had heard the invitation to the event at his post, decided to experience the event and was inspired watching the staff and the incarcerated coming together.

"It's good to see everyone come together on a nice day, making things work as a united community within these walls. I did not think this could happen," said Rael.

Dr. Nocerino, Mental Health staffer at SQRC, spoke of the benefits

of recreational therapy. "Any recreational activity helps with mind and spirit. If we can create enjoyable moments as a community, then [we're] thriving, not just surviving," said Dr. Nocerino.

Associate Warden Rosalez and Office Technician Silvia Amador were also amazed that residents and staff were having a joyful time driving around the track.

"Did I think we would ever see events like this? Absolutely not, but we're happy to bring everyone together and are hopeful we'll see it more often," said AW Rosalez.

OT Silvia Amador, who has been at SQRC for eight months said, "This is most surprising to me and I see nothing more that is needed to unify."

TIER TALK

By Anthony Carvalho
Sports Editor

Having watched coaching greats like Billy Martin, Walter Alston, Bruce Bochy, and Frank Robinson, baseball enthusiasts can't help but compare the leadership of Richard "Coach Will" Williams to a bevy of successful managers.

What makes this man create diamonds out of incarcerated residents? What makes this man lead to a zero percent recidivism rate since he has taken over the helm of the prison's oldest program? What makes this man consistently produce the most competitive sports product in San Quentin's history?

In an interview with *San Quentin News*, the manager of the 110-year-old San Quentin baseball program reveals his secrets.

AMC: Well, well, well, can't say anything unusual because I see you everyday, but I will ask how is everything with San Quentin Baseball's most successful manager ever?

COACH WILL:

SQ Giants' Coach Will reveals his secrets to coaching prison baseball teams

Everything's going great; ramping up for the new season.

AMC: Every year, you mold 20 to 26 people with authentic leadership and real talk. How do you train players to conform to build a team?

COACH WILL: I encourage independence in the players, but I also try to get them to acknowledge the team concept, to buy-in to what's good for the team.

AMC: Some guys call you a hard-ass malcontent and I want you to answer that claim. Are You?

COACH WILL: It's just a rumor coming from others. People, coaches, and players don't like to make hard decisions. Instead, they form committees to shield themselves from those decisions. Some just don't want to make decisions and pass them on to someone else.

AMC: You have coached legends like Austin Thurman, Anthony "T-Tone" Denard, Carrington "The Natural" Russelle, and Brandon Riddle-Terrell. Equally important, you helped our EOP brothers



Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Richard "Coach Will" Williams during a 2023 season game.

by letting them assist as equipment managers and every year, as a bleeding heart, you keep on one or two guys who have no business playing baseball. Why?

COACH WILL: I haven't coached any legends, but some really good ballplayers, yes. And yes, if I see a guy who may not have the ability

but wants to be coached and is coachable... I know they'll come to practice everyday and just be humble and happy, that is always a nice addition to the team.

AMC: You've also had the transgender community and the hearing-challenged community on your teams and you don't care what color anyone

is. How did you change the racism that was prevalent when we both arrived?

COACH WILL: I did know I had [Samantha], and we just treated her like most people and how I would like to be treated. Racism will always exist, some are just better at hiding it. For me, as it relates to my team, I don't care what you are — if you can play and bring no drama to the field, you have a chance.

AMC: You average 25 hours a week coaching baseball while also working for The Last Mile, you counsel and mentor your players. How do you find time for your programs?

COACH WILL: It doesn't feel like that much time in when you're doing something you love. Right now, I'm taking a break in programming because my old brain can't remember half the stuff I've learned. Seriously, I have been on waiting lists like VOEG and G.R.I.P. pre-Covid and am still waiting. But I am doing Edovo late at night.

AMC: How does leading

the most decorated team in the history of this country's prison system help you prepare to go home and what will you do once the Board realizes how much you have contributed to the San Quentin community?

COACH WILL: Man, seeing first-timers come in, Team Victory and their father, son, and daughter, Team Mission is always showing love. Frank and the Barron always bring it as fixtures on our diamond. Now, the SF Giants are sponsoring us. Mike Kremer, Steve Reichardt, and Free Staff Coach K. Bhatt all have inspired and taught me virtues I thought I would never see in prison.

If the Board honors me and gives me a date to go home, I will. This time I will be leaving with a wealth of friends from all the volunteers, and I hope wherever I go, I will coach youngsters to stay out of trouble.

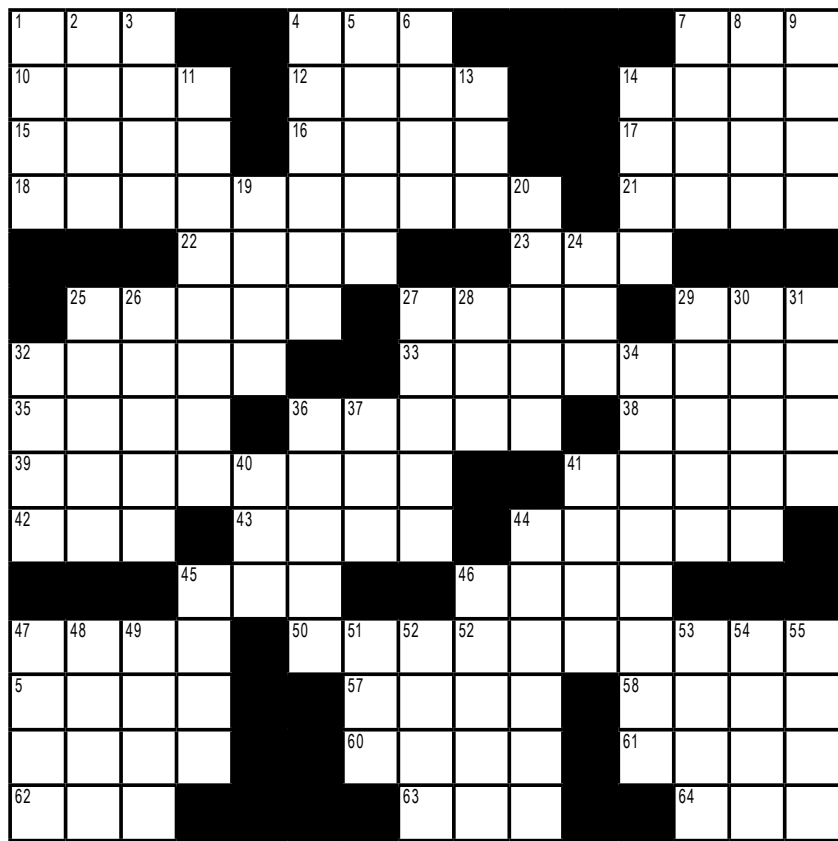
AMC: Thanks for the chat, Coach Will.

AMC Note: I have worked under this man since my arrival in 2018.

CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Jonathan Chiu

Edited by Jan Perry



Across

1. Gotcha!
4. Math professionals (Abbr.)
7. Boy
10. Hair product
12. ZZ Top song
14. Singer Del Ray
15. Conservative Lahren
16. Senior org.
17. Website to look up actors, TV, and movies
18. Informal jacket
21. Send
22. Dolt
23. ___ and flow
25. Throws
27. Wife Boleyn
29. Mercedes badging
32. Women's silk garment
33. The ___ with Stephen Colbert
35. Branch of the military
36. USA TV show or business formal wear
38. Rank in the Korean military
39. Plant substance used in lotion
41. Actress Sophia
42. Court identifier (Abbr.)
43. Friends
44. Jack of 24
45. Hand language
46. Organic remains
47. Prayer ender
50. Belt alternative
56. TV host Spencer
57. Hawaiian island
58. Flat and smooth
59. Watch brand
60. Kendrick Lamar album
61. Funk singer Wolf
62. Number of commandments
63. Ask
64. Set

Down

1. Pretends
2. Game of basketball
3. Shells and bullets
4. Fasteners
5. Type of corps
6. New York gangster Thomas
7. The Dalai
8. You _____
9. TV network name
11. A small repetitive woven pattern that resembles small diamonds
13. Retreat
14. Body part
19. Type of bag
20. Campers' equipment
24. ___ Gees
25. Jung and Lewis
26. Sara Bareilles song
27. Jennifer Garner spy TV show
28. Singer ___ King Cole
29. Portion
30. Beck song
31. Actor McGregor
32. Indian spinach dish
34. Push
36. Type of military personnel
37. Web address (Abbr.)
40. Second in commands (Abbr.)
41. Past participle of lie
44. Airplane maker
45. Actresses de Armas and Ortiz
46. Wave froth
47. 21 Savage song
48. Female horse
49. Activist Brockovich
51. East Coast college nicknamed the Terrapins (Abbr.)
52. Maker of the 9-3
53. Precedes changing or shifting
54. Maintenance arm of the British army (Abbr.)
55. Cut

BOOK REVIEW

A Reason to Breathe

A memoir by Halim A. Flowers

Pheng Ly
Staff Writer

"A Reason to Breathe" is a deeply moving and inspiring memoir by Halim A. Flowers. This book is a story of resilience, hope, and the human spirit's capacity to overcome unimaginable adversity. Flowers writes the narrative of his life with vulnerability and lyricism, navigating the complexities of identity, and trauma, and redemption.

In this memoir, Flowers delves into his journey towards healing, self-discovery, and purpose. With unflinching honesty, he confronts the lingering shadows of his past, exploring the depths of his emotional and psychological scars. Yet, it is precisely in these darkest corners that he uncovers the strength to keep moving forward and keep breathing. His struggles ignited a transformative journey of self-discovery and growth.

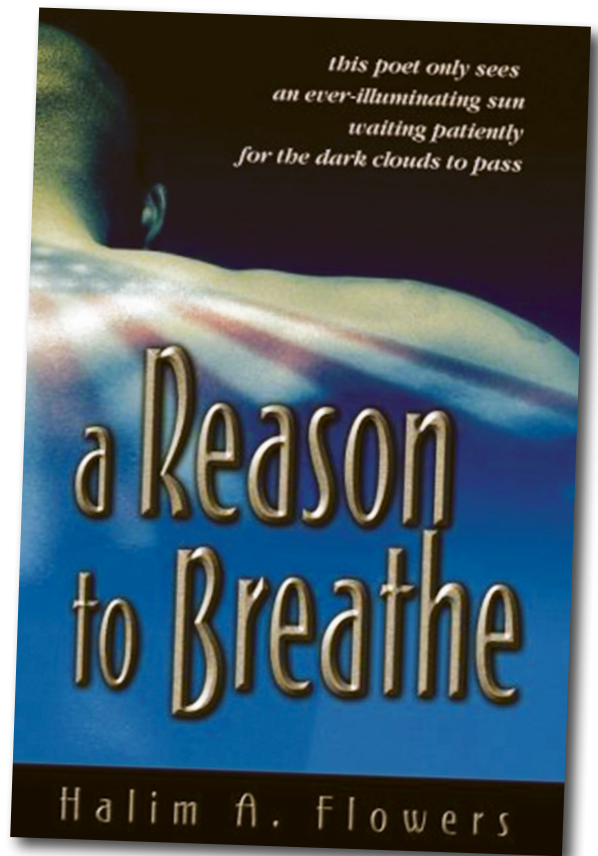
Throughout the book, Flowers' writing is both evocative and accessible, infusing his story with a sense of hope and possibility. Flowers recounts his journey from a tumultuous childhood, through the depths of addiction and incarceration. His reflections on love, family, and community serve as a testament to the power of the human connection in the face of adversity.

His life began in struggle at a very young age when he was exposed to extreme violence. This set the stage for Flowers to be involved with street gangs in his adolescent years. He writes about living with a father who was a crack cocaine addict, which led him to selling drugs on the streets of Washington D.C. He mirrored what he saw taking place around him, believing that type of environment to be the norm in society.

After he was sentenced to serve two life sentences in a maximum-security prison at the age of 16, he concluded that this was not the life he wanted to live. Despite his tragic circumstances and hardship, Flowers had an attitude of self-empowerment. He didn't like his early days as an illiterate, drug abuser who was violent. Flowers took control of his life and began to reshape himself. Equipped with a roadmap that would lead children in circumstances like his to live a life of crime and prison, Flowers sought to make a difference. Instead of playing the victim of his circumstances, Flowers found ways to change his story. He thought about making a difference for children in the community and give them a better chance than he had.

As the years passed by for Flowers inside of prison, he read a lot of books, which improved his intellect, and enabled him to become well-spoken communicator. Flowers learned how to structure words into sentences, which were able to move people emotionally. With nothing but more time on his hands, Flowers began painting. With this newfound skill, he incorporated his writing skills into his artworks that reached beyond prison walls to influence others to believe in him.

Flowers attributed the change of his life's trajectory to Mahatma Gandhi. He wanted to live as the change he wanted to see. He lived a life filled with



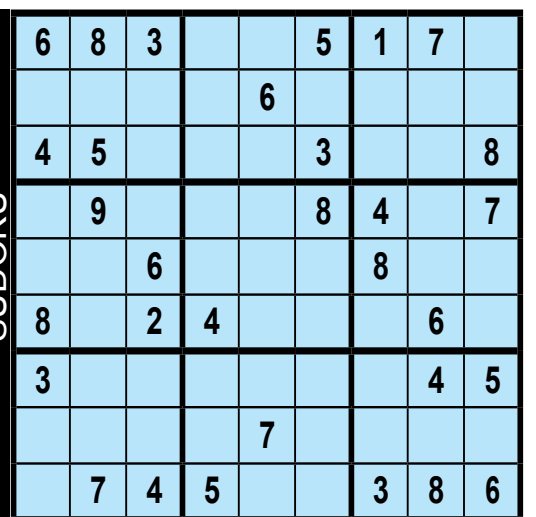
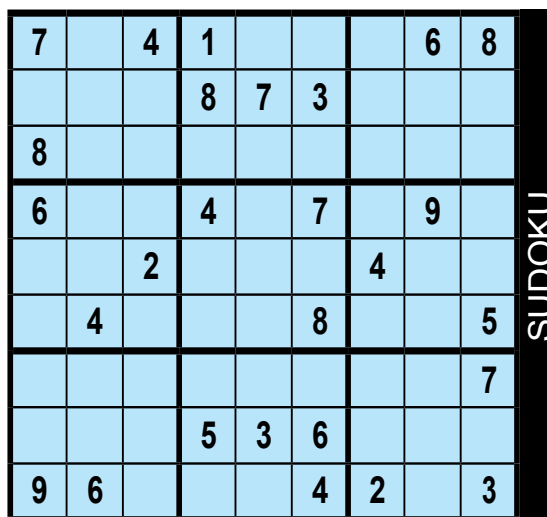
hope, empowering him to overcome labels given him such as "super predator." At the time he went to prison, there no laws that existed that could set Flowers free from prison. He didn't let that fact throw him of course in his effort to changing his life. After serving 22 years of his double life sentence, laws changed in Flowers' favor. He filed a petitioned requesting for a resentencing hearing. A judge agreed to review his petition and agreed that his initial sentence no longer served in the interest of justice as Flowers had made drastic changes in his life and became a different person.

Flowers knew deep down inside at the young age of 16, he had to change, knew what he wanted and what success would look like to him. He was able to put together clear realistic goals and set a plan on how to accomplish them. He became an influential author, and launched his own publishing company to help others see in him what they didn't previously.

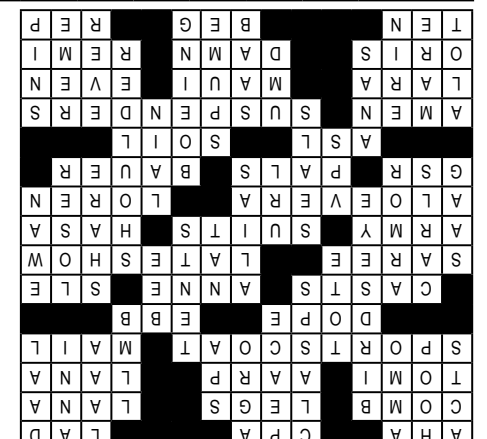
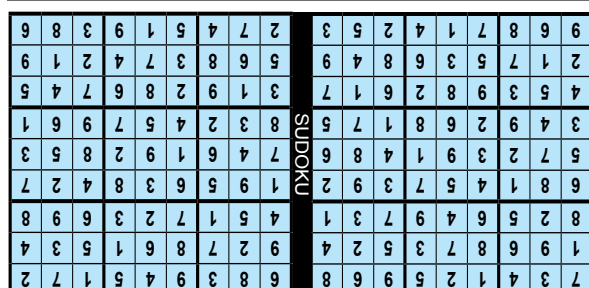
One of the most striking aspects of "A Reason to Breathe" is Flowers' ability to balance the weight of his experiences with a sense of grace and forgiveness. His story serves as a powerful reminder that even in the darkest moments, there is always a way forward, always a reason to keep breathing.

This book is a masterful in offering a message of hope and resilience that resonates long after the final page is turned. It is a testament to the human spirit's capacity to heal, to love, and to find purpose in the face of unimaginable challenge.

"A Reason To Breathe" is a powerful and inspiring read, offering hope and solace to anyone who has faced adversity or struggles. Halim Flowers' remarkable journey is a reminder that no matter how bleak the circumstances, there is always a reason to keep moving forward, always a chance to rediscover and redefine oneself. Another reason to read this book is for those seeking a story of hope, redemption, and the transformative power of the human spirit. Halim Flowers' writing is a gift, offering a message of resilience that will resonate with readers long after they finish the book.



SOLUTIONS



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Looking forward to SQ News

Dear SQNews,
 My name is Joseph Garcia Guzman III. I am requesting a copy of *San Quentin News*. Unfortunately, I'm in AD-SEG serving a RHU term. All I can say is prison politics. I don't even gang bang, I am a US Army Veteran, and someone got caught up in the funk. I'm a G.P. inmate but I should of never ended up on a "gang banging" yard when I'm not even a gang member.

I pray, one day, I end up at San Quentin. I laid over for a night back in 2023 while transferring from RJD to CSP-SAC. When I was SQ, I was amazed. Not by the buildings or the views of the prison but I could feel the opportunities while walking to the SHU. I said to myself, I'm gonna get here some day and I'll parole from here. SQ is the best prison to be at due to the fact it has all the rehabilitation classes/courses. Like I said, the opportunities.

I hope y'all could send me a copy of the *SQ News*.

Thank you! God bless.
 —Joseph G Guzman III
 CSP-SAC
 Represa, California

SQ Journalism Guild instructor inspires Centinela residents

Dear SQNews journalism family,

A few years back you published an article featuring the newsletter I was a part of at Calipatria State Prison. I was editor-in-chief of *Mind Tap*, a newsletter created through the group Men of Vision think tank. This was in 2021. Who would have thought that in 2023, I would be transferred to Centinela-III as the 2025 San Diego State University graduation class with a bachelor's in communication, journalism, and media. *SQNews* still touches me to this day. This time it happened through the journalism guild and professor at U.C. Berkeley's investigative journalism, Lisa Armstrong.

Professor Armstrong spoke to my SDSU cohort for three hours straight, enlightening us on the perils and joys of journalism. I could not wait to tell you about it. Journalism has always been a "thing" to the incarcerated population. It has now been provided the light where each man can potentially see his own journalistic potential, thanks in large part to *SQNews*. The magnitude and impact of *SQNews* is far-reaching. When Professor Armstrong landed here, I knew it was going to be a great opportunity to learn from one of the best. I must say, she didn't disappoint. One of the most valuable pieces of information she gave me was always to hear both sides of a story and always to check sources.

When asked why she became a journalist, her answer resonated with me: "There is something wrong with the world and I want people to know about it." One of the things that tied us all to Professor Armstrong's journalism portfolio is that she has a "dog in the fight" of the incarcerated person plight. This came across to us immediately, after hearing the professor speak. It was powerful and educational and we appreciated the time the professor took to join our journalism class along with our gracious professor from SDSU, Arthur Santana, who is pretty brilliant in his own right.

Thank you, *SQNews* for continuously providing the type of material you do. And thank you for allowing us to have your Journalism Guild professor. For the day.

—Marlon Gray
 Imperial, California

SQNews spreads joy

Dear SQNews,
 Please send me a copy of the latest issue of your newspaper. We love it here!! I am an inmate at Nevada's High Desert State Prison, and we cannot wait for each new copy. I used to get them

regularly in 2023, but they stopped coming this year. It is an awesome representation of the state of prison life in the o.s. thank you

—Wayne Viera
 High Desert State Prison
 Indian Springs, Nevada

Wasco resident finds SQNews informative

Dear SQNews,

My name is Willie and I am currently a resident at Wasco State Prison. I came across your newspaper and I enjoyed every story in it. There is a lot of good information about prison reform. I love to read the different ideas, projects, and hobbies the residents achieve. I am looking forward to hearing from you guys if God allows. Thank you and God bless the prison's staff and *San Quentin News* journalists, editors, and staff.

—Willie Avila
 Wasco State Prison
 Wasco, California

SQNews praised

Dear SQNews,

I love what you guys do. Please keep up the good work. You give those of us housed in locations like Fresno, hope that change is possible. Hang tough, guys.

—Justin Gladding
 Fresno, California

Shout out from N.C.

Dear fellow journalists of SQNews:

Greetings from North Carolina where we produce *The Nash News*, a quarterly magazine created, designed, and produced entirely by incarcerated men at Nash Correctional Institution.

I am a journalist and former editor of *The Nash News*, and I wanted to reach out and share some of our successes with you. We have recently become a primarily digital.

—Caddell Kivett
 Nashville Correctional Institution, Maryland

EDITORIAL



Raw Pixel.com

I put that on my mama

By Tomiekia Johnson
 CCWF Guild Writer

Listening to Grammy award winning Victoria Monet's new classic, *I Put That on my Momma* — "On my momma, on my hood, I look fly, I look good..." Monet sung. I ponder how the prison system is "thirst trapping" [using for attention] precious incarcerated moms. When moms get to prison, we are promised rehabilitation, but prison misuses our natural resources, turning us into "mammies" poised to raise other people's children.

Barely hanging in there, I've seen my own daughter just once in four years. I remember hugging her small frame, easing up just before I squeezed too hard. It was a sunny still day, we did pushups in the small yard outside the visiting area. People smiled, families noticed.

I have been consumed with protecting my daughter from the same abuse I suffered that led to me being behind bars. The system seems to have a cruel taste for the most valuable moms. We make the best peer mentors, facilitators, Inmate Advisors, instructors, and are makeshift moms in a place where makeshift families are built by forced alternative circumstances.

We are overcrowded in eight woman cells. There should only be four beds in a cell. That is the law, but those laws are not enforced so it keeps incarcerated moms crawling over each other.

New recalcitrant's are forever popping up at our doorsteps — squeezing in. Where particularly B-l-a-c-k moms can't break free from the bedrocks of slavery, the long arm of the caste system perpetually shatters the "free-world" family, sending the p-i-e-c-e-s [pieces] to an ecosystem that systematically undermines efforts to get home in time to rebuild a proper family foundation for the children — moms must return home to mom.

Back to Victoria Monet, "I put that on my momma."

According to Prison Policy Initiative, there are "almost one million" incarcerated girls and women in the U.S. prison system. Also, "an estimated 58% of incarcerated women have minor children." California incarcerated women historically face a generation gap that since the inception of women's prisons, has incarcerated the more educated, skilled, talented, resourceful women, calling upon us to mentor, facilitate, correct, and to be surrogate mothers to the recalcitrant undomesticated women prisoners.

A "lifer" [one serving a life sentence] is expected to manage and balance the entire prison ecosystem to make everyone's life better,

at the expense of her own quality of life. At Central California Women's facility, 10 years is a generation gap; 10 years of vocation, experience, training, teaching, working, also actualizes a woman in her rehabilitation process. Lifers are the most valuable commodities in the prison.

In November 2023, CCWF recorded: 180 women who served 20-25 years, 160 served 15+ years, 200 served 10+ years, and 2,000+ women served less than 10 years. Over the past few decades, the rate of incarceration for women is twice the rate for men.

Widely known research says serving beyond 10 years becomes harmful, setting in regression, burnout, and vulnerability to write ups, loss of family (death) and support, skills and job opportunities expiring and becoming outdated.

All the more reason incarcerated women demand viable paths to freedom through mandatory resentencing of the "California Model" for women — like myself — who've served more than 10 years.

One evening, I found myself standing in the middle of the bright day room just behind rows of women leaning in — hanging on every word emitting from a Twilight movie.

Women shuffled around using the night to productively hustle. A mom, a few years my senior, stood in front of me with heavy eyes lamenting, "you taught me how to keep a good room, and I've been teaching other women, but I'm tired now TJ. I can't do it anymore. These women are coming in here lazy. I work, go to school, I'm too tired to keep teaching them." I understood.

Our conversation commingled with sentiments I heard in a PBS documentary featuring one of my heroes, Fanie Lou Hamer, a Civil Rights advocate, reverberating in the back of my mind.

"We are tired... we are sick and tired...we are tired of many things... we go on because it's not right here," said Hamer, about the prejudice she fought against in Mississippi.

Well here in CCWF, we are older, we are moms, we know and we understand now. We are sick and tired of being away from our children. The "California Model" women were reared by moms who taught us better. We are educated, smart, valued, highly skilled, trained, fly, and "hood"; we got it from our mommas. And now it's time to get back home to be mothers to our own children. I put that on my momma. —

The editorial was provide by Empowerment Avenue and was edited by SQNews for length and clarity.

AROUND THE WORLD



EVELYN TOPPER
ASPEN, COLORADO

Art by Jesse Milo



ART

Hunger pains encouraged Moises Ramos to set sail for artistic future

By Edwin E. Chavez
Staff Writer

Driven by hunger, the need for means to survive inside a prison walls gave life to innovation and creativity displayed in hidden gems of art.

In 2015, California sent Moises Ramos and many other prisoners to Arizona because of overcrowding in CDCR facilities.

He had left his family and loved ones and did not have the means even to purchase ramen soup.

“Me and my bunk decided that we needed to find a way to earn some money to bring food to the cell,” said Ramos. “It those days we didn’t even have a pencil, paper, or a PIN number for us to call our family; we were disconnected from the outside world.”

At the time the artist first came into prison, he knew that he had a creative imagination, but he had never paid much attention to it. He said he liked to encourage others to listen to the creative voices in their heads and to use them for something positive, such as painting, drawing, arts and crafts, music, or any other form of art.

As a student, Ramos started working with cardboard boxes from lunches, turning them into jewelry boxes. At that point, he had discovered his talent for three-dimensional art. His process of constructing a jewelry box took about six hours and involved gluing rolled newspapers, using state-issued soap and floor wax as the main ingredients.

No one wanted to buy the jewelry boxes, but only because no one could afford

them because of a shortage of food.

Ramos recalled the tiny size of the Arizona meal portions, compared to the portions served by the CDCR. He credited those dark days as the guide that has since turned into the fruit of prosperity.

Ramos says his then-roommate Jesus Rios encouraged him to turn even more creative.

At that point, the artisan created a sketch of a sailboat that later turned into the foundation of his many constructions.

According to the master-builder of model square-rigger sailboats, his art constructions had turned tricky. He called the base of the boat one of the hardest items to construct and to keep together. Even worse, he only had inadequate gluing materials to work with.

The gifted artisan designed sailboats with logos of football and soccer teams and personal mascots that other incarcerated residents wanted to send to their families.

Overcoming all the hurdles, he used discarded newspapers and cardboard lunchboxes to create the base for the square-rigger boats. He has since acquired glue, paint, and cardstock from outside vendor Walkenhorst.

“My imagination helps me build pirate ships, sailboats, yachts, and fishing boats,” said Ramos. “My dad challenged me to make him a Ford truck and I allowed my imagination to take over in creating this beautiful F150 for my dad.”

Building these boats has helped him to learn about

patience, to concentrate, to think positively, he said, adding that it would take him away from his incarceration.

He credited his hobby as a tool to decompress so not to feel overwhelmed by life behind bars. His art even made it possible to help his family financially, which he said he considered very important.

“With this new California Model, I would love for CDCR to approve a hobby craft program at SQRC,” said Ramos. “It’d be beneficial throughout my incarceration and upon my release. This could be another way to improve public safety.”

According to the artist, whenever incarcerated persons use personal energy in a positive way, it helps them to break away from criminal thinking that led to their criminal behavior.

During the interview, Ramos discussed his unique ability to play an instrument. He said he plays keyboard and performs as the lead singer of his group Unique Element, which has performed here at SQRC.



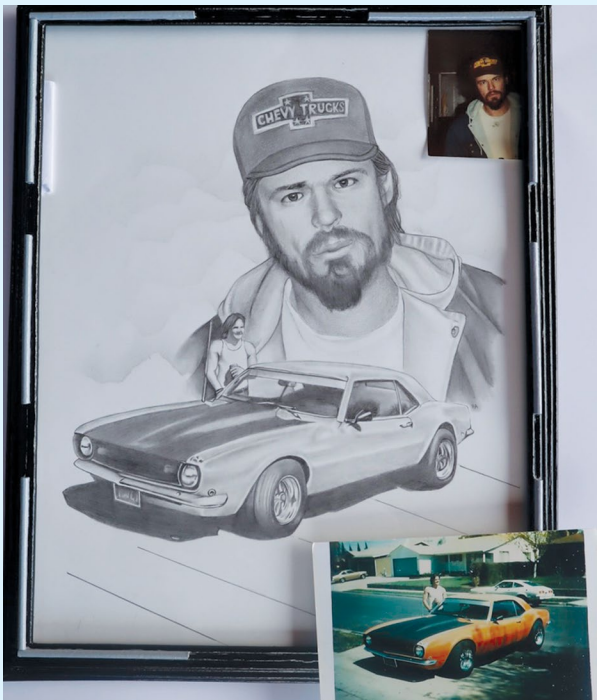
Photos by Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

Models of square-rigger sailboats



Photos by Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews

The pieces show Aztecs and American Indians heritage



Ray Ochoa finds new purpose in life through his quality art

Art begins with creation through imagination and, for Ray Ochoa, through his motivation to make a living.

Ochoa’s art began with a sponsor who once had worked as an artist and now owns art galleries in San Francisco and Hawaii. That sponsor was the first to encourage him to create art.

“I learned to draw by looking over the shoulders of murderers and thieves,” said Ochoa. “This was my art school.”

Ochoa has a white handkerchief on which he spent more than 30 hours painting over a period of two months. The piece shows Aztecs and American Indians and features multiple warriors with metaphorical images of pyramids and jaguars. Ochoa enjoys art that depicts the cultural activities of his ancestors.

Incarcerated persons often try various methods of achieving mental distance from prison, and Ochoa finds his distance through the soothing and therapeutic creation of art.

Ochoa said his art has greatly benefitted his rehabilitation. He holds himself fully accountable and through his ability to produce quality art, he has found new purpose in life. It has helped him in cultivating relationships, not only with residents but also with the outside community.

Whenever Ochoa does a project for someone, he said, he establishes a solid human connection, which makes it easy for him to draw and to give his best. He said he considers it very important to have effective communication during the process because it

“I learned to draw by looking over the shoulders of murderers and thieves,”
—Ray Ochoa

makes him more creative.

He recently completed a portrait of a man in a Chevy truck hat standing next to his Camaro, the father of an incarcerated person who has passed away. “The person who I did this portrait for is more than just a friend, and I knew how much it meant to him when I drew his father,” said Ochoa.

A few years ago, Ochoa won first place with the Golden State quarterly package contest. The company awarded him a 15-inch flat-screen television.

In his younger days, he had designed a logo for the Hollywood Film Prop-Makers Union. Thirty years later, the union still uses the same logo.

Ochoa said that no artist should ever take a detour from creating art. Some persons may want to criticize the artist’s work, but criticism should never stop the creative process.

Incarcerated for over three decades, he expects to receive parole in the near future.

Upon release, Ochoa said he would enroll at Merritt Community College to obtain his AA degree for a certification in counseling. Art will continue to play a big part in his life as a hobby.

—Edwin E. Chavez