



San Quentin News

EST. 1940

PRODUCED BY THE INCARCERATED

ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE

VOL. 2025 NO. 2

FEBRUARY — ISSUE 177

SANQUENTINNEWS.COM

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION 2,915



Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

From left: Jeff Grant MD, Palav Barbaria MD/MS, Assembly member Mia Bonta, Kristen Madsen MD/MPH

Breaking the Cycle

Residents of narrative workshop reveal the impact of adverse childhood experiences

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

San Quentin resident James Daly was sentenced to four life terms, plus 31 years. He blamed his harsh sentence and the unraveling of his life to a torn relationship between him and his father. "I could never be the son my father wanted me to be," Daly said. "I would act out, and he would beat me." Daly was one of 16 San Quentin residents who shared their childhood traumatic experiences, as part of the Back to the Start

self-help program, which honored them with an inaugural graduation. The program teaches incarcerated people to write their stories and describe their Adverse Childhood Experiences, which may have led to their incarceration. The event was held in SQ's Chapel B, moderated by Dr. Jenny Espinoza M.D. and hosted by residents Michael Callahan, and Juan Moreno Haines. "It's amazing to see everybody, I wasn't sure everybody was going to show up," Espinoza said. Espinoza was employed at SQ as a Primary



Founder of Back to the Start
Dr. Jenny Espinoza MD



Jason Jackson reads his story



Jorge Lopez with wife Samantha and friend Vanessa Castillo

Care Physician, where she had an interest in childhood trauma. Although she had medical training, she said "[I] was shook to the core in learning about childhood violence." Kamau Bell, the celebrated Bay Area comedian, was asked by the physician to say a few words. Bell said San Quentin "is one of the few places in my life where everyone is happy to see me." He added, "It feels nice to think people [acknowledge that] I am doing nice work." Warden C. Andes shared with attendees that

See Trauma on pg. 4

Survey finds only 8% of Americans have confidence in justice system

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

Americans lacked confidence in the American criminal justice system, said survey results as published by the Gallup News Service. Fewer Americans had "A great deal" or "Quite a lot" of confidence in the system than respondents who had "Some" or "Very little." The criminal justice system ranked 13th among 17 institutions covered by the survey. Results for the courts, lawyers, judges, juries, jails, prisons, parole boards, and all the other parts of the system turned out broadly negative across all demographics. "Now I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one — a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?" asked Gallup pollsters. The institutions in the survey included — in random order — Congress, the presidency, the U.S. Supreme Court, the military, the media (television news and newspapers), organized labor, big and small business, banks, large technology companies, the

See Public on pg. 4

Lack of resources a concern for elderly parolees

By Terrell J. Marshall
Journalism Guild Writer

After release from prison, many elderly former residents of San Quentin said they have found themselves lacking resources such as housing, medical care, and employment. At the same time, the homeless population in the U.S. has hit a record high, with California having the nation's largest unsheltered community. Some current San Quentin Rehabilitation Center residents said they feared living on the streets. The high cost of living and health care has exacerbated fear of release for many older residents. "I don't know what I'm going to do when I get out," said Randy Hanson, a 73-year-old resident at SQRC. "I have no one left out there. All my folks are dead. A lot of times, I think I'll be better off staying in prison." One resident interviewed for this story went as far as saying he considered sabotaging his release. Older residents about to go home would require unique parole plans to help them set up a successful transition. According to the *International Journal of Prisoner Health* 2023, elderly adults — aged 55 and over — often faced added challenges while attempting to achieve a healthy reentry. IJPH stated that some of these barriers included housing, continuity of health care and access to health insurance, and problems with obtaining social security benefits. Resident Mike Beaudette said two programs — California Re-Entry and California Re-Entry Institute — focused

See Elderly on pg. 4

Prisons block artificial intelligence use for parole suitability

By Bostyon Johnson
Managing Editor

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has blocked request for public records from researchers wanting to examine if race and ethnicity bias exist in parole-suitability decisions, according to a lawsuit filed by the Electronic Frontier Foundation. "We want to create a machine learning tool that can extract factors from parole hearing transcripts, describe the current decision-making process, and identify which decisions appear inconsistent with that process and might be worthy of reconsideration," said Catalin Voss, a PhD student at Stanford University. "We need race data to do that." CDCR officials denied public records requests since 2018 claiming exemption under the California Records Request Act. Kristen Bell, an assistant professor of law at the University of Oregon is no stranger to exposing illegitimate factors that have, in the past, influenced parole suitability decisions specifically juveniles who were serving extensive sentences. "There has been much debate about evidence-based criminal justice reform in California, but how can we know if we're moving any closer

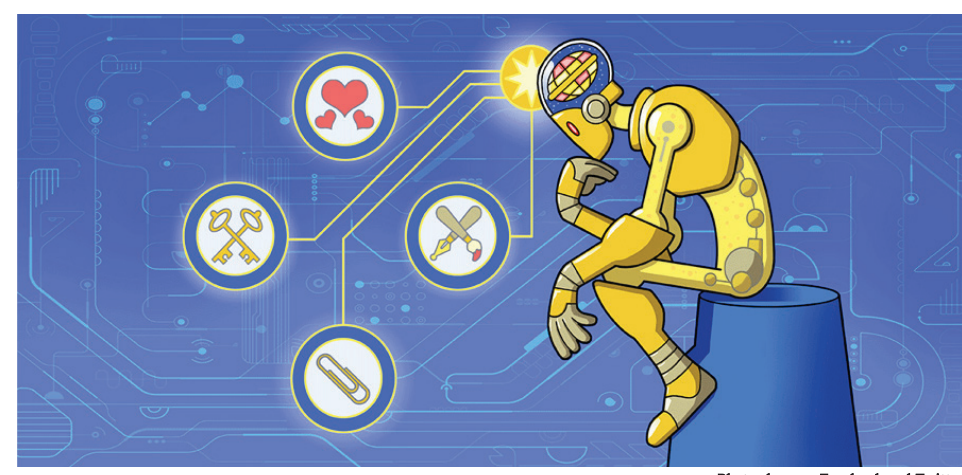


Photo share on Facebook and Twitter

to justice when the prison system is preventing independent researchers from accessing race data," said Bell. Former managing attorney of The California Innocence Project, Michael Semanchik is using an AI assistant program to identify patterns of inconsistencies in documents to help overturn sentences. "We are spending a lot of our resources and time trying to figure out which cases deserve

investigation," Semanchik told the American Bar Association Journal. "If AI can just tell me which ones to focus on, we can focus on the investigation and litigation of getting people out of prison." In 2023, a Vera Institute of Justice report looked at 168 hearing transcripts and found that most people denied parole had a low

See AI on pg. 4



SQ'S NEW WARDEN
Chance Andes officially named Warden of SQ
SEE PAGE 2

BLACK HISTORY MONTH
Father of Black History month and story of dreadlocks
SEE PAGE 7

UNCUFFED GRADUATION
Read about award winning podcasts new team members
SEE PAGE 10



HOLIDAY EVENTS
Banquets, concerts, book fair, and toy giveaway
SEE PAGE 12-13



MISSION STATEMENT

San Quentin News reports on rehabilitative efforts to advance social justice and to improve public safety.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE SAN QUENTIN NEWS:

THE REVA & DAVID LOGAN FOUNDATION

THE NATHAN CUMMINGS FOUNDATION

THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

APP LOVIN



THE SAN QUENTIN NEWS IS PRINTED BY MARIN SUN PRINTING



San Quentin News is produced by a diverse team of incarcerated journalists who write, edit, design, and coordinate the distribution of the newspaper throughout California prisons and beyond.

SanQuentinNews.com

or send a check or money order payable to:

Pollen Initiative P.O. Box 494 San Quentin, CA 94964 TAX ID # 92-2619177

PROFILE

San Quentin's new Warden Chance Andes

Twenty-one years of service included a term with ISU and at Soledad

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho Staff Writer

Warden Chance Andes' first year at San Quentin showed all stakeholders — including residents — a glimpse of the future California Model.

After San Quentin's previous warden Ron Broomfield left to accept a promotion to Director of Adult Institutions, Andes accepted an offer of Warden by CDCR leadership.

"We will make it at SQRC when we can stand together as peace officers and residents in a better environment for both," said Andes.

Andes' new assignment as SQRC's warden came with a list of projects that he said he must complete to coordinate the cultural change envisioned by CDCR leadership.

"Soon, the Upper Yard will become more accessible, which will provide more recreational space, and more programs."

Andes, a youthful 43-year-old, enjoyed a fast-track career within the CDCR. His 21 years of service include more than a decade in the trenches before he accepted greater responsibilities.

Andes' career included working at Soledad, where he received a promotion to the rank of sergeant.

"It was there I learned aspects of mutual respect between staff and the incarcerated," Andes said. "Old institutions like SQRC and Soledad had old values with different levels of respect. At Soledad, seasoned officers taught me to always respect the population and showed me a badge alone does not earn respect; we must earn respect of the incarcerated."

Andes work at other prison yards gave him another level of insight that may have benefits for San Quentin's transition to the California Model.

"[I was working at] a Level IV yard and I quickly realized staff and population both do terms; 'Mine is 30 years,'" Andes said. "Upon reflection, I now see the similarities of traumas or remembrances that both the staff and the incarcerated endure. From the clanging of cell doors, to words like 'get down' and 'man down,' we all view the same things, so both communities are traumatized."

"We all put on an exterior shell to protect ourselves, but the experiences can both be negative and positive. Either way, the feelings of both sides are so similar, and yet we experience results in different perspectives for the staff and residents. That is where the healing can happen for both sides," Andes said.

The Warden said he hoped to improve the daily and long-term experience for everyone in the San Quentin community.

"Although we have two different lenses, the



Warden Andes and former Director of Adult Institutions Ron Broomfield at Film Festival

buy-in, which will come slow and steady, can be just amazing. That is why I want to improve the daily and long-term experiences for all," Andes said.

Andes also absorbed personal growth while serving a term in ISU. "I got paid to stop things and never used force unless there was an imminent threat," Andes said. "I've been doing this long enough... one prison at a time."

"For 22 years I grew up with this staff and I connect with them and I see the benefits for all sides if we complete the change," Andes said.

Andes' empathy for rehabilitation came from his experience of having an incarcerated family member.

Andes said he started his job in January and quickly developed a strategic plan to ready the institution for the project estimated to cost the state \$240 million.

"We need buy-in from all parties involved. Some things we start may not succeed right away, so I request patience and flexibility from the staff and the incarcerated," Andes said.

"If we see the difference between programmers and non-programmers, we must see the differences in staff as well, because there are some incarcerated and staff resistant to change," Andes said.

Andes said he believes that his officers must have certain characteristics in order for the transition to the California Model to be successful. The main characteristic is that officers would buy into the California Model, too. This idea involves building up trust and consistency while generating forward momentum while embracing the historical moment; and letting his style of leadership serve as a model.

While training staff to implement the California Model, he also challenged the residents to participate as stakeholders of their programming.

He said realistic change would happen in very small increments. "I do my best to not let the population make a mistake," he said.

Andes said his philosophy regarding rehabilitation included foundational concepts for implementation on the inside, but of the kind that would help residents to transition to the outside.

Andes raised the bar for the next generation by saying, "When you understand healing will take a life-long commitment, you can then fall in place behind your higher power, your family, and community."

"Your life must be of service and amends. That's why the state is investing in you; we want you whole when you return to society."

Andes continued, "The good ol' days are today, so embrace the moment, focus on your present, and get



Andes and staff from CMF Vacaville prior to prison softball game



PIO Lt. Berry, Kerry Washington, and Andes at Film Festival



Photos by Media Center

Andes speaks to participants of staff and resident softball game

your project or rehabilitation where it needs to be," Andes said. "Do incarceration the way you want to be seen; incorporate it and use it for a better life. Remember, 90% of you will go home."

"Get your program where

it needs to be," Andes said. "Even though [rehabilitation] includes improving home, community, and becoming a stakeholder of safety and rehabilitation, you must first accept full responsibility for every wrong you have done."

San Quentin News

EST. 1940

SAN QUENTIN NEWS STAFF

Kevin D. Sawyer — Editor-In-Chief
 David Ditto — Associate Editor
 Bostyon Johnson — Managing Editor
 Edwin E. Chavez — Spanish Journalism Guild Chair
 Jerry Maleek Gearin — English Journalism Guild Chair
 Anthony Manuel Carvalho — Sports Editor

Staff Writers

C. K. Gerhartsreiter
 Aristeo Sampablo
 Eric Allen
 César Martínez

Layout Design

Michael Callahan

Photography

Vincent O'Bannon

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Lt. G. Berry—Public Information Officer
 Sgt. J. Graves—Warden's Office
 Todd Javernick—Information Officer I, CDCR Press Office
 David Maldonado (A)—Chief, Strategic Communications and External Affairs

Advisers

Jan Perry
 Prof. William Drummond
 Alastair Boone
 Stuart Wagner
 Amanda Weitman

Advisers Emeritae

John C. Eagan, Joan Lisetor, Steve McNamara,
 Nikki Meredith, Linda Xiques

POLLEN INITIATIVE

(SAN QUENTIN NEWS SPONSOR)

Jesse Vasquez — Executive Director
 Kate McQueen — Editorial Director
 Meredith Ackley — Operations Coordinator
 Veronica Roseborough — Communications Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jon Spurlock
 Gregg Smith
 Amanda Weitman
 Richard Richardson

Current and past stories of the San Quentin News are available online at: SanQuentinNews.com

Follow us on X: [@SanQuentinNews](https://twitter.com/SanQuentinNews)

Permission is granted to reprint articles appearing in the San Quentin News, provided credit is given to the author and this publication, except for articles reprinted herein from other publications.

The opinions herein are of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of San Quentin or CDCR.

Your Voice Matters!

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

By submitting your content, you consent to these *SQNews* policies:

- *SQNews* may edit, publish, or not publish submitted content.
- Submissions become the property of *SQNews* and cannot be returned.
- *SQNews* does not publish content that is obscene, degrading, misleading, promotes violence, or cannot be confirmed.
- If you do not want your name published, please state so.

Send your submissions to:

San Quentin News
 1 Main Street
 San Quentin, CA 94964

To receive the latest edition of the *San Quentin News* by mail, please send a request to the address above.

REENTRY



Residents welcome employers, volunteers, and reentry professionals



Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Resident sits with Second Chance Employer

Job preparation and interview training pays dividends

By Terrell J. Marshall
 Journalism Guild Writer

The San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's Prison to Employment Connection program celebrated its 10th anniversary with two ceremonies in December 2024. PEC integrated successful employers interested in helping residents to achieve the program's motto: "A better way out."

After 14 weeks of intense job preparation and interview training, participants' hard work and preparation concluded during the highly anticipated Employer Day, which allowed participants to try their new skills before graduating from the program.

PEC designed its job preparation to focus on teaching residents how to write résumés, learn interview skills, and build confidence by meeting with employers, volunteers, and reentry professionals.

"We are all here today to connect with each other, so employers and residents can together create possibilities," said host and PEC Executive Director Sumer Schulze.

Schulze explained that residents would gain motivation and hope for the future after meeting with potential employers through this venue. "We all know it's easier to get a job if you know somebody," Schulze said, adding, "this personal connection empowers them to believe that success is within their reach."

Before the interviews began, the program told participants to imagine that the interviews would take place in an office setting, rather than in a prison.

Participants greeted 27 employers as they moved from one station to the next, answering questions, presenting résumés, and making connections. Caltrans, Farming Hope, Goodwill, Iron Workers 378, and Forestry Fire, were among those volunteering their time and experience for the job readiness-training

program.

The program distributed information pamphlets about apprenticeship programs, job resource centers, and financial aid opportunities to all participants.

Volunteer participant Caroline Norton from The Last Mile coding program said, "TLM helps people build the tactical skills that are needed to get jobs when they get home," Norton said. "[PEC] builds the confidence necessary to present really well in an interview."

PEC alumnus John Levin, 64, said he facilitated for the program for the last two years. "[PEC] gave me the opportunity to fine-tune the skills learned in the program, while allowing me to teach others how to combat some difficult obstacles they will face when released," said Levin. "We teach these guys how to talk about their incarceration in a positive way."

Levin said PEC would not want residents to hide the fact of their incarceration from employers. Instead, PEC encouraged them to show the important lessons and skills they have learned during their incarceration and that they have improved themselves. Levin added that PEC believed this strategy would give employers insight as to how they could turn into assets for their companies.

Employers provided verbal feedback during the interview process and completed a written assessment for each candidate.

"Wow! We would hire him in a minute," wrote one employer on graduate Joseph Toy's interview review.

Resident Brian O'Quin, 34, assessment said he "should have no problem finding a job."

"Articulate and professional," appeared on graduate Marcus Casillas' review. Casillas, 36, said he felt lucky to be a part of something that has a direct impact on his future.

"Getting a job that can turn into a career is my entire focus right now," said Casillas. "Thanks to [PEC] I've made connections to help me take steps towards success."

PEC hosts said they liked helping incarcerated people make smooth transitions into society while giving them the confidence to integrate into their communities.

"I know I have value that extends beyond these walls," said graduate Eric Bergen, 64.

Since the spring of 2014, PEC Employment Readiness Workshops have taught incarcerated persons the reentry skills needed to secure employment upon release.

According to Schulze, the catalyst that brought about creation of the program in 2012 happened when a San Quentin resident approached volunteer Diana Williams with a vision of helping incarcerated people find gainful employment. Two years later, San Quentin held its first PEC graduation. Williams passed away a year ago.

Resident PEC facilitator Angel Alvarez, 52, honored Williams by saying she would always let employers and volunteers know that because of them, residents would gain the skills they needed for a second chance.

"Williams would say nobody is born with experience. You have to learn by trying and finding out what works," said Alvarez.

Alvarez also acknowledged program manager Gabrielle Nicolet as one of the key elements to the success of the program. "Nicolet has been a huge part of PEC since 2017, showing up every Thursday night to teach interview skills and to coach participants."

"[PEC] connects participants to their values, strengths, skills, visions, and inherent worth as a human being," said Schulze.

POLICY

CDCR reevaluates policy on drug discoveries and contraband

By Bostyon Johnson
 Managing Editor

A federal grand jury indictment from October 31, 2024, said a K-9 officer had planted drugs, phones, and knives around San Quentin Rehabilitation Center in an effort to increase his overtime pay and gain a promotion, according to *Marin Independent Journal*.

Court documents said Sergeant Avelino Ramirez allegedly smuggled, planted, and "dishonestly discovered" methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana, tobacco, electronic devices, and weapons into the prisons at which he worked.

"In 2021, Ramirez recovered 13 of the 23 contraband packages found at San Quentin." In 2022, Ramirez discovered 20 contraband packages out of a total 28 at San Quentin. Again, the next highest number found by a single officer was two," said a KTVU article.

The vision statement for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation called rehabilitation and reduced drug use for the incarcerated population a priority, but locating the source of drug discoveries were mostly unsuccessful.

Ramirez joined the CDCR at San Quentin in 2006. He transferred two times. In 2022, he transferred to California Health Care Facility in Vacaville. A few days later, he transferred to California Medical Facility in Stockton.

The discoveries and suspended searches in certain areas of the facility

brought attention to supervisors, not before Ramirez had received upwards of \$8,200 in overtime pay.

Ramirez has kept his job with CDCR, but has remained on paid administrative leave as of February 27, 2024, according to a CDCR spokesperson.

Residents at San Quentin talked about the impact this outcome has on the lives of residents who may have been denied parole due to disciplinary write-ups received with Ramirez's name as the investigator.

"This needs to be exposed because it's a search for the truth," said resident Richard Blanchard, 65. "Now that it has been exposed, what accountability would be taken as far as going back and checking disciplinary records?" Blanchard said the residents affected by an investigation of the former officer should have their cases revisited.

According to an audit report conducted by the Office of the Inspector General, several headquarters staff were interviewed. Policy and procedures for searching all staff, visitors, and contractors entering secured perimeters of prison grounds were also audited.

The report found that by collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses, financial records, and phone records, the drugs traced back to employees.

The audit report recommended entrance searches and the use of canines to search visitors and staff in agreement with current department policy.

CDCR has employed contraband

interdiction efforts such as baggage and parcel X-ray scanners, cell phone interruption and detection technology, portable security systems, audio and video surveillance systems, and low-dose full-body X-ray scanners.

The high definition cameras are located in areas accessible to incarcerated people in nine facilities with plans to expand to 12 additional prisons, to monitor activity and movement.

CDCR has implemented the above interdictions and detection strategies that reported major drug discoveries and the number of persons arrested for attempting to introduce drugs, alcohol, or contraband into the facility.

The KTVU article noted a "dramatic reduction" of contraband discoveries since Ramirez was removed from Vacaville in February 2023, according to the indictment.

According to the *Marin Independent Journal*, Ramirez's federal indictment is the second one that has surfaced within the last six months involving San Quentin staff. In September, Keith Reindeer Randle, a custodian, allegedly tried to smuggle 300 grams of methamphetamine into San Quentin in a peanut butter jar in his backpack.

"If prison investigators and the Office of Internal Affairs conducted frequent and consistently thorough investigations, the department would likely more effectively deter employee misconduct and reduce the flow of drugs into prisons," said the January 2023 OIG audit report.

ACES

Continued from page 1

he experienced childhood trauma himself, and that he was lucky that someone stepped into his life to help him.

The sharing of stories had already begun, but resident participants were eager to give their own accounts of their early lives.

Co-host Callahan told the audience his experience of breaking the cycle of a traumatic upbringing.

"I was skeptical at first. I had never talked about childhood trauma," he said. He once thought about hanging himself. "I tried to take my own life by a tree that was a...sanctuary for me."

He added that children need protection, which did not exist in his home. Drugs and alcohol use was a primary function, which provoked hostility, manipulation, and dysfunction within the family.

SQ resident George Lopez shared his narrative, titled "Thorns and Roses." He recalled that during his childhood he sold candy under the supervision of an adult. He said as a little boy he approached a male customer who directed racial slurs at the boy based on Lopez's Hispanic background.

"Things never looked the same after that day," Lopez said.

Hugo Enrique-Campos spoke about his adverse childhood experiences and how they affected his social development, which led him to aggression.

"I used drugs, and drowned myself in alcohol, but through vulnerability I gained strength and courage," Campos said. "In order to explain weakness, I needed strength."

Resident Kojo Clutchette called his narrative "Palm Tree Shadows." He said that the 1984 Olympic Games

Health and policy professionals discuss how adverse childhood experiences affect everyone



Participants with co-founder Brian Asey, Lisa, Markelle Taylor, Dr. Espinoza, and Kamau Bell

overshadowed his Los Angeles neighborhood near the Memorial Coliseum, because there were no athletes, no parades on his streets, just hustlers and drug addicts.

The next group of residents shared their experiences of near death experiences, and trauma through discovering literacy.

Alex Ross, 58, has been incarcerated 31 years of a 54-year sentence. He said he grew up with "literacy trauma," unable to comprehend. He was bullied and teased.

Freddy Huante, received four life terms that added up to 91 years to life. He shared his narrative, titled "Against all Odds"

He was born premature with undeveloped lungs, weighing approximately 1.8 pounds, his entire body fitted into the palm of his father's

hand, according Huante.

"The medical staff stated 'he would not make it through the night' but God had other plans," Huante said.

Members of the Spanish community shared their traumas about inclusion. According to program facilitator Edwin E. Chavez, when people are excluded because of their language barriers, and not able to articulate the English language clearly, they experience a form of trauma.

Donell Pimpton shared his loss of a family member, and program facilitator Joshua Strange shared his story about his divorced parents.

Pimpton said losing his grandmother to diabetes impacted his life. He watched his grandma's leg turn blue because of her Type 2 diabetes.

"When I think of her today,

I remember her touch, her smell. I am so grateful for you, I love you, until we meet again," Pimpton said.

Strange's called his parents' divorce, a "nuclear bomb."

"My brother and I witnessed the lawyers, the courtroom, not knowing whom they were going to live with, and the possibility of being separated," said Strange. "I learned a lesson in the dysfunction of the legal system."

The event held a panel discussion that included a state official and three medical professionals.

In attendance were Mia Bonta, Democratic Assembly member of the 14th district in Oakland, and Dr. Jeff Grant M.D., a primary care physician at SQ.

Kristine Madsen, director of pediatrics at U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health, and Palav Barbaria M.D.



Co-founder Juan Moreno Haines



Donald Thompson



Comedian Kamau Bell



Fred Huante

M.S. chief quality officer for the Calif. Department of Healthcare Services.

They discussed how childhood trauma impacts lifelong behavior, leading to violence and drug use and how pain and trauma affect incarcerated people and the foster care system.

At the end of the event certificates were handed out to all the graduates, and they received acknowledgment from the California State Assembly.

Assembly member Damon Connolly of the 12th district, Marin/ Sonoma county signed each certificate including comments regarding the

participant's accomplishments.

The certificates stated that this award is for "your invaluable efforts in the inaugural Breaking the Cycle Event hosted by Back to the Start." The State Assembly extended its congratulations to the residents for their achievements, and looked forward to the meaningful impact they will continue to make in the future

Among the 16 incarcerated speakers there were 19 men serving life sentences, a total of 1,883 years between them. It cost \$133,000 a year to house them, totaling \$250 million dollars annually, according to Back to the Start.

AI

Continued from page 1

Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions score.

The COMPAS score is a risk assessment algorithm that predicts the chances an individual commit violence or re-offend based on factors like education level, parole plans, age, and criminal history.

Residents of San Quentin shared their thoughts on data collection, using machine-learning algorithms to determine their freedom and the impact of a suitability hearing using artificial intelligence.

Resident George Camarena was reluctant to the idea of an algorithm controlling his freedom. He said he does not know enough about AI to feel comfortable placing his freedom in its hands.

"I would say no to AI because I don't trust it yet. At the end of the day, the person going [through the parole-suitability process] should be able to opt in or out of using AI because it's their life," said Camarena.

Resident Charles S. has a release date. He talked about his friend's parole denial. The parole board denied his release, but asked that he complete a specific program, which he did. When he returned for his suitability hearing 18 months later, there was a new panel of commissioners with a new set of requirements.

"People shouldn't have to see a different parole board each

Forms of AI used in some criminal justice arenas

time and they all want different things," said Charles S.

Resident Maxx Robinson said he would be reluctant to using an algorithm that just gathers documents because he said that AI is unable to pick up on the emotional cues that are normally recognized by other humans.

"Remorse is relative. It has to be seen and felt by a human being. A machine can't determine if a person does or does not have remorse because remorse is measured in many ways," Robinson said.

The Journal of Quantitative Criminology report noted that parole boards have close to unlimited discretionary power after a person is sentenced. Researchers have found that locating race discrimination in the parole decision-making process is a challenge because race is not an individual factor of a person's parole denial.

The report noted that some individuals denied parole had complete release plans, positive records of in-person education while incarcerated, and vocational programming, but their denial was for their original commitment offense.

"Racial disparities in rates of prison release are not, in and of themselves, an indication of racial discrimination, as there may be factors that can appropriately influence the release decision that also correlate with race," said the report.

In 2016, New York passed a law requiring all parole

denials be followed by a written explanation from the New York State Parole Board on why the person was denied parole whenever that denial falls outside the COMPAS risk score, according to New York Codes, rules regulations of 2020. In 2021, New York proposed state Senate Bill S1415A. The bill stated that they will release "any incarcerated person appearing before the board who is eligible for release on parole, unless the parole case record demonstrates there is a current and unreasonable risk the person will violate the law if released and such risk cannot be mitigated by parole supervision."

Saira Hussain, staff attorney for Electronic Frontier Foundation noted that the response from CDCR is only an argument.

"The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is making the same arguments with us that have already lost in court," said Hussain. "Our clients want to use machine learning to identify patterns of discrimination – something you'd think prison officials might want to learn more about."

Staff attorney Cara Gagliano said government officials should not have the last say on who gets certain information.

"Our clients simply want CDCR to follow the law and provide the records they need to do their work," Gagliano said.

Public

Continued from page 1

police, public schools, churches or organized religion, higher education, the medical system, and the criminal justice system.

The survey used the percentage of responses as the key indicator of public confidence. Respondents who had "A great deal" of confidence in the criminal justice system amounted to only 8%; respondents who had "Quite a lot" of confidence calculated to 13%; a sum of these percentages produced an overall confidence score of 21. Another 34% respondents said they had "Some" confidence and 42% respondents said they had "Very little" confidence.

Americans have little confidence in criminal justice system

Gallup also categorized the results into the demographic categories of gender, race, age, education, party affiliation, and annual income. Like Gallup, the *San Quentin News'* interpretation of these data added the number of respondents who said "A great deal" and "Quite a lot" to calculate the number of confidence in the system. The analysis added the number of respondents who said "Very little" and "Some" to show non-confidence.

Gallup, America's premier survey company, called a random sample of 1,005 adults over the age of 18, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

The margin of sampling error calculated to plus or minus 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Gallup also provided historical data that revealed the criminal justice system has not broken out of a 14 to 34 range over the last 28 years. It reached its high of 34 in 2004 and its lowest point of 14 in 2022. Its current score of 21 lay below its median of 28.

"No one feels really satisfied with the criminal justice system," said resident Charles Crowe. "Victim advocates think the system too soft on crime, and reformers think of mass incarceration as a failed strategy."

Elderly

Continued from page 1

on helping residents of any age to prepare for release by providing community-based support.

Beaudette said a new Peer Support Specialist Program recently developed by California Correctional Health Care Services would help incarcerated residents of all ages. PSSP graduates have certifications in the CCHCS program that allowed them to acquire skills emphasizing relapse prevention.

"It's difficult to make it out there with only \$200.00 gate

Residents said improvements can be made for elder support

"A lot of these guys are institutionalized and have been locked up for so long they cannot see a future on the other side of these walls."

money," said 63-year-old San Quentin resident Stevin Faith. "[The program] sounds like some of these peer support guys might know what I'm going through and be able to help."

The IJPH reported 131,500 persons over 55 held in state

prisons, amounting to an increase of 400% since 1993.

The report also stated, "Older adults who are or have been incarcerated constitute a growing population in the USA. The complex health needs of this group are often inadequately addressed when transitioning back into the community."

"A lot of these guys are institutionalized and have been locked up for so long they cannot see a future on the other side of these walls," Hansen said.

POLICY

Historic change provides opportunity for youth offender mentors and mentees

By Eric Allen
Staff Writer

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation took a progressive step to make fire camp more accessible to participants in the Youth Offender Program, known to residents as YOP.

Captain Fred Money came to San Quentin Rehabilitation Center from Sacramento with Lt. M. Hill and Lt. Vanessa Melendez to speak to incarcerated residents taking part in the program. YOP mentors and mentees went to Chapel B to learn about recent changes. Lt. Hill, the Commander at Growlersburg Conservation Camp, a 27-year CDCR veteran, talked about not making excuses. He believed everyone has value and worth.

"We expect more from you in camp. You been through some stuff in life but many of you just haven't been challenged the right way. Camp feeds you rib eye steaks, offers GED programs to get you 6 months off your sentence, face-to-face Lake Tahoe College classes free of charge, weightlifting for strength training. If you really don't know who you are, camp will give you that opportunity," Hill said.

One critical change gave mentors — ages 26 and older — permission to request to go to fire camp and gave mentees — ages 18 to 25 — a chance to go to a youth fire camp.

The other big change concerned fire camp participation for youth offenders with an administrative "VIO" classification related to a current or prior conviction for a violent felony as defined in the California Code of Regulations Title 15 3375.2(b)(29).

Eligible participants must have a security level of III (or under) and must have at least 6 months left on their sentences with under 8 years left to serve. A YOP participant must have an Institutional Classification Committee approval to go to camp. A correctional counselor's request would not suffice.

"There are incentives for going to camp. You can become a firefighter once you're released," Capt. Money said, indicating yet another change.

In the past, returned citizens struggled to get firefighter jobs because their convictions prevented them to obtain an EMT license, a condition for such positions. Assembly Bill 2147, signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2021, has since allowed returned citizens



Resident firefighters clearing brush after a fire

SQNews archive

to expunge their records by working at fire camp, which would allow them to obtain an EMT license.

"We just doubled the pay of our top firefighter from \$5.12 to \$10.24 a day," Capt. Money said. If fighting an active fire, Cal Fire would pay incarcerated firefighters an additional dollar an hour. "The CDCR has already approved Cal Fire to pay around \$200 a week," Capt. Money said, adding, "They feed you better in camp. We want the youthful offender to make this their last stop in prison getting out and having a good job. Every year

we have guys walking out of prison into a state job."

Former lifer Jose Olmedo spoke about his life in prison and the help his job as a life coach at the Ventura Training Center fire camp has provided. After six denials, the Board of Parole granted his release in 2015. Since paroling, Olmedo has traveled across California to recruit firefighters.

"We offer attorney help for child custody cases, people to help you build your credit and money saving plans," said Olmedo, also an employee at the Anti-Recidivism Coalition. "When you leave this 18-month

program, the plan is to have you leave with \$20,000 to \$30,000 in the bank to put down on your first house."

Lt. Melendez, employed at the Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp, took the stage and said, "Can you imagine coming to camp then sending your kids pictures of you in a firefighter uniform? People in our community love our firefighters. Amity Foundation just took our firefighters bowling."

Mentor Charles Williams, 38, a resident at San Quentin, left the event feeling positive. "It's one thing to

hear about it, but for them to come to San Quentin to inform us about what's going on was great," Williams said. "It shows the system is changing; I have 47 years to serve so I can't go but I'm sure I would go if I could."

Capt. Money and Lieutenants Hill and Melendez kept emphasizing the importance of staying drug- and alcohol-free. Lt. Hill referred to it as the number one dream killer in camp.

The participants in the event applauded as they learned about this new opportunity. San Quentin resident James Hilton, 25, said he had a few months left before aging out of the Youth Offender Program.

He later reported that after having left the event, he went to his counselor to request placement on the fire camp list. He said he had thought applying to fire camp would have turned into a long process, but the Institutional Classification Committee heard his application in only 2 weeks. Two months later, Hilton said he would go to the fire camp in Jamestown, called the Sierra Conservation Center.

"I went from hopeless to having hope. Going to this event changed me," Hilton said.

DEATH ROW

Former Death Row Upper Yard receives upgrade

By Terrell J. Marshall
Journalism Guild Writer

High-pitched grinding noises, sparks, and the smell of carbon blades cutting through steel have informed residents of progress at the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

The sounds, the lights, and the odor came from the long-awaited conversion of the Upper Yard from its prior use as a secure outside solitary cell area for Death Row. According to Lt. B. Haub, construction crews began working in September to dismantle and remove 38 outdoor isolation cells and a basketball court.

"Plans on how to best utilize the recently open yard space are being made," Haub said. "The goal is for the Upper Yard to be used and available for the whole population."

Behind a 10-foot-tall security fence used to sit the outdoor cells, their perimeter surrounded with



Upper Yard demolition removed isolation cells and amenities

Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

razor wire. Each cell had a stainless steel toilet, a sink, and some room to exercise. The yard and the cells remained out-of-sight to the general population, shielded by a black nylon tarp.

The exercise activities in the outdoor cells did not remain out of earshot, though. According to former Death Row residents, the space

has long had an association with very loud callouts during common workout sessions. Attempts by general population residents to communicate with Death Row residents through the fence would result in Rules Violation Reports.

An outside construction company started the demolition project in

September 2024. The team has included as many as five carpenters and a work crew of 15 Inmate Day Labor program (IDL) workers.

Resident Daryl Beulah, 60, said he felt excited to work with the IDL crew helping to reimagine a space once available to everyone at San Quentin. "I've been on all the major projects within the last

5 years," Beulah said. "This one is exciting because of how much space we will have for something new."

Beulah added that his involvement with the project included in the overall project planning an orientation that addressed worker safety. "The next day we started right in on demolition using generators, grinders, and reciprocating saws to cut everything down," Beulah said.

Outside construction workers toiled high off the ground, using scissor lifts to reach and remove barbed wire from the fence. The crew worked to remove the welds and screws that connected cells and fencing.

According to Lt. Haub, thousands of pounds of parts and pieces, including stacks of screen panels and doors, would end up re-purposed at another prison.

The most noticeable part of the demolition process showed up in the beginning of the year during the dismantling of the old Upper Yard canopy.

Lead paint coated the entire steel superstructure and a second construction crew that specialized in lead-abatement demolition and removal worked high overhead as they removed some 500 metal panels from a 21,000 square-foot roof. The structure used rivets from an era before welding.

A buzz of excitement sounded from residents walking by the construction zone. "This yard hasn't seen sunshine like this in years," said resident Marcus Gallegos, 59, as he passed by the area.

The steel structure would soon receive new paint. Lt. Haub said colorful and clear panels made of recycled composite material would replace the old panels, bringing vitality to the reclaimed structure.

"What they are doing to the Upper Yard shows us that they are continuing to make positive changes here at San Quentin," said resident Tony Chavez, 30.

Remaining condemned prisoners receive innovative therapy

By Jambri Johnson, Sr.
Journalism Guild Writer

The 10 remaining Death Row residents at San Quentin are receiving innovative methods of therapy as they wait to be transferred to general population facilities.

SQ Sgt. Brenes and four of his colleagues have implemented an innovative approach to socialize and humanize the condemned residents, who suffer from severe mental disorders.

They are housed at the prison's central hospital medical unit, where they are undergoing psychiatric and therapeutic treatment for their conditions.

Some receive electric shock therapy while others participate in group therapy sessions, according to the SQ Resource Team.

One resident, a 45-year-old transgender woman who has

been on Death Row since 2004, hopes to be transferred to Chowchilla women's facility and engage with other residents more regularly.

"I don't like solitary confinement at all," she shared.

The first time she was allowed into the SQ recreation area without cuffs, she was unsure of what to do with her hands, and sat on them to conceal them out of habit.

Having these residents physically engage with psych-clinicians, recreational therapists, custody staff, and other residents to help ease their mental disorders is unprecedented, according to SQ's Resource Team.

Some of the condemned residents have known each other for some time, as a result of the time spent together on Death Row.

The residents housed in the prison hospital receive

treatment for various conditions. Their disorders prevent them from going to other institutions. The residents say the program helps them transition from isolation easier, however, their anxiety and stress is a real risk.

One condemned resident said he is ready for change, but can't help worrying about the unknown, explaining that even the thought of walking to dinner makes him nervous.

SQ's Resource Team stated that they see the program as a logical and "humane" way to provide skills and treatment and to build trust.

"The trust issue is not just the officers, it's gaining the trust of residents," said Correctional Officer C. Ramirez.

Being able to build a rapport with residents allows staff to do their job effectively,

"I would not come out before. I was paranoid, I was too freaked out to go."

according to Ramirez. The day-to-day stress of officers on the job is a real concern for the administration.

In turn, officers have the ability to engage with residents lowering the potential for violence; this allows them to do their job effectively.

It takes time to establish rapport, stated SQ Correctional Officer M. Hauwert. She is another member of the Resource Team involved with transforming SQ prison to meet the standards set forth in the California Model.

"We plan for everything,

we do reports after the fact; each one has a profile, we consult with the therapist... everything is ran through the safety and security," she said. "All of this is preplanned."

It was obvious the individuals housed on the fourth floor enjoyed their recreational time with the officers and staff. They engaged in conversations, laughed, listened to music provided by staff, and showed a desire to win at the games they played like corn hole and foosball.

A 56-year-old Death Row resident confined to a wheelchair engaged in a game of "Uno No Mercy" with staff. In between mouthfuls of popcorn, which he enjoyed for the first time in 25 years, he described his anxiety caused by years of isolation.

"I would not come out before. I was paranoid, I was too freaked out to go,"

he said.

The hospital residents spend time in the mental health dayroom, where they watch movies on a large TV screen, play video and board games, and engage in in-depth discussion with clinicians in a comforting environment.

The program has more than a thousand dollars worth of table games; the room has been decorated with murals painted by Death Row residents.

The Resource Team has prioritized the mental health for the remaining condemned individuals on the fourth floor.

Out of a pool of approximately 900 candidates, only five staff members were assigned to the Resource Team. The selected staff expressed a sense of pride working to overcome the stigma of rehabilitating residents.



Dr. Tiffany Rawlings founder of 'Beauty Behind Bars'



Co-founder Michael Brown



Project Pat

Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Beauty Behind Bars

Inspirational messages on mental freedom from incarceration

By Martin Keith DeWitt
Journalism Guild Writer

Dr. Tiffany Love Rawlings, founder of 'Beauty Behind Bars,' brought her unique message of positivity and perseverance to three classes of Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment students in the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center gym.

The goal of Beauty Behind Bars is to encourage people to free themselves from mental incarceration and self-imprisonment, according to Love Rawlings, whose aim is "teaching people to be free while incarcerated, to give hope to the incarcerated."

Resident Bill Sanders discussed how inspired he was by the event and the conversations.

"The stories were good. They were inspiring. The story of Clemmie G. was

amazing given the fact that she had been through so much, was uneducated, and still overcame adversity to give back," said Sanders.

Rawlings, who also visited SQ in 2017 and 2019, brought her husband Dr. Dennis Rawlings and several representatives of the Go Foundation to the event. These representatives included Clemmie 'G. from Tennessee' Greenlee, former law enforcement officer Michael Brown, and Project Pat and Big Kountry Nate from the Three-Six Mafia.

"If you can do life for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, then why can't you do life for you and/or your family," Love Rawlings challenged attendees as she shared her own life story.

After enduring a childhood filled with spousal abuse, Love Rawlings attended East

Tennessee State University on a track scholarship and married a man twenty years her senior. The relationship was abusive, and she described her state of mind locked in the prison of her own mind.

After that experience, Love Rawlings wrote a book on how to free oneself from the shackles of the mind. She then learned social work to help free her incarcerated brother. While she was successful, he died from stage-four leukemia two years after being released.

Resident Mike Thompson talked about how inspired he was after hearing Love Rawlings say "A made up bed, is a made up mind." Since then he has made sure to make his bed every day.

"There was no ah-ha moment. It was all very common sense stuff, which is not as common as it should be."

The Go Foundation was started during the pandemic, with members handing out books in the streets. Now, the foundation visits prisons, bringing a message of hope. Co-Founder Michael Brown spoke about the power of a positive mentality, describing the power of mental focus and perseverance.

"If you can think it," claimed Brown, "You can have it."

Big Kountry Nate of Three Six Mafia, also representing the Go Foundation, shared his own perspective as a formerly incarcerated person.

"Think before you do, listen and learn from a lot of people that's been through these problems and situations," he said. "There's more people inside now that can make a difference on the outside but they won't let them out because they too powerful to be out there."

Monthly drum sessions provides connection, community, rhythm

By William Burley
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin's Chapel C hosts a monthly Drum Circle session in an effort to energize the incarcerated people.

The energy produced by the drumming must be experienced to be fully appreciated. The deep bass vibration of the larger drums, accented with the elevated snap of the smaller drums weaving throughout, is hypnotic.

"The idea of sitting with others and grooving on a rhythmic pattern is not a new one," said John Zeretzke, SQ resident and co-creator of the program.

He maintains that the idea of a drum circle in America has evolved into its own unique cultural tradition, derived from the ancient art of drumming embedded in multiple world cultures.

Using the vision of its co-founder Jewish Chaplain Rabbi Paul Shleffar, the Drum Circle was initiated in November of 2023.

"It's a great way for people to connect in a way they don't often get and be creative as a

group," said Shleffar.

A musician and composer for more than 35 years, Zeretzke's passion is world cultural music, which encompasses many different traditions, most of which have their own unique instruments and percussion rhythms.

He talked about what music meant to him. "It's what I do," said Zeretzke. "Music has the power to make change. It's healing and spiritual food."

Drums provided for the sessions include congas, bongos, Eastern frame drums, North African bendirs, dholaks from India, and a variety of other percussion instruments.

The Drum Circle is normally held in Chapel C at 8:00 a.m. on the first Friday of each month. If it shifts to later in the morning due to limited space allocation, a schedule will be posted in the housing units.

"To join in a drum circle, even if you are a beginner, is fun. It brings people closer together in unity without words or needed instruction," said Zeretzke, "People leave here with a sense of joy and fulfillment, with a big smile

on their faces. It's like getting your batteries charged."

Whether you have experience drumming or are a complete novice, all are welcome. The first 15 minutes of a session are instructional, covering various techniques, and then the session begins.

A single drummer will begin a beat, setting the rhythm. The others, as they get the feel of the rhythm, will add their own pattern to fill it out. In no time, the whole circle is in unified

communication.

Eventually, someone else will initiate another rhythmic beat and the circle is off again. Its truly something to be experienced.

The drumming participants, both old hands and first timers, all shared similar thoughts and feelings about the experience.

Arent Bradt said, "It helps develop community, connects us to our roots, and gives those looking for a connection to music, that connection."

Musician and first-timer to the circle Robert Gomez said, "Music is a key to your soul. It can bring peace and help you to relax."

Longtime participant Carlos Gale said, "I love it and really get a great feeling. The opening up of emotions and connecting with the other drummers is spiritual."

Gordon (Flash) Kimbrough, who has been with the circle since it began, said, "It's organic and creative, from the heart and the core of the soul. We communicate and fuel off each other. The effect is therapeutic, stress reducing, and fun."



SQNews archive

Congas

EVENTS

Seminar teaches power of self-forgiveness

By Tyrone Luqman Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

Powerful Days, a program designed to teach the science and power of self-forgiveness, taught San Quentin residents that forgiving oneself is the first step to achieve true freedom.

Powerful Days hosted an event in Protestant Chapel B geared towards emotional intelligence training. The guest speakers were Charles Myles, Miesha Myles, Clarence Jackson and Roderick Allen.

The event also introduced the programs of the Flintridge Center and the executive director of the center Joshua McCurry was in attendance. Flintridge Center, located in Pasadena, CA, supports community members exiting incarceration by offering services free of charge such as the apprenticeship preparation program, reintegration services and record change support.

First to share his story was formerly incarcerated resident Clarence Jackson.

"There was a time when all I knew was the hood and gang banging," said Jackson. "Upon my release the Flintridge Center helped me get a job as an electrician making \$31 dollars an hour. If I can do it, so can you."

Charles Myles, lead motivational trainer for Powerful Days shared stories of his youth and his battles with controlling his violent streak. He spoke about how

his toxic mindset led to him having actual physical issues with his health.

"What the mind conceives, the body starts to believe," said Myles.

He described the psychological factors that lead to the physiological ailments in an individual. Myles used a quote from Buddha to lend foundation to his point, telling residents that "we are shaped by our thoughts and we become what we think."

Miesha Myles, wife and co-trainer with Charles, offered strategies to residents on how to practice self-forgiveness. She spoke about some of the difficulties males have sharing their innermost feelings with others and suggested that residents practice journaling as means to emptying out unresolved feelings on to paper. Miesha described the positive aspects of journaling, being raw and completely honest with oneself.

Before the conclusion of the event the Powerful Days crew displayed the dictionary and religious definition of forgiveness. Then the crew shared the Powerful Days definition of forgiveness, which stated that forgiveness is giving up on the hope of a better past to move forward with your life.

"As a Muslim, I've always equated forgiveness to my faith," said resident Hamed Ali. "But this workshop really personalized forgiveness in a way that shows me that I need to forgive myself first."

Grief and Gratitude Writing Workshop offers safe space

The Alive Inside organization sponsored a Grief and Gratitude Writing Workshop in San Quentin's Chapel D.

Alive Inside holds alternating monthly workshops; The Open Mic Night and the grief and gratitude workshop. The grief workshop is held the second Tuesday of every month centered on working through grief.

The Open Mic Night with music, poetry, and stories centered on loss and grief. The following month there will be a writing workshop where participants can write and reflect on their thoughts and feelings about the grief they are going through.

Ned Buskirk, an outside facilitator for the session, opened up by explaining the group's purpose.

"To create a space to open up and be vulnerable, to express what you don't normally express," said Buskirk.

He explained that the session was mostly for writing and listening, when someone is sharing, there was to be no commenting or offering of advice. Buskirk said the space is sacred.

The group was small, with only Director of Alive Inside, Jordan Edelheit, Bay Area musician Adrienne Shamszad, Buskirk, and seven SQ resident participants.

Buskirk, Edelheit and Shamszad each spoke a little about the purpose of the program and their reasons for being there. They all agreed with Buskirk when he said "We are here with you, for you."

Shamszad played guitar and sang an original song "Let it go" to set the mood.

The group was then given their first writing prompt: What grieves you? What grief brought you here? The participants were given time to write while Shamszad played softly on the guitar.

The participants were asked if they would read to the group what they had written. It was made clear that sharing was not mandatory and that if what they had written was too personal or painful they could pass.

Everyone shared. Sometimes slowly, haltingly, and with occasional tears, but in the end they all managed to unburden themselves.

A break was taken, during which Shamszad played an Iranian setar, a two stringed instrument played like a guitar, and sang a song in Farsi called "Tazary".

After emotions had settled down, the group was given another prompt to write about: "What is your littlest grief?" Or if they preferred: "What do people think you should be grieving about and what do you actually grieve about?"

Shamszad again played softly while people wrote, but this time on the setar.

Everyone shared again with fewer tears and some laughter over their littlest grief.

During the break Shamszad switched back to the guitar and sang another original song "I've been searching all my life for you."

The final writing prompt for the evening was: "What are you grateful for?" The mood was lighter during the share, with a bit of open discussion and music to wrap up the session.

—William Burley
Journalism Guild Writer

BLACK HISTORY

American author's mission preserves African Americans' history

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

An American author, historian, and journalist devoted his life to the preservation of Black history.

Carter G. Woodson studied African-Americans' contributions to the development of the United States, contributions that the Afro-Centrism movement finds believable, according to Wikipedia.

"[African-American contributions] were overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed by the writers of history text books and the teachers who use them," Woodson said.

His examinations put Black people's history and human experience into perspective, and in 1933 he authored one of his most popular books, *"The Miseducation of the Negro."*

On February 26, 1926, Woodson founded Negro History Week, a predecessor of Black History Month.

His idea was to encourage civil rights leaders, schoolteachers, religious leaders, women's groups

and fraternal associations to improve their understanding of African-American history.

He devoted his life to historical research and the preservation of African-American history; as part of that effort, he collected thousands of artifacts and publications.

As a member of the American Historical Association, Woodson realized the AHA was not interested in Black history. He was assured that he had no future in a White-dominated historical profession.

In order to advance Black people's contributions, he created an institution that would enable scholars to study history.

On September 9, 1915, in Chicago, Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in collaboration with other Black scholars.

The purpose of the Association was to have a scientific study of the neglected aspects of Black life, ushering in a new era and training people in a new method of research.



Carter G. Woodson
Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

They intended "to treat the records scientifically and to publish findings in the world, [avoiding] the awful fate of becoming a negligible factor in the thought of the world," Wikipedia noted.

Woodson believed that education among Black and White people could reduce racism, and promote the organized study of African-American history.

Woodson's devotion to history displayed his character, but it was his own history that got him to preserve Black History.

Woodson was born December 13, 1875, in New Canton, Virginia, a son of slaves James Henry Woodson and Anne Eliza Riddle.

The family struggled with poverty, but a young Woodson worked on the

family farm contributing to their economics, and as a result he was unable to attend preparatory school.

In four months' time he received academic instructions from his uncles and brothers, and as a result Woodson was able to master basic school subjects.

At the age of 17 he followed his brother Robert Henry to Huntington, West Virginia, with an aspiration to attend Douglass High School, a secondary school for Black children.

In 1895, at the age of 20, Woodson enrolled fulltime at DHS. Two years later he earned a high school diploma and later became the principal of Douglass High.

From 1901 to 1903 he attended Berea College in Kentucky, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in literature. He also attended the University of Chicago, where he joined the first Black fraternity, Sigma Pi Phi.

In 1912 Woodson earned a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University, the

second African American after W.E.B. Dubois, and the first descendant of slaves to receive the high academic honor.

Woodson later joined the staff at Howard University as a professor and eventually became Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

On April 3, 1950, at age 74, Woodson died from an abrupt heart attack in his Washington D.C. home. He was buried at the Lincoln Memorial Cemetery, in Suitland, Maryland.

Today more than 30 academic institutions in 14 states have named their schools after Carter G. Woodson, recognizing his lifelong work of preserving American history. As a result of his historical efforts, Woodson was dubbed the Father of Black History, Wikipedia noted.

"[It's] merely the logical result of tradition, the inevitable outcome of thorough instruction to the effect that the Negro have never contributed anything to the progress of mankind," Woodson stated.

Persons with dreadlocks face stigma despite legal protection

By Lawrence Randall
Journalism Guild Writer

Jamario Moore, a San Quentin resident, says that wearing dreadlocks, even in this day and age, can get you in trouble.

Moore said that he has had negative reactions from correctional officers because of his hair choice.

"One day at yard recall, the C/Os [Correctional officers] said everybody with dreadlocks stay outside. Then they took our ID's without an explanation," Moore said.

The officers later told them, that because of their dreads they felt they would be causing problems at the prison, Moore said.

Around the world dreadlocks, long popular in the Black community, have on occasion been stigmatized in other settings. Some residents at San Quentin shared their stories in hopes of changing that narrative.

The origin of dreadlocks can be traced to ancient Egypt, the Sahara and other corners of Africa where Black people have traditionally worn their hair this way, according to Wikipedia.

"I started growing my locks 25 years ago while on the streets with my son's

mother during Kwanza," said, Ralph "Amin" Brown, a San Quentin resident. (Kwanza is a celebration begun by Maulana Ron Karenga of Los Angeles as an alternative to the traditional Christmas observance.)

In the book *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America*, the author said that the origin of the name dreadlocks began during Trans-Atlantic the slave trade. After spending months cramped below decks in slave ships, the Africans' hair became matted and tangled, said Wikipedia.

"When I told my Queen [his wife] I was getting locks," Mr. Brown's wife response was, "Oh yeah, Dreadlocks!"

Brown replied, "I said, 'No. They are locks and it is nothing dreadful about them.' I had to educate her on our history and why Europeans called us that-dreadful."

Wikipedia said that from the African diaspora to the Western diaspora, Black people's stories about their locks affirmed the strength and truth of what their hair choices really mean to them.

"I consider my locks my crown," Brown said. "Me being a Black man having a crown represents me knowing I have a choice."

Governor Gavin Newsom signed the Crown Act into law On July 3, 2019. It pertains to hair discrimination, but even with the passing of the Crown Act, African-Americans say they are experiencing what scholars call "hairism-discrimination."

Because of the Crown Act, imprisoned people with dreads now live with less fear of discrimination from prison staff, they say, adding the new rule makes institutions more inclusive with freedom for residents to be themselves.

Wikipedia said a study found that 25% percent of Black women have been denied employment because of their hair alone. From Africa, to England, to Texas, reports have been published that Black youngsters have been subjected to suspension from school because of their dreads.

Brown said, "I can say both times I cut my dreads, I was back on some bull crap (negative behavior). I never noticed until you asked, but every time I cut them I went back to my old ways, less peaceful."

Wikipedia says that the dreadlocks are believed to connect a person to the spirit world. That's another reason Black people grow their

locks and nurture the health of their hair.

SQ resident Delvon Adams related this incident, "My mom had alopecia (A disease that causes hair loss). She was visiting one day and I gave her a lock that I pulled out. I felt I lost something, but I gave my mom that lock and through that connection from that one, she grew hers [locks]."

Rastafarians are people who are inspired by the Bible; their locks are a symbolic connection to African culture.

The Ethiopians were seen wearing dreadlocks during the Italian-Ethiopian War in the 1930s when Benito Mussolini invaded. During the invasion a vow was made not to cut their hair, noted Wikipedia.

SQ resident Steven Warren said, "For me it is the equivalent to having lion's mane. It's the connection to Biblical times, Samson and the Nazarites," Warren said. "I felt I had a mission, and I knew I needed a particular piece of power that only the most high could provide, so I made a vow while embarking on this journey."

"Your hair comes as it should, and it's not to be altered with chemicals. Your hair connects you to the most high God so let it swing," Warren said.



Delvon Adams

Photo below by Marcus Casillas // SQNews



Photos by Aristeo Sampablo // SQNews



Steven Warren



Ralph Amin Brown

African American culture, family, community celebrated at Kwanzaa

By Tyrone Luqman Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin residents and outside guests gathered in Chapel B to near capacity on Saturday, December 21 to kick off the 2024 Kwanzaa celebration.

The 58-year-old African American holiday celebrates family, community and culture. It was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor of African studies, in 1966.

Kwanzaa is a seven day festival, where each day commemorates the Seven Principles of Unity (Umoja), Self Determination (Kujichagulia), Collective Work and Responsibility (Ujima), Cooperative Economics (Ujamaa), Purpose (Nia), Creativity (Kuumba), and Faith (Imani).

Musicians and

percussionists from several SQ bands came together to form a musical collective that set a festive mood. As speakers approached the podium, they were accompanied with the bass sound of pounding congas and bongos, reflecting roots in African tradition.

SQ resident Kaleo "9yne 4oe" Kealoha opened the celebration with a performance of two deeply personal rap songs.

"It is a blessing to be here, a close friend invited me," said Kealoha, a native of Hawaiian and German decent. "It's an honor that the Black community accepted me to perform my music. It was an opportunity for me to show my love for the community and my love for the culture."

The tables where attendees sat were adorned with red, black, and green table

cloths. Resident Lamavis Commundoiwilla displayed his artwork representing the beauty of Black women. Resident artist Douglas Dawkins created African women-themed cards that served as the centerpieces of the tables.

Poets from the facility's art community showed up in force to present artfully-crafted pieces laden with the struggles and triumphs of African American communities.

SQ resident and poet Jason "Supreme" Jackson performed a powerful spoken word piece titled "Black Like Me" along side the bass sound of the house band.

"I grew up in LA celebrating Kwanzaa. Going to Kwanzaa plays and celebrations, my family observed all the tenets of Kwanzaa," said Jackson. "To be in this moment means

the world to me as a Black man. This is the first time I've ever heard of Kwanzaa being celebrated in a prison setting."

Jackson, who wrote his first poem at 12 years old and performed his first poem at age 16, left the stage to a standing ovation and thunderous applause.

In attendance was Project Pat, a member of the rap group Three Six Mafia, who won an Academy Award for best movie score for "Hustle and Flow." As a formerly incarcerated person himself, he shared that he wanted to use his platform to shine a light on the beauty that resides behind prison walls.

"This event is a beautiful thing. I never celebrated Kwanzaa in my life before today," said Project Pat. "People on the outside don't understand the beauty and

humanity that exists in places like this. It's my job to bring more exposure and let the world know."

SQTV writer and director of film Mathew Sheppard graced the audience with his comedy, amusing the crowd with jokes that skillfully told the stories of famous African American inventors.

"F.J. Loudin invented the keychain because he couldn't be the first brother to lose his house key, he'd be back in the field in no time," quipped Sheppard.

Along with the poets and musical performances, speakers were called to the podium to articulate the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa.

At the conclusion of the event, bean pies, banana pudding, and peach cobbler were served to attendees alongside hot cocoa.

Participants also received custom bags of M&Ms colored with the traditional Kwanzaa colors of red, black, and green.

SQ resident Situe "Skoowee" Toluao, a core member of the Asian Pacific Islander community, expressed his love and appreciation for African American culture.

"I always loved culture in general, because culture is what showed me who I truly am," said Toluao. "I feel Black [people] are pioneers in industry and entertainment. When it comes to fighting oppression, other marginalized communities look to Black [people] for inspiration."

Resident poet Jackson left attendees with one final message to ponder in his poem "Black Like Me." He rhymed, "we both the riddle and the clue, the answers to all the questions if we only knew."

REENTRY

Internet platform helps returning citizens find employment

By Jason Jackson
Journalism Guild Writer

Working on the outside, Jodi Anderson Jr., a formerly incarcerated person, has created an online platform to help persons with criminal records obtain employment.

Like many of persons with criminal records, Anderson had trouble finding work because of his background. "They'd run a background check and say, 'Hey, you didn't tell me you were incarcerated when you were a teenager, and that you just got out three years ago. We're not taking that risk,'" Anderson said.

Anderson co-created Restorative Records, a website on which returning citizens may upload for potential employers their criminal histories, educational backgrounds, and their rehabilitation efforts.

Arrested and incarcerated as a teenager, Anderson did not let his setback hinder his growth. He earned many certifications while completing self-help programs. He even received a degree from Stanford University.

He eventually found a job, but wanted to make the employment process easier for returning citizens.

Restorative Records has caught the attention of some notable institutions, including Cornell University and the State University of New York. Both schools provided grants to Anderson's cause, enabling

the program's implementation across the schools' campuses.

"This pilot program aligns with our vision of being renowned for the way we value the people and highlight the skills and unique experiences of nontraditional talent, all while assisting us in addressing our hiring needs," said Donna Lynch-Cunningham, the dean of Human Resources at Cornell University.

Anderson told the *Cornell Chronicle* that the country has a labor shortage and that employers would miss out on qualified applicants simply because of the system's structure. Tapping into this qualified applicant pool would have benefits for perspective employers.

The White House released a report in 2022 that stated that of more than 70 million Americans who have a criminal record, 75% remained unemployed more than a year after their release from jails or prisons.

The report further revealed that employees with criminal records tended to work more efficiently, would more likely receive promotions, and typically incurred fewer work-related infractions than employees without a criminal record.

"We're trying to address the biases that exist in hiring flows," Anderson told the *Cornell Chronicle*. "The bias against formerly incarcerated people isn't intentional; I just think it's built into the system."

SOCIAL STUDY

Anti-social behavior learned in prison

Interviews conducted at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, revealed that some residents developed anti-social behavior as result of their imprisonment.

The interviews revealed that residents are aware of the adverse effects of imprisonment, making them increasingly self-conscious of their ability to socialize. Incarcerated individuals are removed from the normalcy of everyday life. Resident Alan Buckley feels that he lost the opportunity to develop healthy social skills which include traveling, shopping in a store, or developing a career.

"I've developed a lot of anxiety with being in public spaces, especially being around people who aren't incarcerated," said Buckley. "In prison, we're all in the same boat, [but] when someone from the outside comes in, it throws me off."

A prison environment can be a problematic place to foster

healthy social skills, especially at medium and maximum security facilities. These prisons are often plagued with violent behavior. Such environments make it less likely for incarcerated individuals to join self-help programs.

Resident Jambri Johnson Sr. said his experiences in such a prison environment. Johnson has been incarcerated for 17 years most of those in high security prisons.

"I ended up finding comfort in being reclusive and with the misery of being in prison," Johnson Sr. said. "It helped me to survive, but it hurt, because it made me socially awkward."

Some residents, like Delshawn Beauchamp, are housed far away from their family and unable to visit. This can worsen anti-social tendencies.

Beauchamp's family lives in Compton, California--500 miles south of San Quentin. He said that it is

financially difficult for his loved ones to visit because the distance is so far,

Armando Carlos, an SQRC resident, credited the nine years of isolation he spent in the Segregated Housing Unit with his difficulty in connecting with others.

"I used to watch sad movies just to see if I could still cry and feel emotion," Carlos said. "It felt good knowing that I still could after becoming so numb to genuine connections."

The environment at San Quentin has offered some residents their first opportunity in years to strengthen their social skills.

"My first experience at San Quentin was going to a concert where Dee Dee Simon [A Registered Nurse at SQRC] performed," Johnson Sr. said. "It was great! The music was good, and for that time, I felt free."

Some residents have ideas on how to mitigate anti-social behaviors with

administrative aid.

"We need more access to existing programs, because the long waiting lists can leave a lot of people out of classes," Buckley said. "That would really help us build confidence."

Buckley added that he believed it would help to provide specific classes on communication and social skills to teach San Quentin residents how to interact with the world.

The programming at San Quentin has offered a glimpse of improvements where individuals can make their lives better when provided the necessary tools.

"I'm being more vulnerable and proactive with involving myself in programs," Johnson Sr. said. "Not just because I have to go to the parole board, but also because I just want to be regular, and able to relate to and interact with regular people."

— Jason Jackson
Journalism Guild Writer

NATIONAL

Habitual criminal law in Vermont leads to life in prison

By James Staggs
Journalism Guild Writer

An African-American man faces life in prison, because of a habitual criminal law in the state of Vermont.

Kwesi Wilson, 39, was charged with five separate charges stemming from a high-speed chase. He could be sentenced to life in prison if found guilty of being a "habitual" offender under state law, according to *Battleboro Reformer*.

In a court proceeding, Judge Kerry McDonald-Cady made the decision to retain Wilson to the custody of authorities after weighing evidence and

his criminal history. Wilson has three prior convictions spread out across Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont.

At the hearing Wilson's mother, Evaney Wilson, spoke on her son's behalf. She tried to convince Judge McDonald-Cady to grant her son bail, claiming he is a drug addict that needs to be helped, not locked up.

"As an African American living in Vermont, this is a very racial state," said Wilson. "I'm not saying that people who break the law shouldn't be accountable, but I've seen it too much"

In a statement to the court Wilson suggested that "there

seems to be a White law and a Black law here," she said.

She added that her disappointment is when African Americans that suffer from drug addiction go unnoticed; especially after being released from custody without help.

Statistics in the state of Vermont show the racial imbalance where Blacks are stopped more than Whites.

"Incarceration does nothing to rehabilitate addicted individuals... that's not justice, its injustice," Wilson said. "You see it nationally where Donald Trump is convicted of 34 felonies and still running for President of the United States."

Attempting to find some help for her son. Wilson pleaded with the judge for the younger Wilson's freedom asking he be released under specific conditions, released to her custody with a 24/7 curfew while awaiting trial.

The Judge denied her request for bail because her son was facing a life sentence. Wilson turned to his mother, and mouthed the words, "I love you."

After years of frustration with her son's addiction, including the lack of services for substance abuse. Wilson declares as a mother, "I just want to give him a chance to get better."

1. California (CalMatters)

California prisons will return to the practice of giving a full \$200 in "gate money" to people being released from prison. Since 1994 CDCR had been deducting money from those who did not have "dress-out clothes" or transportation arrangements. The change in policy comes after a class-action lawsuit that said the deductions violated a 51-year-old law. Gov. Newsom signed a \$1.8 million funding bill last September that will cover clothing and transportation costs for this year.

2. Nevada (The New York Times)

Kirstin Blaise Lobato was awarded \$34 million dollars in court after spending 16 years in prison for a murder she did not commit. She had sued the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and retired detectives Thomas Thowsen and James LaRochelle, claiming the detectives found no evidence connecting her to the murder and ignored evidence that proved her innocence. Each detective was charged \$10,000 in punitive damages.

3. Idaho (Associated Press)

Three news organizations sued Idaho's Department of Correction Director Josh Tewalt in Boise's U.S. District Court. The lawsuit claims the department is unconstitutionally blocking members of the media from witnessing the full process of administering lethal injections during executions. "Our execution practices have been repeatedly upheld, including meeting or exceeding the requirements under the First Amendment," said



NEWS BRIEFS
By BOSTYON JOHNSON
MANAGING EDITOR

Sandra Kuzeta-Cerimagic, a spokesperson for the DOC.

4. Oklahoma (Associated Press)

Oklahoma's Pardon and Parole Board rejected a man's petition for clemency. Kevin Ray Underwood's attorneys said his life should be spared due to his long history of abuse and mental health issues like autism, bipolar and panic disorder, and schizotypal personality disorder. However, Assistant Attorney General Aspen Layman claimed Underwood's crime was one of the most depraved in Oklahoma history: Underwood had lured a 10-year-old girl into his apartment, where he killed her with the intention of

eating her body. Underwood was executed on December 19, 2024.

5. Missouri (Associated Press)

The number of people on Death Row in Missouri has dropped from 100 in the 1990s to only eight people. Of those eight, three of them were declared mentally incompetent and will likely serve out their lives in prison. The other five have appeals pending, and there are no new executions scheduled. Like Missouri's example, executions are waning across the nation; twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty and five others have moratoriums.

6. Kentucky (The Hill)

Kentucky's Department of Corrections allows transgender individuals access to gender-affirming surgery after "all other avenues to alleviate" gender dysphoria have been attempted. However, Governor Andy Beshear seeks additional clarity on the DOC's legal obligations before he supports incarcerated people having surgeries at the expense of taxpayers. "Convicted felons do not have the right to have any and all medical surgeries paid for entirely by tax dollars, especially when it would exceed the type of coverage available

to law-abiding citizens in the private sector," Beshear said.

7. Maryland (Associated Press)

Poor oversight of companies that provide mental and physical health services resulted in Maryland's Dept. of Public Safety and Correctional Services compromising the health of people incarcerated in Maryland. A new audit covering a five-year span of records discovered hundreds of examples of missed mental health exams and suicide risk assessments, as well as medical issues for patients experiencing symptoms. Though the population of incarcerated people declined

steadily, cost of health care increased \$40 million dollars between 2018 and 2023.

8. Washington D.C. (Associated Press)

On Dec. 13, 2024, President Joe Biden commuted the sentences of roughly 1,500 people on home confinement and pardoned 39 Americans with nonviolent convictions. It was the largest single-day clemency act in modern history. Then, on Jan. 20, 2025, President Donald Trump pardoned, commuted the sentences, or said he would dismiss the cases of more than 1,500 people charged with crimes in the Jan. 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

PROGRAMS

Award winning journalism podcast welcomes six new members to family

By Eric Allen
Staff Writer

On Friday the 13, Uncuffed audio podcast laid out the red carpet for their December 2024 graduation ceremony at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

Celebrating inside Chapel B everyone came dressed to impress. The six graduates were accompanied by family, friends, staff of Uncuffed and KALW Radio station 91.7 FM.

Uncuffed education facilitator Ryan Pagan hosted the event, he entertained everyone with his energetic personality. His wife was also in attendance, witnessing his work unfold for the first time.

"It's cool because she never seen me like that," Pagan said. "It's different telling someone what I do, then them seeing it in action."

Formerly incarcerated Uncuffed alumni Thanh Tran and Chanthon Bun came to the event to show their support. Another alumni Greg Eskridge, former Uncuffed facilitator, made a notable appearance. He was released from San Quentin in July after serving 30 years. Upon Eskridge's release, he works at KALW Public radio station.

Now, less than six months after being released in July, "I came back to celebrate and inspire the guys," Eskridge said. "I'm still a part of this community. I know the beauty in this place."

Uncuffed was brought to San Quentin by longtime Senior Editor Ninna Gaensler Debs, and Senior Producer



Photo by Joaquin Salvador // SQTV

Uncuffed representatives, KALW Radio team, formerly incarcerated, and resident graduates

Angela Johnston. They had a mission to give a voice to the incarcerated through an audio podcast training program. This gives the participants an opportunity to express their humanity, develop job skills, and inspire change.

Uncuffed has been training people for over 10 years and produces an award-winning journalism podcast, launching careers in media and changing the narrative about people in prison.

Graduate Anthony Gomez was called to the stage by Johnston and Gaensler to receive his certificate. After shaking hands, Gomez gave a heartfelt speech about not liking to celebrate the month of December, because it's the

same month his crime was committed in 2015.

That brought tears to the eyes of his mother and KALW Executive Producer Ben Trefny, who were both present.

"It's beautiful to see them all together," said Trefny.

"Anthony's story made me cry." It was also Gomez's mother's birthday.

According to Graduate Matt Sheppard, instructors Johnston and Gaensler encouraged all graduates to invite their families to the graduation.

Over the 24 weeks of the course, each participant had to produce four audio stories, which included assignments: Mix tape, interview someone, personal essay, and an audio essay.

Sheppard's comedy on stage had the entire room laughing with his jokes. He said comedy is a way his family coped with life challenges. His daughter, who flew in from Atlanta to see her father graduate, could not hold back her smile. There were photos and video cameras capturing the moment.

"Now my daughter can see I am nothing like what she was hearing about me when she was younger," said Sheppard.

During the event, everyone sat together at tables conversing while eating food. It was an event of celebration, hard work, and unity.

"A lot of those people that came in are my future

colleagues. Hopefully their families know they are in the right business, helping the right people," Sheppard said.

KALW staff Victor Tence and Shereen Adel, who were visiting San Quentin for the first time, chatted with residents and shared their journalism experience. Having an open mind was pivotal for Adel, who recently started training incoming staff members. One of their new members came from the Uncuffed program recently.

She mentioned talking to him, saying "I feel like my world has expanded." Reflecting on her experience with the program so far, she spoke to the importance of not putting people in boxes based on what they have faced in life.

Uncuffed senior producer and instructor Johnston, who helped organize the event, were busy making sure everything went as planned.

Johnston spoke on the impact the Uncuffed program had on her career in the last ten years. She said the participants taught her so much about being a good storyteller, and what it means to be a journalist.

According to Johnston, the big eye opener for her is having empathy for other people.

"I wish we could have brought more people in to hear these amazing stories" said Johnston.

Cross Currents daily news magazine host Hana Baba opened up on stage about life struggles while considering journalism early in her career. Skipping

journalism school, growing up in Texas, she did not see other journalists who looked like her. She encouraged the guests to take in this beautiful moment, feel the positivity in the room.

"When people listen to Uncuffed, you have the power to take people to your world," Baba said. "That's what journalism is all about: connection and heart."

Before leaving the event, she danced alongside a few residents to the song "Ain't No Stopping Us Now" by McFadden and Whitehead.

After the event concluded, attendees were not just taking away invaluable advice, but were educated on how they can continue to support such organizations that put so much effort into empowering and uplifting incarcerated members voices and stories. The Uncuffed podcast can be heard on California State Prison-issued GTL tablets and on radio station 91.7FM.

Uncuffed has expanded to other institutions like California Solano State Prison and the California Institution for Women. By giving a voice to more incarcerated people, Uncuffed is telling the narrative about incarcerated people one story at a time.

As James Kass, executive director of KALW said, "Our goal is to get Uncuffed broadcast all across the country" and, thanks to their 150,000 weekly listeners, he believes that this is more than feasible.

Psychological analysis program connects personality and behavior

By Kenneth Gatison
Journalism Guild Writer

The Enneagram Prison Project, a personality analysis self-help group, celebrated its graduates by acknowledging what they have accomplished. The event was held in San Quentin's Chapel B.

In efforts to learn more about his personality graduate Donell Haynie participated in the program, where he learned about things he did not notice in the past.

"Reflecting back on my childhood. I learned that a lot of things that contributed to my life as an adult had been because of certain trauma that I had suffered," Haynie said. "So because of that for a long time I pretended to be someone I wasn't in order to live up to the high standards instead of just being comfortable with who I was."

Resident Haynie expressed how he is able to pass on to his daughter what he learned through the program. He says to

learn about psychological development and have a deeper relationship with friends and family is worthwhile.

Haynie said he will use his new found knowledge to better understand his thoughts, and to use the skills he learned in the group to teach his child how to recognize physical and verbal abuse.

"I was able to explain to my daughter why I didn't allow her to be verbally or physically abused as a child. I didn't want her to suffer

the trauma and pain that I went through," Haynie stated. "So yes, this group absolutely helped me have a better connection with my daughter."

Susan Olesek, founded the program, began coming to San Quentin in 2016 to teach residents about the psychological system that helps people understand their behavior.

Olesek facilitated this group with two formerly incarcerated individuals Dustin Baldwin and Alex who served as ambassadors

to the program.

Baldwin, paroled in March of 2020, after doing a six-year term said he liked teaching the group because he felt like he's connecting back with his tribe that he left behind.

"Leaving this place and doing the work wasn't easy, I had a lot of slips and falls, coming back into a place like this it's like home you guys are my family," Baldwin said. "You guys are my people, my tribe, I have connected with my tribe coming back in here".

Alex served 26 years in prison, has been part of the Enneagram for 10 years. He said he teaches the lessons he learned from the group to help people heal from the same trauma that he had growing up.

"I get a continuous freedom and joy seeing other people heal from the same trauma I had," Alex said.

He added that the people in prison are not the only one, that gets to enjoy the program, Enneagram is taught all over the country to incarcerated people.

BUSINESS

Prison Policy Initiative says mass incarceration blocks economic justice

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

Americans have heard the phrase "the rich get richer" so often that it has turned into a cliché. A Prison Policy Initiative report has outlined statistics on the truth of the cliché, connecting it with mass incarceration as a cause that revealed the adage's reality.

The report "10 ways that mass incarceration is an engine of economic injustice" by Eric Seligman and Brian Nam-Sonenstein paralleled the fight for a fair economy with the movement against prisons. The argument made two major points. First, mass incarceration made poor communities even poorer because it undermined movements for economic justice. Second, mass incarceration made unionizing harder and weakened workers.

"In 1973, the wealthiest 10% of Americans captured one-third of all income, but nearly 40 years later, they had captured one-half of it. In that time, the ultra-rich 1%

went from holding 9% of all income to nearly a quarter of it," said the report.

The report reasoned that mass incarceration used sentencing to drive the poor into deeper poverty. "Poverty traps people in jail," said the report. "About 83% of people in local jails are legally innocent and awaiting trial, and many of them are too poor to make bail." Jail also prevented employment and increased the chances of job loss, leading to long-term job instability and lost benefits.

Mass incarceration has impoverished families by saddling them with "astronomical new expenses related to supporting a loved one on the inside." An Ella Baker Center survey showed that 58% of families living in poverty could not afford the costs associated with a conviction, said the report.

Mass incarceration has deepened poverty in rural prison towns, PPI revealed, holding new prison construction responsible for poverty. New prisons had not created new jobs because seniority rules favored



Graph provided by Prison Policy Initiative

existing workers. PPI asserted that new prisons discouraged local investment. Business might fear an incoming criminalized population, and new prisons have often attracted large chain stores with which smaller local business could not compete.

"After California's state prison in Corcoran was built

in 1988, fewer than 10% of the jobs went to local residents," said the report. It cited a 2007 study of California's prison boom by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, which reported that on average, fewer than 20% of jobs from new state prisons went to local residents.

The report's second major point addressed employment

justice. "Among the more than 50,000 people released from federal prisons in 2010, a staggering 33% found no employment over four years post-release and no more than 40% were employed at any given time," said the report.

PPI said they saw unions as an "equalizing force, reducing racial and gender economic disparity and increasing political participation," but "mass incarceration undermines these benefits by preventing workers from leveraging their collective power through unions" and political engagement.

Disenfranchisement laws that prevented returning citizens in many states from voting affected "5.17 million people — 1 out of every 44 adults."

PPI also criticized the Census Bureau for skewing political representation through "prison gerrymandering." The practice has disempowered communities by removing potential voters but then counting them as living

in the jurisdictions of their imprisonment. Mass incarceration also "artificially lowers official unemployment rates as incarcerated people go uncounted," stated the report.

The report blamed mass incarceration for continuing a tradition of reinforcing divisions that obscured shared interest in policy reforms. "Throughout U.S. history, racism has prevented the development of a fully united movement for workers rights," the report stated.

A PPI example of mass incarceration's influence on societal ideas related to labor market research that found employers more frequently assuming "criminality in Black job applicants, whether they have a criminal record or not."

The report concluded that the vast majority Americans "have a stake in dismantling this engine of inequality." PPI advocated the idea that "solidarity between all workers — criminalized or not — is necessary to progress toward a more economically just future."

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

2025



Recent study reveals realities of incarcerated marriages

By Tyrone Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

Prison puts a special pressure on the survival of a marriage. But for some couples, they have managed to stay together, despite being separated by prison bars.

On June 1, 1987, the United States Supreme Court established that marriage is a right for those serving terms in prison.

Since that time, many couples have taken their vows inside penal institutions. However, a recent study, conducted by the Florida State University College of Criminology & Criminal Justice, concluded that when one spouse is incarcerated, even for a brief time, the marriage is more likely to end in divorce.

Every year of a prison term increases the odds that the marriage will end in divorce, the study said. The odds of separation increase by 32% during incarceration and after release.

The study reported that spouses believed their marriages were less loving and more violent after incarceration than before.

The study did not take account the anti-social behavior that preceded one spouse's imprisonment, as if imprisonment were the sole source of the marital conflict.

Perry Shaw, formerly incarcerated at the California Health Care Facility in Stockton, married Chantel Shaw in November of 2007. Shaw was released in 2023 after his conviction was overturned on appeal.

During a phone interview, Perry and Chantel talked about how and why their marriage survived incarceration.

"I actually feel that my husband getting locked up made us closer," said Mrs. Shaw. "The removal of all our day-to-day distractions and our singular

focus on getting him home made me feel like we were teammates in a way I didn't feel before."

She added that she felt her husband's imprisonment exposed a level of vulnerability inside him she did not know existed. She said this allowed her to open up more and present parts of herself that were hidden behind a cloak of feminine bravado.

Perry Shaw affirmed the sentiments of his wife regarding the strength of their marriage.

"If my wife and I bumped heads on something, there was no marriage counseling available to us at the prison. We had to talk it out; we had to communicate," said Shaw. "There's no lifers group to teach you how to be a good husband. We found our strength surviving adversity together, and now a year after my release we are stronger than ever."

One aspect of incarcerated marriages the Florida study fails to address is when a free person decides to marry a person serving a prison term.

San Quentin resident Abdiel Guerrero is eight years into a life sentence. He married his companion of four years earlier this year. Guerrero met his wife while in the Alameda County Jail litigating his current life sentence.

"Before we got married I asked my girl why she would want to marry me, considering my situation," Guerrero said. "I was moved to hear that she saw the steps I was actively taking to correct the mindset that led to my life sentence and she felt that my efforts to become a better person separated me from other potential suitors in the free world."

Guerrero said that he and his wife talk on the phone one to three hours a day, a high level of interpersonal communication. He said that he can instantly tell his wife's mood based on the tone of her voice.

The Russell Sage Foundation produced a study saying that men in prison have about a 50% divorce rate (roughly the same rate for the public at large).

"When I was on the street, the communication in my prior relationships was super different," said Guerrero. "We may have had 10 to 15 minutes a day of actual face to face conversation. We didn't talk on the phone at all. Does texting count?"

A Pew Research study said that the divorce rate of the incarcerated population drops dramatically when one or both spouses practice a religion faithfully. Incarcerated Protestants have the highest divorce rate at 19%, while Hindus and Muslims have the lowest divorce rates at 5% respectively.

Sammie Nichols practices Islam and is serving multiple life sentences. He has been with his girlfriend for six years before they married three years ago. Nichols has been incarcerated 16 years.

"My faith governs my life, and it teaches me that my wife is 50% of my very existence," Nichols said. "She is the one that gives me balance, with Islam as our foundation keeping us rooted in truth."

His wife, Porcha, said in a phone interview that she had to ask herself if she was willing to share life with Sammie considering his beings sentenced to life in prison. She said she initially intended to be his friend, but the quality and depth of Sammie's humanity overwhelmed her, she said.

"After getting to know him [Sammie] and connecting through letters, phone calls, and visits, he began to show me what real love was," Mrs. Nichols said. "He showed me how to love as well as what it was like to be loved by a man."

Porcha Nichols added that she has had a front row seat to her husband's transformation and daily growth into manhood.

According to Lifers Support Alliance, in parole board hearings, the board members look at the strength of incarcerated marriages as a factor in determining if the subject is likely to succeed after release.

In some cases a committed and supportive spouse could weigh heavily in determining if someone is suitable for release.



Holiday Events

Renowned author and philanthropist spreads love and generosity

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

Many San Quentin residents in attendance at a December 5 commencement event in Chapel B said they felt that Santa Claus had arrived early. A thin, tall man, whom a resident described as “funny and graciously goofy,” occupied the chapel stage and spoke of gratitude and generosity, wearing not a red Santa hat but a blue Boston Red Sox baseball cap. His gifts to the San Quentin community brought cheer to everyone in attendance.

Bob Goff, the man who stood center stage, a self-described “recovering lawyer” and former law school professor, has earned a station of appreciation at San Quentin. His secular canon overlapped into a version of inclusive Christianity that went by the refrains “Love Does” and “Dream Big,” the former doubling as the name of his nonprofit and the latter doubling as the title of one of his bestselling books.

“Merry Christmas!” shouted Goff into a full house comprised of alumni of his class and of new graduates about to receive



From left: Former Chief Deputy Warden Oak Smith, resident Joshua Strange, Bob Goff, resident Jay Kim, and Jody Luke

their certificates. As he cited Romans 8:19, “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of sons of God,” he contextualized the verse by adding, “The entire world is up on their tip toes just waiting what you will do next.” He pointed into the room at the word “you.”

Goff has visited San Quentin since 2019, invited by former warden Oak Smith. “I heard Bob speak and I invited him to come,” Smith said. Smith and his wife traveled from Texas to attend the San Quentin event. “Bob is a person whose leadership

can get so many people motivated,” Smith added.

Since 2002, the year in which Goff founded his San Diego-based Love Does, the organization has expanded to 14 countries. “We operate schools, safe houses, prison programs, a women’s resource center, and a food program serving over 200,000 people on average annually,” said Jody Luke, the non-profit’s president. She described the mission of the organization as fighting for human rights, caring for the vulnerable, and providing education in conflict zones.

Luke said she used



Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Graduates process into Chapel B

to work as a Chartered Public Accountant for PriceWaterhouse Coopers, which had given her broad expertise in a variety of start-up businesses. She said she might have a firm grasp on numbers, but the life stories around her fuel her desire to help friends and strangers alike.

Goff has written several New York Times bestsellers, *Love Does*, *Everybody Always*, *Dream Big*, and *Undistracted*. He also served as Honorary Consul to the Republic of Uganda.

Attendees at the event voiced universal praise

for Goff and his mission. Residents who said, “He changed my life for the better,” and “Bob gives me hope,” and “Love Does will be my new goal in life,” summarized the overall esteem for Goff.

Britton Buchanan, a North Carolina-based singer-songwriter, provided the entertainment. He said his career had reached new heights after his success as the runner-up on *The Voice*. “It’s remarkable to be here,” Buchanan said. He added that the California Model impressed him, for he believed that “punishing people does not work,

because retribution just perpetuates ugly cycles.”

Soon the 35 graduates entered and took the stage attired in blue caps and gowns. Luke shouted, “Thank you and welcome to the 2024 graduation.”

Goff awarded special honors to Joshua Strange for obtaining a Masters in Business Administration and to Jay Kim for having received a BA degree in interdisciplinary arts with an emphasis on sociology. Both scholars finished their degrees at Adams State University in Alamosa, Colo., paid by Love Does scholarships.

At the end of the event, Luke said, “Class of 2024, please stand and turn your tassels to the right.” A minute later, the class members tossed their caps into the air. A graduation lunch of Chick-fil-A sandwiches followed.

Goff concluded the event with a passage from Psalms 118:22, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” He advised the graduates to “continue to cultivate community. You are some of the freest men I ever met,” and in the spirit of gratitude and generosity, Goff said, “Use us.”

Joy, love, unity for parishioners at Catholic banquet

By Lawrence Randall
Journalism Guild Writer

The holiday season was in full swing, when San Quentin residents and religious leaders gathered in Chapel B, to share the love of Christ.

For some incarcerated people Christmas can be a lonely time, but when residents and volunteers begin to fill the chapel, hearts were filled with the spirit of joy.

“I get depressed during the holidays, and I miss my family very much, said SQ resident Tony De Trinidad. “However, this event gives me a bit of that family feeling.”

In the absence of the residents’ families, there was a sense of unity, which permeated behind the prison’s walls.

In attendance were different ethnicities gathered to enjoy the festivities, but SQ’s Spanish speaking community made up the majority of the celebratory banquet.

Laughter among those in the room, intertwined with the delightful sounds from the “Unico-Elemento” the band provided the perfect atmosphere for the elements of cheerfulness.

Resident Moises Ramos who is the lead musician of the band, elaborated on the importance of performing at the banquet.

“It brings us great joy, and it helps us in the healing process of others,” Ramos said. “For the Hispanic community a lot of them have never seen a live Spanish

band. It’s great to give [them] that experience.”

The banquet beautifully captured the spirit of Christmas. One big Christmas tree and one small Christmas tree were placed on the stage. Both trees were filled from top to bottom with bright lights and other shiny ornaments. The large tree had a glowing star, and the smaller one had a baby angel on top.

Stockings hung along the walls, with sayings like “Holy Holy,” “Jesus lives,” and “Christ the King.”

Volunteer Anna Dorion laughed, she said she thought she had walked into a wedding at first, because of how nice and put together the place looked.

She added, “Today I

didn’t think I was in San Quentin. When you talk about rehabilitation this does me good, when we’re lifting each other up this is Gods Kingdom on earth.”

The attributes of Christ could be seen throughout this festive event, when cold drinks were served such as orhchata a Mexican drink that is made up of Milk, Sugar, Rice, and Cinnamon, which everyone seemed to enjoy.

The banquet’s main dish that was served consisted of a dinner roll, collard greens, mac & cheese, and a slice of ham and turkey. After the meal everyone was given a piece of chocolate cake.

Olegario Ambriz, one of the servers, took a break to share the reason he chose to serve the population rather

than to just enjoy the event.

“For me, it is knowing that Jesus served. That’s my motivation every time I help somebody, that’s the way I honor my creator my way to make amends,” Ambriz stated.

Throughout the event parishioners provided a comfort as they walked around greeting offering hugs and giving handshakes making sure nobody was missed.

Trever Burgon of the Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints, spoke about the impact he hoped the banquet would have on the incarcerated population and beyond.

“I hope this event is impactful in a way, the residents don’t feel alone,”

Burgon said. “Christmas in here can be a lonely time, I hope by being here to share a little of the light of Christ they know Christ hasn’t left them alone.”

The event displayed that the beauty of humanity still exist inside, a dark place where hope is often losses. A Spiritual example that reaches residents who desire to be loved, seen and heard, and that they matter to the outside world.

Ordained priest Jack Kearns, of the Latter Day Saints, said the importance of why he attended the banquet.

“For me brother, God does not do random, I was almost headed here. Because of poor choices, my calling now is to bring light into dark places.”

MTC unveils first memorial wall, recognizing 24 individuals

By Bostyon Johnson
Managing Editor

Mount Tamalpais College held its first annual “Remembrance Wall” memorial celebrating the lives of 24 faculty members, students, and alumni.

The event involved a flower ceremony, memories, and passing out paper roses to commemorate the lives of the deceased. Residents and staff were also encouraged to place origami butterflies, hearts, and swans on the memorial.

“We are here to share that special bond of remembrance,” said resident Chan Park, who co-facilitated the event with MTC staff member Kirsten Pickering. “All of them were participants and members of our community.”

Pickering and resident Idalio Villagran conducted the flower ceremony as MTC students and guests formed a circle for a flower presentation. The first rose was then passed around the circle and placed on the remembrance wall.

Resident band *El Unico Elemento* performed during

the opening ceremony and after a moment of silence, the first name was called, “Levelt Duverne,” as pictures of the deceased were on display in the background.

Attendees talked about past encounters or their personal experiences with the departed.

“I knew this person. We took classes together and I would see him in the visiting room. It was such a shock to me when he passed,” said resident Eddie DeWeaver, who also spoke somber words about former GRIP outside facilitator Bernard Moss.

Resident Donald Thompson, who did not know Moss, said, “When I heard of his passing, I could see the impact on those who were impacted by him and seeing their reaction had an impact on me.”

Thompson also said a few words about Larry “Doc” Histon.

“I met Doc in 2015 in Chapel B. He was truly a man of God,” Thompson said. “He ran a tight ship as he lead a team of ushers during church services.”

When Pickering called the name of former *San Quentin News* editor-in-chief



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

MTC Memorial in B-building

Arnulfo Garcia, many people talked about Garcia’s large presence and his impact and contributions to the newspaper.

Pickering also mentioned alumnus German Yambao and spoke about his contributions and dedication to the incarcerated population. He worked from the outside to help people released.

“He was one of the people providing rides at the gate for people while working with Bonafide,” said Pickering.

Several residents commented on the life of

Anthony Starks, noting his great personality and kindheartedness.

Andrew Gazzeny, who lived next-door to Starks for four years, noted how he would see Starks always on the move doing things and how sad it was to not see him around anymore.

DeWeaver, about Stark’s basketball skills, said, “He had a crazy shot. He would make it 90% of the time and I would be like, ‘Wow!’”

The college campus has had many names, from Prison University Project to Patten

MEMORIUM

STUDENTS:
Kenneth Musa Bailey; George Burns; James Bryant “Shorty” Dunbar; Levelt Duverne; Arnulfo Garcia; Darrell Anthony Gautt; Anthony Starks; Frank Valdivia; James Vick; Eric Williams Warner

ALUMNI:
Jeff Brooks; Marcus Crumb; Larry “Doc” Hudson; Bernard Moss; Matthew Solomon; Monta Kevin Tindall; James “Bennett” JB” Wells; German Yambao

FACULTY MEMBERS:
Nancy Bourne; Judy Breen; Alfonso Garcia-Saz; Charles Gross; Kathryn Miller

University to now MTC, which is an accredited college. No matter what the name changes are, since 1996 there has always been a community of college-level education here, noted Park.

A few years ago, Park learned that his teacher was volunteering his time to

drive and teach in prison. That experience made him commit to showing up for his education. He was salutorian in 2022.

“The first day I decided to come down here in 2017. The one thing I’ve learned is that we are often bound by [our] experiences.”



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Jad Salem with his son choosing a toy



From left: CRM Barragan, VGSQ Chairman Noah Winchester, Carlos Smith, James Reeves, C/O Ramirez, Harvey Brooks pass out present

Annual toy giveaway in visiting room spreads Christmas spirit

**By Marcus Casillas
Journalism Guild Writer**

The Veterans Group of San Quentin's Toy Land for Kids toy giveaway program took place at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's main visiting room December 20, 21, 22, and on Christmas Day.

VGSQ transformed the children's play area into a festive toy store by displaying gifts to highlight the holiday giving spirit. Residents and their children selected gifts as if shopping at a store. The toys sat on tables covered with Christmas-themed wrapping while a colorfully decorated Christmas tree lit up the room.

"I can't shop with my

daughter like I want to, but today, I'm able to do that," said resident Daniel Tolosa, 29, a first-time father. "Here she gets to pick out a toy and know her papa gave it to her. This is a beautiful feeling that I've been looking forward to all year."

The program provided gifts for ages 3 to 17. A variety of toys included doctor's medical kit play sets, Mini Barbie Land vans, Avengers' Ant Man figures, construction site play sets, and remote-controlled cars. A Velvet coloring art poster read "Born to be Awesome, Girl Power."

Speaking about his children, resident David Avila, 37, said, "To directly receive something from me

helps to build connections that are needed."

Matty, Avila's fiancée, called the program "great." She added, "It was something he was unable to directly do in the past for his children. He could take home gifts for his grandchildren so that they were still able to receive Christmas presents."

VGSQ chairperson Noah Winchester, 40, a San Quentin resident, said the population donated around \$3,100 from their trust accounts. This event marked the first time residents donated directly to VGSQ for this event. San Quentin staff also had a chance to donate. VGSQ sponsor Ron Self, a former San Quentin resident, used

the donations to buy 124 toys. VGSQ and the California Model Resource Team collaborated with the Fourth Reconnaissance Battalion US Marine Corps for the event.

The visiting room at H-unit, San Quentin's dormitory-style housing unit, received 40 toys and the remaining 84 toys went to the main visiting center. Warden Chance Andes, VGSQ sponsor Tina R., Community Resource Manager Office Technician A. Torres, and officers from the CMRT helped with distribution.

"This type of event means everything because it's just me and my brother," said Myiako C., who visited her loved one. "Being able to

experience receiving presents in this environment is awesome and helpful."

Winchester said the event created a welcoming atmosphere that showed kindness, compassion, and service. "Having an opportunity to put back into our community gives me purpose to keep going, allowing me to take pride in continuing to do the work while seeing humanity at its best," he said.

Marvin, 11, and David, 8, two nephews of resident Edgar Rodriguez, 33, had arrived at the event with cheerful spirit. Marvin said, "I'm happy. It's pretty cool to be with my uncle picking out my toys. I haven't seen him in a long

time." His brother David picked out a hobbyhorse and named it Jerry. He said he loved the cartoon characters Tom and Jerry.

"This affords both the public and [the] administration to view incarcerated veterans as more than just their crimes," said resident and VGSQ participant Steve Drown, 75.

Since the 1980s, VGSQ has had a mission to work year-round to serve incarcerated veterans at San Quentin through the camaraderie of military service. Leftover toys went to the Marine Corps' Toys-for-Tots program.

The Veterans Group of San Quentin said they wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Holiday book fair inspires residents' connections with loved ones through reading

**By Steve Drown
Journalism Guild Writer**

San Quentin residents filled Christmas stockings for their children through the Holiday Book Fair sponsored by the Friends of San Quentin Library.

The event, held in the Main Library, featured book selections ranging from beginning readers to young adults.

"My greatest joy is to see a group of people who are 'marginalized' given the opportunity to share, interact, and take a gift from God to help others," said Friends of San Quentin Library organizer Lisa J.

Approximately 400 residents participated in the book fair, leading many to express their joy of being able share in the joy that gift giving provides.

Resident Joshua, who has two kids, said, "This will make their day once their mom gives the books to them."

Upon entering the library, residents were provided with a vision of hundreds of books arranged on various tables.

Each area identified a certain book genre including picture books for babies, young teens, and beginning and middle readers. There



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

SQ Library staff, Friends of San Quentin Library representatives, and resident staff

were also sections listed as uncorrected proofs of new books in categories such as science, holiday, Spanish, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

"The book fair is amazing," said Lisa J. "It provides residents with the ability to share and give to their kids."

The ability to read directly to a child or children via the GTL tablets may become a possibility in the near

future. Resident Rahim said, "It would give us the opportunity to let our kids know we love them and that they are on our minds."

The ability to share a gift chosen by, and sent to, a child is one of the greatest aspects of the book fair, said an event organizer.

Every outside guest expressed joy and appreciation for the residents participation. It was the most rewarding

aspect of the event.

Outside librarian Natalie, from San Francisco, indicated that this is an opportunity for her to witness something special. "The bond formed between a father and his kid, helping the kid to read — that is relationship building. It benefits both the parent and the child.

"When you read to a child, you give that child the chance to hear you and be with you.

When you give a child the gift of a book, the child can learn and grow, and you can be a part of that growth — paraphrase of an old Chinese proverb."

Friends of San Quentin Library co-founder Kristi K. said that she "loved to share books and resources. It's fun to talk with the guys, especially when helping [them] to choose a book. There are more resources in here, and more 'thank you's' from the

participants."

Rahim B. reinforced this sentiment, saying, "This has assisted in my relationship with my grandson. He will be two years old in May. It gives me the opportunity to let him know I care and he is on my mind."

Poet Laureate and Friends of San Quentin Library Francesca said, "I enjoy watching people working together."

She noted how much it means to the residents to be able to pick out what to give. "People in prison want to give," she said. "They are actually working on themselves with an openness and honesty not always seen. This is an unharnessed culture of good, a sense of community."

Resident Green said that the event "was cool, all free, good when you don't have any money." He was able to obtain six books to send to his family because of the size of his family.

He said that he would love the opportunity to sit with his grandkids and read because he has never had the chance to meet the majority of them.

The estimation by library staff was that approximately 270 books were mailed to family during this event.

Concert pianist performs Christmas carols

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

Concert pianist Linda Rice performed a Christmas carols concert at Chapel B Saturday, December 7. Also known as a world-renowned harpist, Rice has performed in venues from jails and prisons to the White House. The artist has visited San Quentin for 25 years and has taught piano at San Quentin for William James Association for many years.

The concert also featured soprano Megan O'Brien, San Quentin's Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Chapel Choir director since 2019. A vocal

teacher at a local music school, O'Brien said she visited San Quentin Rehabilitation Center twice a week with incarcerated singers.

Rice began the evening with a prayer of gratitude. She then recited the line "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" from Psalm 100. Rice began the concert by playing a piano solo of "Silent Night," followed by "Carol of the Bells." Next, Rice reinterpreted "We Three Kings" by wandering into a staccato jazz rhythm.

Rice then asked the audience to sing along to "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," followed by "The First Noel," and an

improvised E-minor medley of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," "What Child Is This?" and "Let All Mortal Flesh."

Pianist Mark Kinney, an SQRC resident, joined Rice on stage to play the drums for "Little Drummer Boy." Rice said she considered Kinney one of the finest musicians with whom she ever worked and she told the audience that she did not invite "just anybody" to perform with her.

Kinney later said he had known these carols since childhood, but as a child, he had not appreciated them. "Now, they make me emotional." He said he liked "God Rest Ye

Merry Gentlemen" best because "the minor key gives you a melancholic, distant feeling that soon goes into a major key and the mood changes totally, and makes you feel festive."

O'Brien entered the stage for a performance of "Oh, Holy Night," which earned her a standing ovation. Many audience members said they considered the performance the highlight of the evening, commenting on both O'Brien's powerful voice and Rice's skillful accompaniment.

Near the end of the concert, Rice told a story about one of her favorite carols: "When I was growing up in Oklahoma,

we did not have much money, but my mother often took the bus to Jenkins' Music Store in downtown Tulsa and she paid 65 cents for sheet music. One day, she came back with her favorite Christmas carol, and she asked me to play it. That was 'Winter Wonderland.'"

After the performance, Rice said she recently played a concert at a private home in San Rafael. "The hosts had a Bösendorfer Imperial Concert Grand piano," she said with considerable excitement. Famous classical pianists "Vladimir Horowitz and Glenn Gould had played on it and had signed it."

Imperial Concert Grand

pianos have 97 keys instead of the customary 88 keys of Concert Grand pianos, offering a full eight octaves in tonal range. Composer Franz Liszt played only Bösendorfer pianos because they could endure his rigorous performances; on other pianos, he would break the soundboards usually after only one use.

The evening ended with the classic carol "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Rice said she looked forward to returning next year.

Catholic Chaplain Father George Williams said, "Linda Rice embodies what it means to be a true Christian."

El miedo y el impacto de deportaciones masivas



El vehículo de la deportación

SQNews archive



El Presidente Electo Donald J. Trump

Wikipedia

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair;
Sandhya Dharini Ganesan
U.C. Berkeley Student

Gabriel V. Chavez fue residente de una prisión de California durante más de 30 años. Tras haber sido liberado, Chavez fue retenido en un centro de detención de ICE durante dos años. Ahora Chavez de 50 años, está nuevamente encarcelado en una prisión salvadoreña, un entorno especialmente peligroso para alguien cubierto de tatuajes.

En marzo de 2022, el presidente salvadoreño Nayib Bukele, en respuesta a la violencia extrema de las pandillas en el país, promulgó la ley de "Asociación con Actividades Ilícitas". Esta ley penaliza los tatuajes en un intento de darle a la policía el poder de reprimir a las pandillas. Cualquier tatuaje, desde la Virgen María hasta unas manos en oración, puede interpretarse como relacionado con pandillas según la nueva ley.

"Como madre, después de que deportaron y encarcelaron a mi hijo, sentí que me estaba muriendo", dijo la madre de Chavez, María Elizabeth Hurren en una entrevista. (Nota del editor: Edwin E.

Chavez, co-autor de este artículo, es hermano de Gabriel e hijo de la señora Hurren).

Hurren, quien vive en el condado de Riverside, envía al gobierno salvadoreño 7 dólares al día para garantizar que su hijo tenga comida y un lugar para dormir mientras está tras las rejas. Señaló que si no paga, teme que su hijo muera de hambre.

Ni Hurren o ni ningún miembro de la familia de Chavez ha podido contactarlo. El aislamiento total ha dejado a su familia preguntándose si Gabriel, quien está en remisión por un cáncer cerebral, está vivo o muerto. Fue diagnosticado hace más de una década.

"Estoy deprimida y ni siquiera puedo concentrarme en el día a día porque no sé si mi hijo está vivo o si lo están tratando por sus condiciones médicas. No tener ningún contacto con mi hijo es difícil, prácticamente, él está secuestrado," dijo la madre.

La historia de Gabriel Chavez no es extraordinaria. Los Estados Unidos ha estado deportando a personas encarceladas a lugares de todo el mundo, desde El Salvador hasta Camboya. Quienes apoyan la deportación de personas condenadas por delitos graves dicen que a

las personas que cometen esos delitos no se les debería permitir seguir viviendo en Estados Unidos.

El miedo a la deportación es una preocupación más que enfrentan las personas encarceladas. La rehabilitación, la reunificación familiar y la superación de los sentimientos de culpa por el delito son algunas de las cosas con las que ya tienen que lidiar.

"Si me deportaran a El Salvador, mi vida estaría en peligro porque me retiré del estilo de vida criminal y de pandillas", dijo Arturo Melendez un residente de SQ.

La propia familia de Melendez, dijo, no estaría dispuesta a ayudarlo por temor a represalias del gobierno salvadoreño. Al igual que Chavez, Melendez también tiene tatuajes que representan una amenaza adicional si es deportado.

Durante su campaña de 2024, el presidente electo de los Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, apoyó políticas de deportación masiva.

Melendez siente que las políticas de inmigración estadounidenses son injustas e inhumanas.

"Las familias están siendo desintegradas," afirmó Melendez. "Cuando los envían de regreso, los están poniendo

en peligro al arrojarlos a la pobreza".

Residentes de SQ como Enrique Mejía dijeron que este sistema de encarcelamiento repetido, conocido como "la ruta de la prisión a la deportación", no está bien. Si una persona cumplió su condena, CDCR no debería enviarla a ICE para un nuevo encarcelamiento y desplazamiento.

Otro residente de SQ, Galicia Juarez, señaló que dos de sus tíos fueron deportados a Guatemala. Uno de ellos fue ejecutado posteriormente después de haber sido extorsionado por un grupo del crimen organizado.

La detención tiene efectos profundos en los familiares de los detenidos. Muchos deportados también tienen parientes sin documentos viviendo en Estados Unidos y corren el riesgo de ser deportados, incluso sin haber cometido un delito.

A pesar de saber que ellos mismos pueden enfrentar la deportación y de haber tenido familiares deportados, algunos defienden la postura de deportación de Donald Trump.

"Estoy de acuerdo con deportar a toda persona que no esté legalmente en este país y que tenga antecedentes penales y que sería un peligro

para la comunidad", dijo el residente Anicasio Garcia.

Originario de Guatemala, Garcia mantuvo un punto de vista minoritario entre los entrevistados. La mayoría de los contactados por *San Quentin News* se negaron a hacer comentarios, citando temores de represalias.

Para aquellos con órdenes de detención de ICE, el conocimiento inminente de la deportación causa confusión sobre su futuro después del encarcelamiento.

"No puedo seguir creciendo en la escuela y en los programas de autoayuda. Por las noches no puedo dormir y me despierto en medio de la noche", dijo Gabriel Lopez. "Aquí en SQ hay otras personas como yo que luchamos por un futuro mejor. Nos estamos graduando de la escuela y nos preparamos para ayudar a otros para que no vuelvan a recaer".

Para otros, los miedos genuinos a la seguridad y a conseguir un trabajo en un lugar nuevo pueden ser una presión adicional mientras están encarcelados en SQ.

Según Luis Orozco, un residente de SQ, muchas personas deportadas han encontrado difícil regresar a México, donde es más complicado encontrar trabajo, un lugar donde vivir o

acceder a otros servicios de reinserción.

Prisioneros como Tomas Ochoa dijeron que el mayor desafío al regresar a México es enfrentarse a los carteles que suelen estar esperando para reclutar personas en sus actividades criminales. Ochoa, al igual que a otros mexicanos, teme ser asesinado por no querer unirse a los carteles después de ser deportado.

Según las estadísticas de CDCR, entre el 15% y el 20% de la población encarcelada es nacida en el extranjero. Sin embargo, muchos hombres en SQ que enfrentan la deportación, abandonaron sus países de origen cuando eran niños y ya no se identifican con la cultura de su país natal y no hablan el idioma de su tierra.

En agosto y septiembre del 2022, la prisión de San Quentin transfirió siete personas a ICE, según el reporte por ACLU.

"A los 63 años, es bien difícil empezar de nuevo en otro país en el que nunca he trabajado", dijo Ivo Parra, un migrante guatemalteco que está sirviendo tiempo en SQ. "Yo he vivido casi toda mi vida en este país".

—Traducido por
Marvin Vasquez

Combatiendo el uso de las sustancias

Por César Martínez
Staff Writer

Un total de 72 participantes se graduaron recientemente del programa Tratamiento Integrado de Enfermedad y Uso de Sustancias (ISUDT, por sus siglas en inglés), siendo esta la segunda graduación más grande en el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin.

El programa del Departamento de Correcciones y Rehabilitación de California trata el trastorno por consumo de sustancias, enfocándose en las actitudes, creencias, pensamientos, sentimientos, opciones, consecuencias, valores y metas de los residentes en las instalaciones del estado.

A través del programa, los participantes del ISUDT, recibieron ayuda para reconocer las consecuencias de autodestrucción por el uso de sustancias, de la misma forma recibieron herramientas para reintegrarse a la comunidad al salir de prisión, todo basado en prácticas basadas en evidencia y terapia cognitiva conductual.

"Al final tienes una segunda oportunidad en tu vida si

lo deseas", dijo la consejera del programa, Stephanie Sánchez.

De acuerdo con Sánchez, al comienzo del programa los participantes no demuestran sus emociones, pero conforme siguen en el programa, empiezan a expresarse más. En algunos casos, dejan de usar sustancias.

Al inicio de la graduación, entraron a la capilla todos los participantes vestidos con toga y birrete. Fueron recibidos de pie y con aplausos, por los esfuerzos y el gran logro, por parte de algunos familiares, consejeros y miembros de la administración.

Chance Andes, director interino del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin y la oficial de información pública Teniente Guim'Mara Berry, expresaron su apoyo a los encarcelados por su camino a la rehabilitación. El director expresó con orgullo, "Así es como se hace aquí en San Quentin".

El residente Nehemías Vásquez interpretó la canción, "Second Chance." Vásquez, le compuso la melodía a un poema escrito por el poeta Miguel Ángel,

quien escribió los versos para su esposa.

"Decidí cantar este poema para motivar a las personas, ya que las segundas oportunidades si existen para todos", dijo Vásquez.

La consejera Stacy Kemp, quien ha participado en el programa por cuatro años, felicitó a los recién graduados. Ella les recordó, como el abuso de sustancias afectó su vida y la de su comunidad. Comentó que la mayoría de los participantes aprendieron a ocultar sus sentimientos durante su encarcelamiento.

"Ustedes tienen una segunda oportunidad", recalzó la consejera, finalizando su discurso.

Antes de obtener sus certificados, algunos participantes tuvieron la oportunidad de comentar sus experiencias durante el programa.

El residente Armando Páez dijo que lleva cuatro años en San Quentin y que desde entonces ha tomado todas las oportunidades como voluntario en los programas de auto-ayuda. Al participar, él aprendió muchas herramientas para convertirse en una mejor persona.

"Después de ver los logros del cambio de vida de otros, eso es lo que quiero que pase en mi propia vida", dijo Páez.

Para otros residentes, el estar activamente participando en los programas les crea un entendimiento de sus capacidades y como emplearlos en su vida diaria.

Natan Campbell, residente y miembro del Programa de Consejería y Tutoría para Ofensores (OMCP), compartió que para él proveer un servicio es necesario, reconocer sus límites y tener más capacidad de recuperación.

"Nunca podré pagar el daño que cause. Sin embargo, por este medio puedo hacer enmiendas", agregó Campbell.

Vang E., representante correccional de IUSDT, dijo que por el momento el programa no está en español, pero se está trabajando para que algún día pueda estarlo. Explicó que como cualquier programa en inglés, se necesita trabajar en los derechos de autor para poder traducir el material en español y agregó que por el momento cuentan con consejeros que son bilingües.

Boletín informativo

En el mes de mayo no importa en qué prisión te encuentres te extendemos la oportunidad, en poder mandar un saludo a tu madre/cita; **(no más de 15 palabras. No se permite apodos ni malas palabras)** la fecha límite es el 1 de abril del 2025, por favor incluye tu nombre completo y prisión.

Te invitamos a que compartas ideas o las historias que serían de beneficio para los encarcelados en el estado de California o en la nación Americana. Ejemplo temas como la justicia social, leyes que beneficia y afecta entre otros

Las discusiones de la deportación masiva sigue causando discordia entre los latino/(a) s. **Comparte con nosotros tu opinión. ¡Tu voz cuenta!**

¿Si estás de acuerdo con la ideas, actitud, planes o alguna propuesta del Presidente Donald Trump?

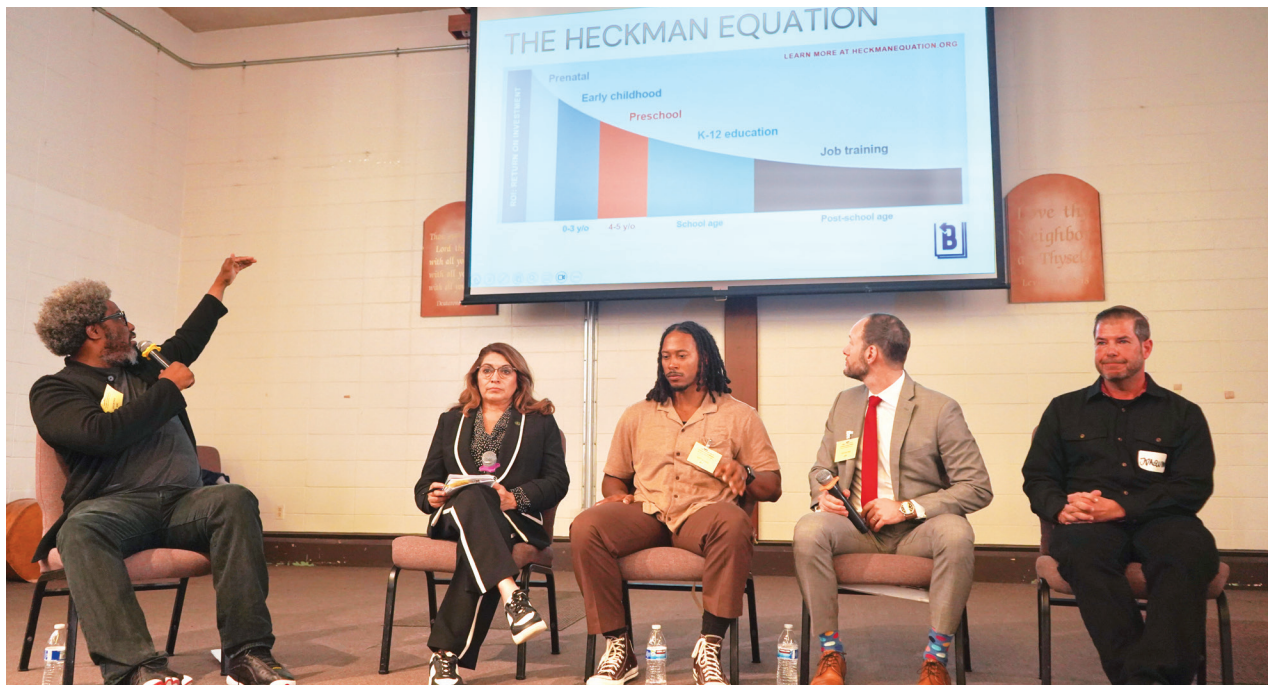
Si no estás de acuerdo. Por favor explica ¿Cómo te afecta la deportación a ti o a tus familiares?

¿Si fueras deportado cuales son las condiciones de tu país?

Comparte todas tus ideas acerca de estos temas

Por favor manda tu opinión a la siguiente dirección

SQNews Spanish Department
1 Main Street
San Quentin, Ca 94964



La estrella de T.V. W. Kamau Bell, explicando datos durante el panel

Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Los creadores de reformas estatales

Por César Martínez
Staff Writer

Por primera vez los reclusos mono lenguaje del español en el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin, pudieron obtener el espacio y la oportunidad de participar en un programa de auto-ayuda llamado “Regresando al Principio”, o BTS (Back To The Start) por sus siglas en inglés.

Desde el principio se creó un espacio especial fundado con la contribución de cuatro prisioneros y dos doctores, en donde los participantes pudieran examinar el desarrollo de su infancia, tales como: la culpa, los resentimientos y el odio propio o hacia los demás.

Buscando la sanación y/o liberación como objetivo principal a los traumas de su niñez, profundizando a través de la escritura y la narración, sobre el impacto causado por la misma. Tal como lo relata uno de los participantes graduados.

“Tuve una niñez muy difícil, pero por medio de los grupos de auto-ayuda descubrí que estas experiencias traumáticas contribuyeron a mi crimen que me trajo a la prisión.”, relató el reo Tranquilliano Figueroa.

Figueroa, no pudo contener sus lágrimas cuando leyó en español su fuerte historia de cómo sus padres al nacer lo regalaron con su abuelita, y lo difícil que fue regresar con ellos otra vez. Durante su relato enfatizó sobre el impacto que esas heridas le habían causado.

“En este grupo — puedo decir, nunca me imaginé sacar mis traumas y decirlos aquí a un grupo de personas [encarceladas]”, dijo otro residente y graduado Noel Chávez relatando su experiencia en cada clase.

Por primera vez, un total de 60 encarcelados fueron distinguidos por su participación de 26 largas semanas en el programa BTS. Concluyendo así en el ciclo de “miedo, culpa, rencor y sanación” causadas por los traumas que afectaron sus vidas en el pasado.

De acuerdo a la Dra. Espinoza médico de cuidado primario, cuando era empleada en SQ. tenía un interés en los traumas de la niñez, confesó que a pesar de su experiencia médica ella “se conmocionó hasta el corazón”, cuando aprendió temas sobre la violencia de la niñez.

Kamau Bell una celebridad que estuvo presente en el evento, tuvo una participación clave como uno de los asesores del programa. Su

pasión y dedicación ha sido observado por parte de sus compañeros y participantes.

“Como yo digo [SQ] es uno de los pocos lugares en mi vida, donde cada uno es feliz de verme”, dijo Bell y agregó; “Se siente bien pensar que la gente [reconoce lo que] yo estoy haciendo, un buen trabajo”.

Según la Dra. Espinoza los participantes usan la escritura y la narración, para procesar y descargar de todo el impacto negativo causado por los traumas, experimentados desde la niñez hasta la juventud. Usando un enlistado de preguntas, como:

1.-Comparta cómo fue su niñez incluyendo quiénes lo cuidaban:

a) En su casa, con la familia. b) En la escuela, con los maestros/ tutores.

2.-Recordando su niñez, a)¿Cómo lo trataron los adultos que lo cuidaban, desempeñaban bien su papel?

b) ¿Quiénes le dieron ejemplo en su crecimiento?

c) ¿Cuáles eran sus temores y esperanzas?

3.-A continuación describa sobre:

a) ¿Qué ha sido lo peor que le pasó durante su niñez (traumas)?

b) ¿Qué consecuencias negativas generó en su desarrollo?

c) ¿Qué hubiese impedido/prevenido ese evento en su niñez?

4.-Comparta:

a) Sobre su primera experiencia con la policía.

b) Su primer acto criminal y ¿porqué lo hizo?

c) ¿Qué le trajo alegría y felicidad durante su niñez?

En el evento también se contó con la presencia de miembros de la administración y médicos profesionales de SQ — incluyendo las Asambleístas Mía Bonta, Sharon y Quirk Silvia, el Asambleísta Dr. Joaquin Arambula, también Chase Boundin anterior fiscal de San Francisco y Eric Morrison- Smith director ejecutivo de Alianza para Hombres y Jóvenes de Color

El Director C. Andes expresó su conexión personal con el programa y los participantes hablando de lo que vivió en su infancia. Después entre poemas y relatos, 16 participantes tuvieron la oportunidad de expresar sus dolorosas historia de niñez ante el público.

La Dra. Espinoza junto con la estrella de televisión y activista de los derechos humanos W. Kamau Bell, presentaron dos paneles.

Bell tuvo una participación clave como uno de los asesores del programa, su



Luis Guitierrez dando su testimonio



La primera generación hispana del programa BTS

pasión y dedicación ha sido observado por parte de sus compañeros y participantes.

Durante un panel se mostró en un proyector los datos de los 16 participantes del programa, los cuales entre estos participantes se suma 1,883+ años de sentencia, con 19 cadenas perpetuas y una inversión de \$133,000 anual por encarcelado, sumando un total de \$250,439,000 por año.

De acuerdo a la Dra. Espinoza estos recursos impactarían más si se invirtieran en los niños a una temprana edad.

De acuerdo al folleto del programa *Los Fondos de La Defensa De Los Niños por sus siglas en inglés(CDF, Children Defence Fund,* muchos factores contribuyen a moldear los primeros años de vida en los niños. Sin embargo, estos factores comienzan mucho antes del nacimiento de ellos, en un ambiente familiar y de las comunidades.

“Es importante que tanto como adentro y como afuera, den la oportunidad de reconocer el gran trabajo, en humanizar a los encarcelados”, dijo la Sra. Marta G. una visitante de la comunidad.

Recalcando los datos de la tasa alta del nacimiento en los EEUU de bebés con bajo

peso y estructuras familiares inestables, traumas, y con un bajo desempeño académico. Poniendo a estos bebés en una trayectoria que los lleva a una vida de marginación y encarcelamiento y en algunos casos a la muerte prematura.

“Ellos no nunca se descarrilaron de las vías; nunca pudieron llegar a ellas”. declaró la organización de CDF.

“Cuando hablo acerca del dicho ‘en contra de toda adversidad’, pienso acerca de mi vida” dijo el residente Freddi Haunte.

Haunte comentó, que cuando él escribió el poema “Encontra de Toda Adversidad”, fue basado en como él tuvo que superar varios obstáculos de su infancia.

Para varios participantes hispanos fue una oportunidad de hablar de sus experiencias.

De acuerdo a Jorge Frias, él tuvo que ver a muy temprana edad la pérdida de su padre y después el de su hermano por causa de las drogas.

“Yo me sentía muy solo y triste, sin amor y confundido — guarde mucho dolor en mi corazón, porque no lo sufría yo, sino también mis hermanas y mi abuela. concluyo el reo Frias, durante su participación.”

En El Salvador y América Latina la democracia podría estar en peligro

Por Efraín Rojas
Spanish Journalism
Guild Writer

Prensa Latina.

Según una encuesta de la organización Latinobarómetro, en la que participaron residentes de 17 países de Latinoamérica, el 48 por ciento de los encuestados creen que, “la democracia es preferible a cualquier otra forma de gobierno”.

Tal vez sea por todos estos datos, incluyendo la reducción de los crímenes, la prevalencia de la corrupción y la volatilidad de la economía, que en Latinoamérica haya aumentado el apoyo a candidatos mesiánicos. Al respecto, el periodista Oppenheimer, cuestiona si “puede haber una democracia sin oposición”.

De acuerdo al periodista, críticos del presidente de El Salvador comentan que hay acuerdos con los jefes de las pandillas para limitar la violencia, pero que los delincuentes continúan manteniendo poder y control.

Otro problema es que a inicios del 2022, muchas personas en El Salvador fueron encarceladas injustamente por el gobierno bajo un “estado de excepción”.

Jóvenes salvadoreños fueron encarcelados por las autoridades solo por su aspecto de pandilleros, se registraron violaciones a sus derechos humanos, incluidos casos de desapariciones y torturas sin motivo alguno, de acuerdo el grupo defensor de derechos humanos Human Rights Watch.

Debería encenderse una luz roja para América Latina, que ha dado suficientes ejemplos de que el poder en exceso todo el tiempo daña a sus ciudadanos y como lo recuerda Oppenheimer, “las dictaduras suelen terminar mal”.

“Sería la primera vez que en un país exista un partido único en un sistema plenamente democrático”, dijo Bukele al celebrar su triunfo.

La popularidad de Bukele trata de justificar su reelección comparando datos del exmandatario Salvador Sánchez Ceren, quien al término de su mandato del 2014 a 2019 con un registró más de 23,000 homicidios y los 4,300 homicidios registrados durante el primer periodo de cinco años de Bukele, según datos de

Corte federal expone a CDCR

Por Lorenzo Rene
Spanish Journalism
Guild Writer

esos puestos vacantes, dictaminó la jueza de distrito Kimberly Mueller.

Para los residentes del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin, el atender su salud mental, no solo enfrenta barreras en cuestión de la falta de personal, también de sus creencias personales.

El residente Israel Ordoñez-García comentó, “Yo no buscaba ayuda, porque tenía miedo de lo que fueran a pensar las personas que me conocen. Tenía miedo que me fueran a que obligar a tomar pastillas”.

En el caso recientemente resuelto en la corte, la jueza también ordeno al CDCR depositar el dinero en una cuenta especial reservada para ayudar a los reclusos.

De acuerdo con KCRA, una portavoz del CDCR declaró en entrevista, que en el CDCR los reclusos a menudo tienen mayor acceso en atención de salud mental, en comparación con personas que no están encarceladas.

Pero Galván declaró que el problema va más allá. “Esas personas están regresando a las mismas comunidades, y si no les brindamos un apoyo mínimo mientras son castigados en prisión, entonces las necesidades de la comunidad se intensificarán cuando regresen” expresó Galvan.

Según un reporte de la televisora KCRA de Sacramento, existen documentos que señalan el incremento de personas encarceladas con graves problemas de salud mental y la falta de personal para atenderlos. Agregando que por varios años han estado vacantes puestos de trabajo que debieron ocupar especialistas.

“Mis clientes, muchos de ellos con enfermedades mentales graves, en crisis, cortándose o intentando ahorcarse, esperan semanas, semanas y meses antes de ver a un médico”, dijo Ernest Galván, abogado basado en San Francisco quien representó a los reclusos, a la periodista Michell Bandur.

Hundreds ring in New Year with fun and games

California Model Resource Team and WallBusters gaming group provide many recreational activities

**By Martin Keith DeWitt
Journalism Guild Writer**

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center started 2025 celebrated the New Year's holiday with a 'New Years Kick Off Game Day' that took place in SQRC's gym. The numerous recreation activities were sponsored by the California Model Resource Team, and the group WallBusters.

The gym reached its maximum capacity of three hundred eighty-five people just thirty minutes after opening and remained at or near capacity for the duration of the event. In order to maintain a safe environment, custody staff monitored the capacity and allowed those waiting outside to enter as attendees departed the gym.

"No, I never thought I'd be doing this as part of my job," exclaimed Correctional Officer Kruse. Kruse, a member of the CA Model Resource Team, participated in a card game named Magic.

The gym was filled with nine gaming consoles and a wide variety of video games; thirty different board games, including chess, checkers, dominoes, and many unique card games. Also featured was table tennis, foosball, air hockey, a billiard table and ladderball and cornhole station that were touted as something fun for just about everyone.

There was a long line of people waiting to get a free bag of popcorn but no one seemed to mind as the line moved quickly.

The most popular events were observed by the long waits residents endured prior to playing video games that

included Halo, NBA, and Madden '24.

Waits upset no one as they engaged in friendly banter as they waited to compete.

"The concerts, the video games, I love it," said Anthony Turner who arrived to SQRC on December 16.

Turner, serving his fourth term, said he has seen a lot of rehabilitative programs but never imagined anything like this.

All of the games were donated by WallBusters' sponsors, The Powers of Giving Foundation, and The Freedom Foundation in conjunction with the CA Model Resource Team.

CA Model Resource Team Correctional Officer Ramirez said, "This is the biggest event we've had, [it brings] everyone back to childhood fosters goodwill between staff and the incarcerated."

Ramirez also facilitated the recording of video and still camera shots by using the SQRC drone inside the gym.

Wallbuster's has approximately fifteen members and holds monthly gatherings on the first Sunday of each month in the gym for all who wish to participate in game play.

According to Sergeant Brenes of the CA Model Resource Team, the resource team will incorporate their video game platforms with WallBusters board games and card games, in the gym, on a quarterly basis.

"This type of bond between staff and residents is long overdue," said resident Teddy Brooks, "If you look at it we're all the same, we're in this together."



Residents play cornhole and ladder throw



Madden NFL video game competition



Residents playing foosball



Free staff and resident play ping-pong



Resident shooting pool

Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

One-and-done softball tournament and homerun derby end 2024 season

**By Marcus Casillas
Journalism Guild Writer**

Softball tournament and homerun derby marks the end of the SQRC's 2024 softball season.

The tournament, preceded by the homerun derby, consisted of competitors from Lost Dreams Awaken, Prison Sports Ministries, Goon Squad, and SQ's own, Hardtimers.

"I've played all over the United States and I feel there's more fulfillment here than anywhere else," said Matt H. "The coolest thing ever is to be able to come in and play ball." Matt is a player for the Goon Squad.

Players were drafted into four teams for a three game, one-and-done elimination series to decide who would advance to the series finale.

Team captains were Courtney B., Rick D., and John S.

"Softball [can be] so much fun depending on who we play against," said Hannah L. of Lost Dreams. "It's a privilege to be here and play with men that most of society doesn't get to spend time with." Also adding that softball is something she and husband Rudy L. really enjoy.

Michael M. a player for Prison Sports Ministries stated that he comes in (San Quentin) because it allows him to be aware of a place he could end up from a bad choice.

"I always use to drive by San Quentin thinking I would like to go inside

one day. If you want to do something, just visualize it and it will come into play."

Courtney B. of Team 1 made a terrific bare handed catch from a foul tip to help seal their victory to advance while Matt H. hit an inside-the-park homerun that allowed Team 2 to advance to the finals by a score of 12-4.

After hard fought four-inning battles, Team 1 and 2 emerged as finalist. The championship game was set.

The game was a fight to the end, led by Team Rick D and Team Courtney B. After a 15 to 10 victory, Team 2 was crowned champions of the day.

"Being part of the team helps me to stay focus and grounded in doing right. I have team-mates so I'm a team player," said resident Paul Flores.

There were three women and seventeen male contenders competing in the homerun derby.

Fifteen pitches were given to each player as excitement swirled around who was going to be crowned the homerun derby champs.

Two winners emerged triumphant. Zack M. ended with 10 home-runs and Sarah P. with a total of 7.

After the derby, players gathered around the mound, and two game balls, signed by the SQ Hardtimers, were given to the winners of the derby.

Hardtimers Manager Rick Dias and Recreation Coach K. Bhatt expressed how the players were appreciative for all of the games played throughout the season, and thanked Courtney B., for donating the day's snacks.

"Playing ball today is helping me to see life in a different perspective," stated resident Lowell Garamallo. I know it's a privilege to play, so I work hard. Our visitors that come in treat us like humans."



Resident belting a shot into outfield in a game prior to this event

SQNews archive

Residents say racism still an issue at local high school

**By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Sports Editor**

Racial hatred appeared nationally at a New Hartford Central School District, without consequence. Months later, at a local Marin County, California high school, administration also failed to address racism.

"Allowing racial outbursts and not punishing elite white students for racist activities shows educational disparities hide racial hatred. The disparities include white teachers, coaches and schools that germinate the seeds of racism," said SQ Warriors basketball coach, Jeremiah "JB" Brown.

Seeds were planted last year when an unidentified teen used the word "Monkey" at the New Hartford Festival of the Arts in the state of New York, to depict one of the greatest athletes of our time - LeBron James; on a modified box of cereal that displayed the NBA legend James going for a dunk, as the tagline on the box read, "Eat Monkeys, Jump Like Monkeys!"

The art featured chocolate monkeys and banana shapes, promising to make the consumer jump 2 to 5 inches higher for two hours after eating the cereal.

In November 2024, White players used the same word - Monkey - at the local Mt. Tamalpais' football program where that hate crime went undisciplined as well. The players received a slap on the wrist, with the threat of program suspension if such an

event was repeated.

"As we embrace Black History Month, Juneteenth, Kwanzaa or any concocted semblance of recognition for people of color, we must demand that Mt. Tam and the New Hartford School districts redress their decisions, which supports racism and shows how the school-to-prison pipeline is constructed by white administrators throughout the nation," said resident Facilitator LaMar Paschall.

"Persons of color know equality will never be balanced. It's tragic to see a local school like Mt. Tam, and an East Coast equal - both who could've taken heed to what happened to LeBron, and our brother at Mt. Tam's high school team. Instead, each community failed to insure racial hatred is addressed at all levels."

On or around May 9th, the racist act against LeBron was briefly noted at 4 AM on the CBS Early Morning News with Norah O'Donnell. The Mt. Tam racial incident was spot-covered on Channel 7 ABC's local affiliate.

Reporting by Stephanie Holland, a journalist for Spectrum News, was more representative of the feeling of those people of color who are incarcerated.

After New Hartford Central School District's superintendent, Cosimo Tangorra Jr., minimized the teenager's racist art piece, calling it "disheartening, overlooked, and an oversight," reporter Holland said the superintendent declared his

district would use it as a "teachable moment."

Holland invalidated the superintendent's decision, which carried no disciplinary actions for staff or the student.

"Let that sink in: A student art project uses the image of one of the most famous athletes in the world to portray one of the oldest racist stereotypes amongst Black people... [making it] past various teachers, administrators and parents to be displayed to the public?" Holland continued, "Once you get past your 'teachable moment,' how are Black students and families... supposed to feel about the fact that not only was this art created on your watch, it ...was displayed to the community?"

SQRC resident Donald Edge said he witnesses the pain from intergenerational racism throughout the SQRC's community.

"Let that sink in. We, as people of color understand the Mark Furmans and Derek Chauvins are bred and it angers us that young whites are bred at very early ages to assume a fake superiority and hatred over all people of color," Edge said. "Not protesting, about LeBron's, or the young Black man in Marin County, in our own backyard, saddens me. Our children's dreams were killed in that hateful box of cereal, and on the football field of Mt.Tam.," said Edge.

"Violence can be from hopelessness caused by racial hatred and it all must end," said JB Brown. Sports shows the good and intolerable side of humans."

SQ inspires Washington state penitentiary to start running club

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Sports Editor

SQRC's Thousand Mile Club held its annual marathon in November of last year. As fans were in attendance to cheer on the top-flight runners, organizations were also in attendance, trying to take in the value of sports as rehabilitation.

SQRC's fifteenth annual marathon included visitors Keramet Reiter from UC Irvine, Kelsey Engstrom and Jessica Osorio from the UCSF Amends program, as well as James McCanne and Lewis, representatives from the Hoka shoe company which is the Thousand Mile Club's provider of athletic footwear.

The most intriguing visitors were representatives of the Washington State Penitentiary, who were in attendance to evaluate the Thousand Mile Club.

Courtney G., Washington's Way Administrator who

oversees 8 of Washington state's 11 prisons said, "We provide education, vocational training, apprenticeship programs, transitional housing and are building the [sports] program while transitioning; empowering staff and residents to improve life for everyone. It's like rebuilding the plane while flying it."

Two other staffers from Washington's prison system spoke of similar challenges that California is having as they install the San Quentin Model of rehabilitation throughout its state.

Steve Glenn, a Washington State Penitentiary employee for 17 years, is the prison's Grievance Coordinator and is credited with starting Walla Walla's running club.

Glenn visited SQRC with WSP administration to experience SQ's Thousand Mile Club event.

"I'm all for using San Quentin's 1000-Mile Club as an example," said Glenn. Our first event was a 5K



Washington's Way administrators who oversee State's prisons look on

run in October and we have scheduled a 10K run for December."

Although WSP incorporates outside volunteers and selected staff, to oversee programming, Glenn believes their Department of Corrections has been moving towards rehabilitation over the last ten years. He added the programming has created a reduction in violence and a healthier attitude.

Mike Land, a Washington State Penitentiary staffer for one year, touted Walla Walla's current programming as well. Land said their recreation [programming] department consists of roughly six-hundred minimum security residents who have access to Walla Walla's Community College classes, a golf simulator, table top tennis games with weekly tournaments,



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews
Mike Land

intramural sports and their new running club.

Land said he is responsible for close custody as well as recreation, "working both ends of the spectrum."

Land added the running club has been well received with a fairly constant level of participation from the incarcerated residents and as many as fifteen volunteers and staff overseeing the club.

With attempts to upgrade

WSP's programming, the two staffers noticed the same challenges SQRC has experienced.

"The staff is encouraged to interact but there is a lot of push back from 'old guard' staff," said Land. "I'm impressed with the marathon event at San Quentin and hope to replicate it at WSP."

Glenn agreed with Land as he noted the old culture as well.

"There seems to be more push back from the officers than the incarcerated," said Glenn. "[The] rehabilitative and educational opportunities are on the increase, [and] I think that is the direction the department may be going, but I don't know if it will be [at] our facility."

Washington's belief that, rebuilding the plane of rehabilitation may take time, is warranted. However, the shared experiences of SQRC's Thousand Mile Club's Marathon, and sports as rehabilitation, can be shared throughout the country.

Hall-of-Famer reflects on death of Willie Mays, racism, Negro Leagues

The death of Willie Mays, one of the all-time greats of the national pastime, took place 72 hours before he was to be honored at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Ala., where his professional career began in the Negro League.

The Fox Sports pre-game tribute, however, provided a painful reminder of the legacy of segregation and discrimination that Mays and his contemporaries experienced.

Other baseball greats did not mince words about the trauma of racism that some say still exists today.

"The catalyst was Reggie Jackson, who spoke as truthful and controversial as Dr. King's Letter From Birmingham Jail read in August of 1963," said San Quentin resident William Tolbert.

Jackson, a member of MLB's Hall-of-Fame, was interviewed at the event by Fox Sports analyst Alex Rodriguez, a fellow member of Cooperstown.

Jackson stunned his listeners when he declared, "I left Birmingham an angry Black man who was about to hurt white people. If I didn't leave, I'd have killed a white person and this (expletive deleted) would have been hung from an oak tree."

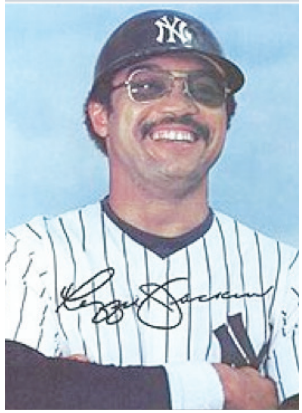
One person who heard Jackson was SQ resident, William Tolbert who with tears in his eyes spoke about his experiences witnessing an actual lynching.

"Elk City, Okla. 1967, I



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Above: Entrance at Rickwood Field in Birmingham Alabama



Reggie Jackson



Will Tolbert

"Rickwood Field is the official temple for our Negro Leagues legends who, like Reggie, still remind us of the racial injustices that remain."

the Birmingham A's, the Oakland A's Double-A minor league affiliate that moved to Birmingham after the Negro League went out of business.

Jackson's return to Birmingham evoked trauma of racial crimes he had witnessed, causing him to fight back tears as Rodriguez continued the uncomfortable interview. CJ Martin, a reporter for the Atlanta Black Star, observed Jackson's apparent suffering, noting he fought back tears, as he shared memories of the racism he endured during his time with the Birmingham

witnessed my uncle being hung on a pecan tree – lynched as you call it – I felt that gang murder and I've carried it with me the rest of my life," said Tolbert.

Jackson and Barry Bonds – Willie Mays' godson – display grief over and now face the job of assuming the mantle of elder statesmen of baseball.

The duo was surrounded by a list of Who's Who in MLB baseball – Alex Rodriguez, Ken Griffey Jr., David Ortiz and Derek Jeter. Combined with Jackson and Bonds, these players hit more than 2900 home runs. They all praised Jackson for his candor.

Jackson started his professional career with

A's in 1967.

"Coming back here is not easy. The racism ... the difficulty of going through different places where we traveled," Jackson told Rodriguez. "Fortunately, I had a manager and I had players ... that helped me get through it, but I wouldn't wish it on anybody."

Jackson said he walked into restaurants with his white teammates, and customers and staff would point at him, using the N-word, saying that he could not eat here or even sit here; even at the country club where Charles Finley, the A's owner, was a member.

Jackson told Rodriguez about his living arrangements on the road, where he was a house guest of teammate Joe Rudi and his wife, Sharon. "I slept on their couch three-four nights a week for about a month and a half. Finally, they (the Rudis) were threatened that they would burn the apartment complex down unless I got out. I wouldn't wish that on anybody."

SQ Giants Aaron "June" Miles praised Jackson, "His courage proves racism diminished sports and society for a very long time. Reggie's trauma should never be forgotten, and I thank SQ Sports for not forgetting, because FOX and journalists censored his statements – whitewashed them – not reporting his true quotes in print and dubbing the broadcast on the East Coast. We sure heard every word

and I hope Reggie's trauma and his words that echoed throughout the nation are enshrined in Cooperstown's Baseball Hall-of-Fame."

During the event, MLB announced that it had stopped segregating Negro Leagues' statistics in the MLB record books. MLB henceforth merged all Negro League statistics into their official records.

"Acceptance of our records is not enough," said SQ Warriors Head Coach Jeremiah "JB" Brown. "Magic, Michael, Le Bron, none of them would have soared without Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige, or Cool Papa Bell; and I bet every Black athlete alive sat in awe when Reggie brought up lynchings during Rickwood Field's party."

Brown continued, "Rickwood Field is the official temple for our Negro League legends who, like Reggie, still remind us of the racial injustices that remain."

Tolbert believes we need more heroes like Jackson who will keep the history of racial violence at the forefront of the country's concerns.

"Especially while MLB's roster of American Black ball players is at its lowest since Jackie Robinson put on a Dodger uniform," said Tolbert. "Instead of lynching on trees, whites just eliminate us from industries such as baseball."

— Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Sports Editor

San Francisco Giants staff hold restorative justice dialogue, team building session

By Martin Keith DeWitt
Journalism Guild Writer

The San Quentin Giants and the San Francisco Giants joined one another in a restorative justice circle type discussion that highlighted the need for change through bonding and team building methods.

The impromptu visit was led by world champion Giants player, outfielder Pat Burrell. Also in attendance were Christian Huang, Giants team Chaplain, and Bobby Baksa, Giants community relations staff member.

Burrell spoke candidly about his own change. He mentioned his upbringing in the Santa Cruz mountains, his major league career, addiction recovery, and

winning a World Series with his hometown team - the SF Giants. He also expounded on what led him to the day's healing circle.

"I woke up one morning and went into the kitchen to dry heave so I wouldn't wake up the kid," explained Burrell. "And as I'm leaning over the sink, I see this deer walk by outside the window and I asked myself 'What am I doing?'"

Attendees introduced themselves and gave a brief explanation of what baseball meant to them before a Q&A session covered topics related to life and baseball.

The conversations became more personal as there were no camera crews or tape recorders present.

Topics included family,



SQ Giants backstop sign

faith, camaraderie, substance abuse, rehabilitation, and the consequences of bad choices.

Visitors began sharing their intimate stories.

SF Giants Chaplain Huang spoke on how he landed the job with the SF Giants.

Huang stated that he was contacted by the Giants organization because of his work with underserved youth in San Francisco's Tenderloin

district.

He and his wife Corey founded the organization "Mobilize Love" ministry.

"I know nothing about baseball," stated Huang. "I want to know how your heart is."

Another attendee, Bobby Baksa, ruminated on his first visit to San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

Baksa said he believed the SF Giants are in line with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's commitment to the rehabilitation and educational opportunities that have transpired at the rehabilitation center since that visit.

Burrell's gratitude for the life he has lived enables him to reach out and give back. He first visited SQRC in

September of 2024, during the team's annual mental health visit.

"On my first visit I didn't know what to expect and once I saw you guys (the team) it touched me," exclaimed Burrell. "I went home and called my dad John to come here with me (when he returned)."

Pat Burrell's father John shared his experience, strength, and hope, after the healing circle this past December.

"(He) (Pat) learned the lesson (of sobriety) much quicker than I did," said J. Burrell.

Both father and son received treatment at the same rehabilitation center in Calistoga, Calif. eight years apart.

SQRC Athletic Coach K. Bhatt participated in the

circle alongside residents and guests.

"Weekends are very special," said Bhatt. "I especially see it with the baseball team and it is genuine, the family, the camaraderie between members of the team."

Resident Eliazar "Eli" Guerra said he was hoping for another day on the field with Burrell.

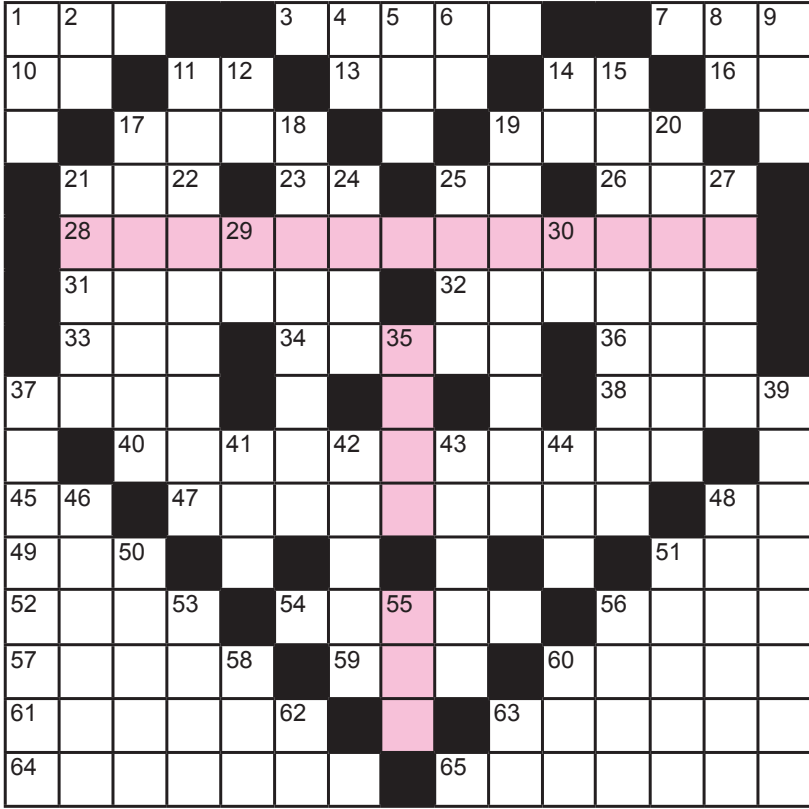
"Pat Burrell and the SF Giants got to know us on a more personal level today. I think it was cool that we talked more about life than baseball," said Guerra.

Burrell added, "I see how important and how special this program is and as a recovering alcoholic [I know] you're always one mistake away from a very serious problem."

CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Michael Fangman

“Closer to the heart”



- Across**
- Your love in France
 - When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, that's _____
 - 1-across in Spain
 - This lets you know you're about to do it all over again
 - Who most govt. officials fear
 - These are in your network
 - He's been down a long time
 - CA's "top hat" to some
 - "Not tonight," your boss says. "Let's do it _____ the _____." (2 wds.)
 - "Oh no!" if you're on a PBS show
 - "Yes you _____!" (An angry answer to the claim, "I am not!")
 - These two vowels let you know you're stuck somewhere between Temecula and San Bernardino
 - If you've got one of these, you're dangerously low on fluids
 - "Just a _____!" (Answer to a pest)
 - Holiday for patron saint of lovers.
 - Where you might be if you're doing things over and over again
 - A dozen make a thoughtful gift for a date who owns a bakery?
 - Venues for many surgeries
 - This stepdaughter of Herod asked for the head of John the Baptist
 - Required for eyes but not for tees
 - Who took a bite out of my cruller?
 - If you know to add an "M" to the front of these four letters, you might be smart enough to join
 - Vidal Sassoon does this, particularly if you let him hold the TV remote
 - In the year of the Hegira (abbrev. used in the Muslim calendar)
 - A jointly arranged, planned, or carried out effort - perhaps to attend a Taylor Swift Eras Tour date?
 - A certain kind of prison yard
 - The bane of vegetable hating kids and sleepy and princesses alike
 - This Stodge passed away in 1973, the last to do so.
 - You can drink these -nitas on a visit to Petaluma, CA
 - This marshy outlet from a river comes from the Choctaw *bayuk*
 - The object of many a joke
 - "_____ ye land lubbers!"
 - This day begins most work wks.
 - Often confused with its rice-less cousin sashimi, this Japanese treat goes great with an Asahi or Sapporo
 - "_____ one equals eleven" (2 wds)
 - A favorite head covering for Canadian trappers or Daniel Boone
 - If she said "yes" to 65-across, this describes you both...
 - See 64-across
- Down**
- Noah had one, not two of these
 - "It's not you, it's _____."
 - If you're in Battle Creek or Kalamazoo you're there (abbrev.)
 - Often the results of ties
 - These pirate favorites also identify a famous British military brigade
 - One of twelve that make up a year
 - These ugly, warlike creatures come from the Latin word for "hell" as well as from the bowels of Tolkien's Middle Earth
 - Something refusing to stretch, or more accurately, unable to do so
 - This US state just loves peaches
 - He's that old dude on the tier
 - A hipster anesthesiologist's business card or license plate maybe?
 - A Persian carpet, essentially
 - Not quite 11 degrees below zero
 - One daredevil's favorite cheese sandwich, with or without tuna?
 - A spouse or child to most, especially when you're mailing a letter
 - A catch this at Barcelona's airport
 - This James had a voice like an angel
 - What you might need if you're asking a question
 - These sacs are often filled with fluid and usually appear under the skin
 - This place is filled with Drs.
 - Two letter title of Peter Gabriel's award winning 1987 album that expressed anticipation and apathy in a single word.
 - Four letters that appear on many a candy heart
 - Where you're likely to find a dine-in meal in most restaurants
 - Yours will be large if you're hungry
 - Netflix, Hulu, e.g. (abbrev.)
 - "Get out!"
 - This constellation hunts w/ Rigel and Betelgeuse
 - These often come after Qs
 - God's abode, rarely here on earth
 - Batman roams its streets
 - One of many that fight wars on the streets, often over "turf"
 - Movies and 49-across can be this
 - If you or someone in your family has served, you can be a member
 - "It's not _____, it's me."
 - He shot Hamilton in a famous duel
 - A short practice, often OTJ
 - It's south, in Mexico
 - More companies are registered here than anywhere else in the U.S.
 - It comes after ME and before SO

Book Review

Michael Tubbs

A journey from poverty to politics

By Jordan Junious
Journalism Guild Writer

Entrenched in poverty and marginalized, a mother's love is all that shielded him from the expected outcomes of a poor black boy in America. *The Deeper the Roots* relays the lived experiences of former Stockton, Calif. mayor Michael Tubbs.

Tubbs offers readers an inspirational memoir, filled with gripping testimonies and a courageous fight against the status quo. From the impoverished neighborhood of south Stockton to Stanford University and becoming the youngest mayor of a major American city, he embodies perseverance.

He depicts his strict and sheltered upbringing by a single mother, lovingly referred to as "she-daddy". His aunt and grandmother stood beside his mother forming a matriarchal circle, enveloping Tubbs in abundant love and support throughout his life.

"Grace and love of fierce women were the nutrients I needed to grow in the soil I was planted in: Stockton, California," Tubbs wrote.

Though Tubbs excelled in school, he expressed that he was at constant odds with his teachers. So much so, that by his senior year he made a formal complaint with the local NAACP regarding racism and discrimination against his biology teacher.

After Tubbs completed high school, he worked at a local school in which he was able to teach eighth-grade students. He found his deepest connections amongst the "bad" students. This opportunity allowed him to embody the type of pedagogy that he felt best connected him to his students.

"My lessons came not from the curriculum, but from the curriculum of our shared experiences," he wrote.

Tubbs was developing a passion for giving back to his community, affording young people with limited resources an opportunity to materialize in a society pivoted against them.

Following several setbacks in his admissions process, Tubbs was accepted into Stanford.

Tubbs experiences at Stanford would foretell a future of political drive and service. During his first year, he recalls challenging professors and other students' perspectives, and demanding fair policing practices from the Palo Alto City Council.

The Black Community Services Center at Stanford selected Tubbs as "Freshman of the Year," an achievement validating his efforts in leadership.

He continued his pursuit toward aiding the disenfranchised youth in his community forming a group at the University of Pacific located in Stockton. He afforded "high-risk" youth the opportunity to learn about the opportunities available to them from people who "looked like them".

With Tubbs' forward progression seemingly unwavering, his senior year was met with several unforeseen obstacles. The murder of his cousin Donnell and the Rhodes Scholarship rejecting him would lead him to one place in his mind: Stockton, Calif.

He made up his mind; he would run for city council of his hometown. Through rigorous campaigning and a sizable financial contribution and endorsement from Oprah Winfrey, Tubbs won the race.

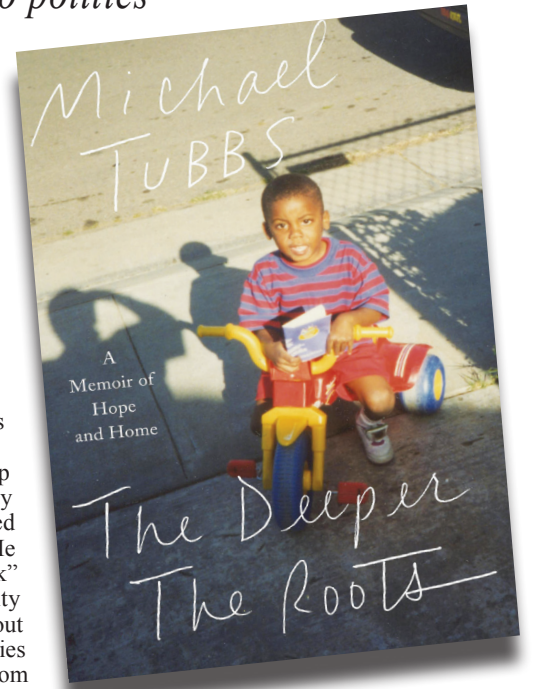
In 2012, Tubbs graduated from Stanford receiving the Lloyd W. Dinkelspiel Award, "the highest honor given to a graduating senior."

As a newly elected council member, Tubbs embarked on a mission to save his city from rampant violence and bankruptcy. Meeting with city council members, the police chief, leaders in the community, and business owners became the norm. However, an untimely mistake would serve as a learning lesson early in his career.

In October 2014, Tubbs was arrested and charged with driving under the influence. He allowed this incident to serve as a learning lesson, and through much support from his community, he continued his pursuit toward recovering his city.

"It was humbling for me to see how one mistake made in a split second could endanger everything I'd worked for. We're all just one bad choice away from ruin," Tubbs wrote.

Despite Tubbs' recent blunder,



he was undeterred from announcing a run for mayor. He garnered the support from then-President Barack Obama, and in 2016, won his mayoral campaign by an overwhelming margin of 70 percent.

"At twenty-six years old, four years out of college, eight years out of high school, I was the youngest person in the United States to be elected mayor of a city with a population of more than 100,000. And I was Stockton's first Black mayor," Tubbs wrote.

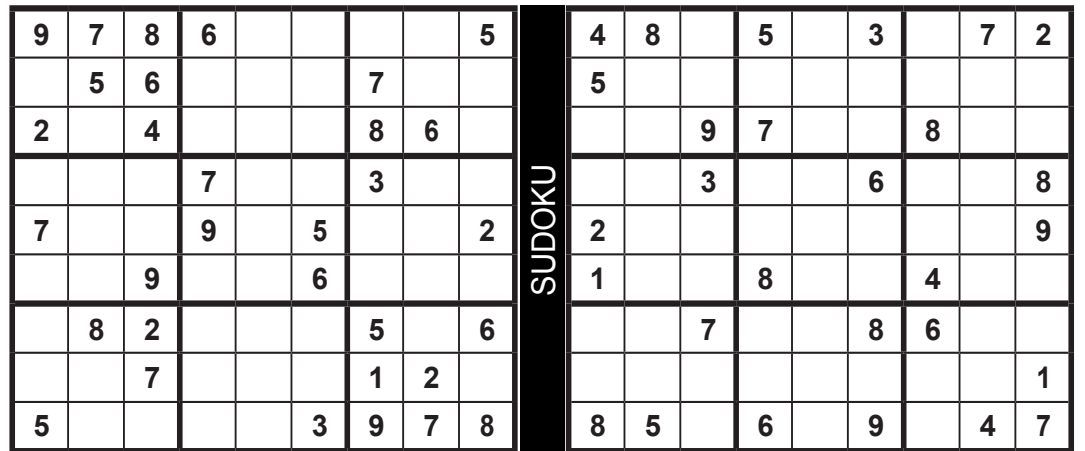
Tubbs' journey as mayor proved to be difficult. Faced with complex issues surrounding poverty and violence, Tubbs launched Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration Project (SEED) and implemented Operation Ceasefire in an attempt to mitigate gun violence. The mayor also faced intense scrutiny of both his public and private lives.

His partner, Anna, gave birth to his first child in 2019 and Tubbs' reflected on the society in which he was raising his son.

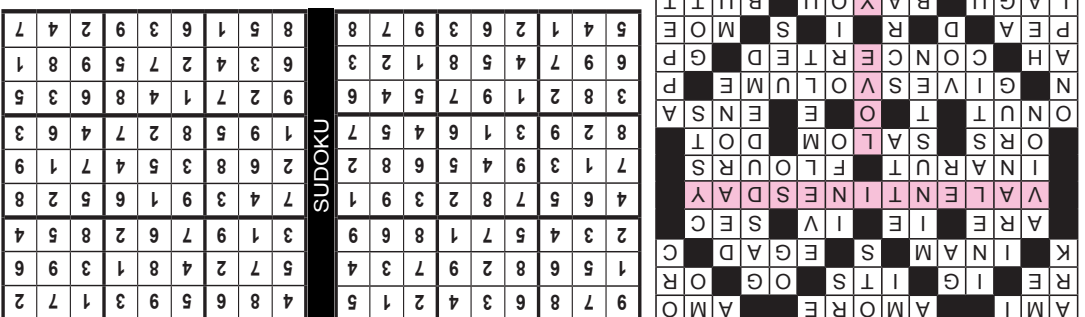
"Although my son is born into a level of privilege I could not have dreamed about as a child, he is still a Black person in America, and I am under no illusion about the obstacle he will have to face," he wrote.

The Deeper the Roots serves as a testimony of a Black man defeating the odds set against him. Tubbs delivers abundant counsel and motivation to those who share his struggle as well as those who did not. He exemplifies the results of hard work and unwavering dedication in service of others.

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Back Page Art Inspires

Dear SQ News,
Enclosed is a flyer on a recent story we were drawn to regarding the late Emmett Till and his legacy, through our company, castaway art, which empowers and promotes individuals in custody and the art they produce we had some of them produce portraits/paintings on Emmett Till. Enjoy the artwork, the story and the poem on the back we ask that you share with your audience and if possible, promote our web sight so other artist can be inspired and earn income and a brand from behind the walls and fences of America's overpopulated prisons.

—Barry Wolfe
Mt Sterling, IL

News Across the Nation

Dear SQ News,
Sending you all love from the East Coast, I've been behind the wall almost 25 years now. New York Gov. is closing New York State Prisons Great Meadow Correctional Facility, will be closing it's doors on Nov 6th, 2024. I will always be grateful to you guys for sending me a copy of San Quentin News each every month. I won't put other brothers on front, however, I do have a lot of friends doing time in the State of CA-Washington State as well.

—Michael Taffinder
Great Meadow CF
Comstock, NY

Uplifting articles inspires hope and good news

Dear SQ News,
God willing you all find yourselves doing amazing. I'm currently doing time in North Kern State Prison, and I ran in to a spare newspaper I am grateful to read all the inspiring and up lifting articles. God bless you all for giving everyone hope and good news. I would love to share and spread your paper around.

Thank you so much God bless you all and great work.

—Jose Soliz
North Kern State Prison

Reader Seeks Answers

Dear SQ News,
As CDCR inmates, we are not told the many ways to acquire milestones or the amount of time the milestones reward you with, can you please do a special report and include this topic. Thank you.

—M. Mason
North Kern State Prison

Reader gets info via Tablet

Dear SQ News,
I wrote to you a few months ago asking to be placed back on your mailing list, to start receiving your paper again. I really enjoy it. Texas inmates have recently gained access to the EDOVO app. The last SQ News on that app is Issue 161/Oct 23 Thank you for your time and great paper.

—James Elliott
Woodville, TX

SQNews Inspires Others

Hello, Id would like to advertise my Books and Flyer in your News Letter/ News Paper. Thank you.

—Jason Kurtz
Phoenix, MD

Greatul for insight

Dear SQ News,
Please send me a copy of the latest issue of your newspaper. I buy them from Walkenhorsts every time I order a package. But the months I don't get them, I know I'm missing out on some good information, I'm a lifer, and in your April 2024 issue you sent me there was a great article in there about Hope In The Board Room: How To prepare for The Best Outcome. It was very insightful. Thank you for sending me that article. I feel like it was meant for me to read that. Thanks for

everything and keep me informed by sending copies of your Newspaper every month if you can and I'll keep buying them every chance I get.

—James Williams
Patton, CA

Nevada Resident Contrasts Circumstance

Dear SQ News,
We love your Newspaper! It is the best way to contrast Nevada Prisons with modern prisons in California and throughout the U.S. Please put me on your mailing list.

—Wayne Viera
High Desert State Prison

Two Publications in One

Dear SQ News,
To whom it may concern, I am on the mailing list for both the "San Quentin News" and the "CCWF paper Trail" Newspapers. I would like to continue to receive these publications but in order for that to happen I need you folks to correct my state identification number.

—Benedict Anthony
Mendonca
Ontario, Oregon

Kentuckian Reads SQNews on Edovo App

Dear SQ News,
Just would like to reads some news. I'm sending three stamps for a issue of SQ News. We just got some San Quentin news on our secures tablets that was old issues. Currently serving a 30 year sentence here at KSP in Kentucky. Are there any folks that would like to move out to CA if we could interstate out there. I have about 4 years left on 85% sentence not much here in KY to help on reentry like out west. But here at KSP they do have a Garment plant that make DOC clothes and pays 1.26 hr since Thanks for your time and newsletters.

—Simon Oliver
Kentucky State penitentiary
Eddyville, KY

EDITORIAL

Hundreds of prisoners still languish in prison for more than 50 years

Lifers convicted of murder and sentenced under an out-of-date statute are forgotten

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Editor-in-Chief

Rehabilitation and the California Model are declared mission and mandate for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Such progressive change has become urgently needed in this era of mass incarceration.

However, the highly publicized awakening of the CDCR fails to acknowledge a small cohort of prisoners. These people are abandoned, hidden away, and silenced by the ravages of time. Although sentenced to life, including the possibility of parole, more than 80 of them have already served 50 continuous years, or longer, behind bars, according to CDCR.

Why are they still behind bars?

Some of these prisoners' arrival in the CDC predate my 1996 entrance into the state's penal system by more than 30 years. My focus is the old lifers convicted of murder and sentenced under an out-of-date statute that imposed an indeterminate term of seven years to life, or "7 Up." There are nearly 200 of these prisoners still languishing in the system. Why?

In 1977, Senate Bill 42 was passed. It created the Determinate Sentencing Law, and also modified much of the old Indeterminate Sentencing Law, enacted in 1917. Prior to enactment of SB 42, all prisoners served indeterminate sentences—six months, one year, five years, or seven years to life.

Then came "rehabilitation." On July 1, 2005, former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger added the "R" to what was then the California Department of Corrections. At the time, I was imprisoned at California State Prison Solano where I, and others, watched the state's prison population continue to grow. Three years later, a federal three-judge panel convened to address overcrowding in *Plata v. Schwarzenegger*.

Since 2005, many of those old lifers continue to wait in

vain. But, as CDCR began its change and focus on rehabilitation, the implementation was slow, or nonexistent, depending on where a convict or prisoner was housed. We weren't "incarcerated persons" or "residents" back then, and the law was codified, unambiguously, to make certain we understood why we were all confined. In fact, the Penal Code read, in relevant part: "The Legislature finds and declares that the purpose of imprisonment for crime is punishment."

On March 17, 2023, nearly two decades after the "R" was added to CDCR, I was seated in a CalPIA (The Last Mile) classroom next door from where Gov. Gavin Newsom delivered his news that San Quentin would become a "rehabilitation center." Like many others, I was incredulous but hopelessly optimistic. Not just for myself, but for others, too. At the forefront of my mind were many of those old lifers I'd met more than 25 years earlier.

For the record, this is not a commentary to make a case for freeing prisoners convicted of murder. My eye is on justice. So I keep asking myself, why are they still here? I'm not naive enough to believe everyone in prison convicted of serious or violent crimes should be turned loose on society, especially if they are not rehabilitated. Anyone mindful of the need for public safety probably agrees. To borrow a phrase from President Donald J. Trump—in the context of prison—here, there are "very fine people, on both sides."

Seven-up lifers are survivors of carceral survival of the fittest. They have fought a hidden war of attrition, through grievances and habeas petitions. In return, they have been met with everything from a barrage of parole denials, to dehumanization, and the arrival of Marcy's Law in 2008—more than 30 years after SB 42. Moreover, all of them were locked up at least six years before the longest held Death Row prisoner, received by the CDC in 1984.

Some 7 Ups entered the penal system as youth offenders and were sent to "gladiator school" at the recently closed Deuel Vocational Institute in Tracy, Calif.

The Sentencing Project published a report this year that states: "The large number of people serving life sentences raises critical questions about moral, financial, and justice related consequences that must be addressed by the nation as well as the states." The report also shares a growing statistic: "Persons aged 55 and older account for nearly two fifths of people serving life." The CDCR has more than 10,000 prisoners over the age of 55 serving life, with the possibility of parole, according to the report. Each 7 Up lifer is above the age of 60.

Some years back, I read a 1970s archived issue of San Quentin News. In it, one of the editors wrote words that resonated and still remain with me. In his view, we the imprisoned must champion the cause for each other. As journalists, writers, artists, and jail house lawyers—if we do not advocate for each other, then who will? In the words of John C. Eagan, a longtime adviser and mentor to journalists at San Quentin News: "We report on what's right with the system, what's wrong with the prison system, and how to fix it."

Perhaps Gov. Newsom, the Legislature, parole board commissioners, and prosecutors—who mosey in and out of San Quentin—will at least consider liberating some of the CDCR's longest held "Convicts" who have been rehabilitated, are no longer a threat to public safety, and are long past their punishment.

Lastly, if we as convicts, inmates, prisoners, incarcerated people, or residents decide to willfully overlook our contemporaries, then maybe we have missed a lesson or two during our own rehabilitative journey that ostensibly teaches insight, empathy, and compassion for others. Don't forget the 7 Ups, or you too may be forgotten.

AROUND THE WORLD



Jan Perry and Picasso's Guernica in the Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid, Spain

California Model Chronicles By Chuck van vliet



HAPPY LANDING! IN OR OUT HAPPY VALENTINE!

ART

Painting provides incarcerated father opportunity to connect with son

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

For incarcerated father and artist Danny Velasquez, the language of art has continued its singular universality as he found his way of life through his art. His ultimate goal remained to share his story with his family and his beloved son, Little D.

At the time of his arrest, his only son had just turned five months old. For his son to grow up in the absence of his father has remained a hard pill for Velasquez to swallow, so Velasquez continued to explore various ways of expressing his fatherly love by painting his innermost thoughts.

"I create art not only to bring my share of color to the world, but also as a way to immortalize myself, to make my mark in the world like, 'Hey, Danny was here,'" said Velasquez. "Each brush stroke is that moment in my life time that I am able to capture."

The artist said he felt that people departed from this world by leaving things behind. Velasquez said he wanted to leave behind a part of his spirit through his art.

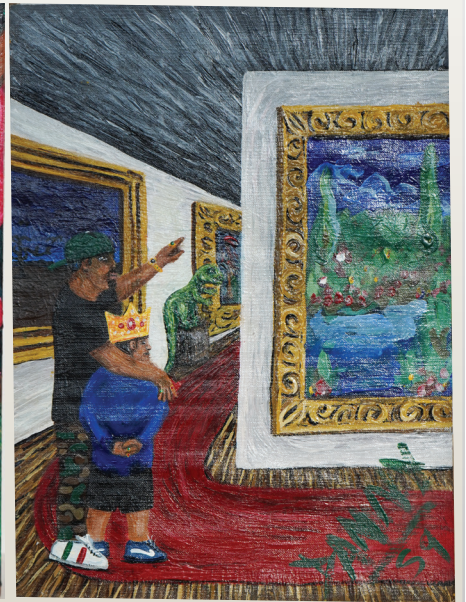
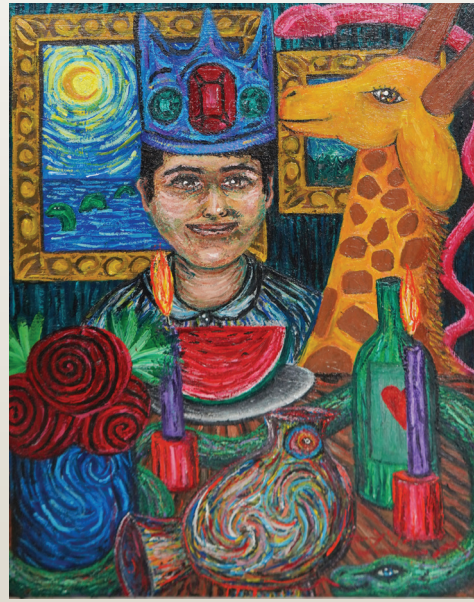
Art represented not only a vision for Velasquez, whose distinctive way to express his creativity let him create art with a narrative, allowing for his collection to tell stories. One of his art pieces showed a man with his family, telling viewers how the man's story began and how it could have ended.

According to the artist, he allowed his art to speak through symbolism. His work has an esoteric quality that the artist has always called "consciously or subconsciously reliable." As an example, for Velasquez, a giraffe represented new beginnings. An illustration of a father and a child meant to convey the father teaching his child. Another work showed someone falling in love.

Velasquez has titled his pieces to highlight their narratives and their purpose. He titled one work *Art Lessons, A Boy and His Dad*, a work depicting how much a father would like to guide his son through life. Another painting showed a father pointing his finger at a painting in an imaginary museum.



"Each brush stroke is that moment in my life time that I am able to capture."



Photos by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQ News

The work *My little Prince* also reflected fatherly love. Velasquez praised his family for his son remaining comfortable during his father's incarceration. Velasquez's work *Gemology* showed a boy and his father, depicting the idea that trade has a faceless quality. The work's objective meant to teach his son a good trade that would give him the ability to earn an honest living.

Velasquez's art also has a commercial aspect. He made a Green Bay Packers hat that showed the football team's logo, and Velasquez said for many incarcerated football fans, art representing their favorite teams allowed for a way to pass time. The multi-faceted artist also created lizards and jewelry from soap bars and said he enjoyed composing poetry. Prior to his incarceration, Velasquez sold precious stones and fine jewelry.

Velasquez said he refused to let incarceration deprive him of his inner freedom. During some of his darker moments, art has remained his best ally and the hidden purpose that kept him going in life.



Velasquez's artwork are renditions are of his fatherly love for his son Little D'



Photos by Aristeo Sampablo // SQ News

Virgil Woods hopes artwork will lead to happy ending

San Quentin resident and artist Virgil Woods titled his artistic ways "From sticky fingers to God-gifted hands."

Prior to incarceration, the artist was a moviegoer who loved to watch Batman and felt that the Joker character does not get the credit he deserved for giving Batman hell.

"Everything that the Joker touches is a work of art," said Woods. "I noticed that every time that they come out with another movie they bring out new Joker, but it will never be as good the original Joker."

Woods said he related to the Joker's unsettled situation and asked why the Joker could never have a happy ending. Woods said he has always kept looking for a happy ending in his life, an ending in which he would have his children who would look at his work and would feel proud of their father. The 60-year-old acknowledged that he wasted his life behind prison bars as a repeat offender.

Woods used his creativity to express his appreciation toward all the women who had played a part in his life. In *A Toast to Our Love*, the artist showed a tropical heart with two champagne glasses and two roses to signify women as one of God's greatest blessings.

Woods said he has always felt that the world under-appreciated women, which motivated him to feature them in his art.

"History has shown that most women are the backbone of a man," Woods said. "Not only a ride-or-die chick [a reliable woman] providing love, nurture, and wisdom. If I fall they're there to pick me up."

Woods' art also referenced the past versus the present by depicting historic aspects of San Francisco back in the 1800s. "Union Street and Market Street were there, but now we have stores, buildings, and bus stops and yet the streets are the same."

Much has changed since San Franciscans used horses as the main form of transportation, the artist said. He added that if the owner whistled to the horse, it would come; they were able to bond.

"Now, the world has disconnected because of all the new technology. Now we use vehicles if you don't take care your car and buy gas, it will run out. The train took the place of horses.

In 1800s, people used to ask, 'When is the next train?' The response was tomorrow at 2:00 o'clock," said Woods. "Now we have a train every fifteen minutes this is why it is important appreciate history and art."

— Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

"History has shown that most women are the backbone of a man. Not only a ride or die chick [a woman will be there for you] providing love, nurture and wisdom. If I fall they're there to pick me up."

