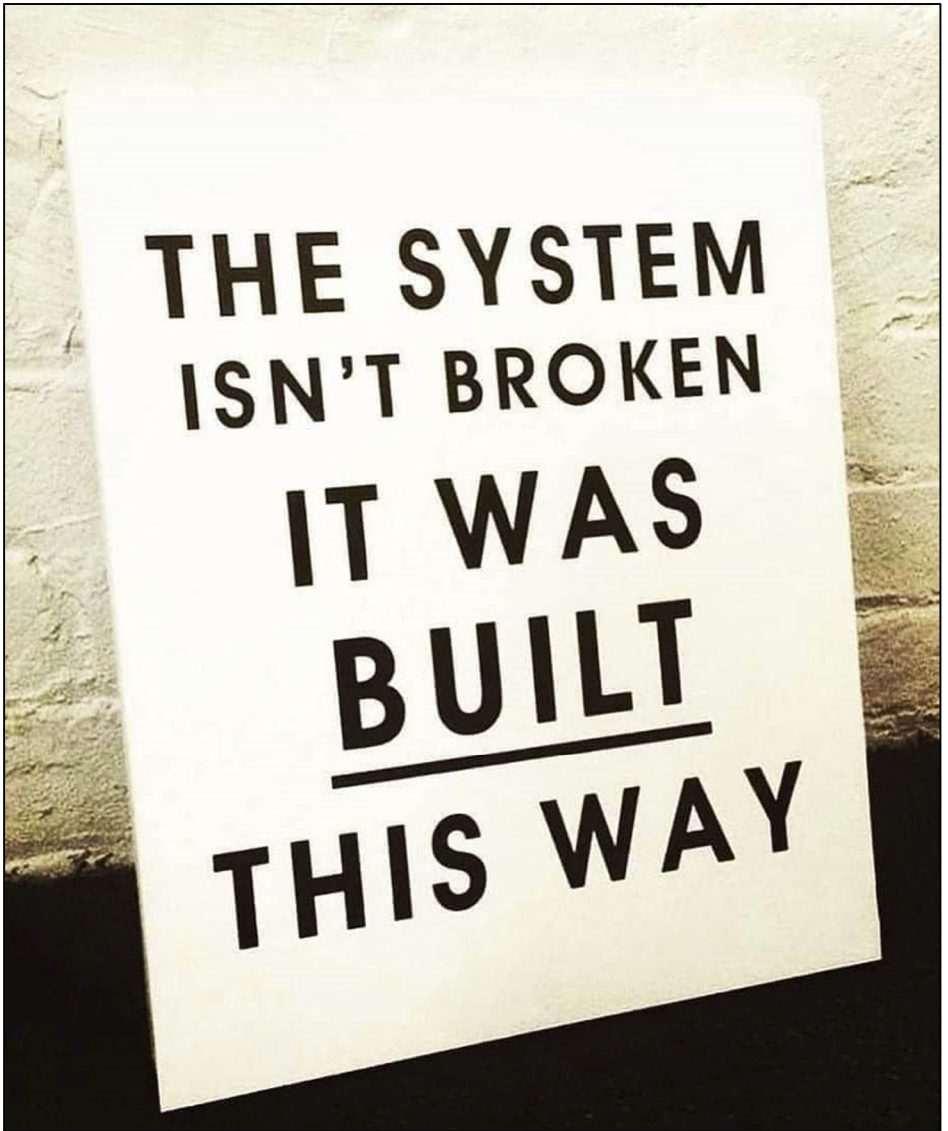


# **CLASS ACTION! NEWS**



**– ISSUE 24 –  
WINTER 2021/22**

< *Editor's Note* >

It is Winter & Issue #24 of 'Class Action News'. This magazine is by & for the 'Prisoner Class' in 'Settler Canada'.



In every Issue we provide a safe space for creative expression, informative news & support resources. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, & anything of sincere value to share. Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided, of course - Yes, Do Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please. Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best. Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation. Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 325 words max). For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous'.

'Class Action News' is published 4 times a year & is free for prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or an organization, please do consider a donation. It really does help to get this inside!

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*Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms*

- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

< *Ancestral Territorial Acknowledgment* >

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which Prison Free Press operates is the Traditional Territory of the Wendat, the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

≈ 'Dish With One Spoon' Treaty ≈

Prisons do not disappear problems, they disappear human beings.  
- Angela Davis

## Prisons & Technology

"In Canada, those behind federal prison walls have long been deprived of most technological advancements in learning. The current state of inmate access to information and technology is backward and obsolete. Offenders have limited access to out-dated stand-alone computers that still use floppy discs. CSC runs Local-area Networks, which are equipped with software from the early 2000s, have no access to the internet, contain limited reference materials and have almost no technical capacity to support or facilitate eLearning of any kind."

- Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report 2019-2020

This is from Dr. Ivan Zinger's introduction to his national investigation, "Learning Behind Bars", that is included in that recent annual report. He doesn't limit his analysis of educational programming and vocational training in federal prisons to computers alone, but that is one primary example underscoring the difficulties offenders have with re-entry into the community. These few paragraphs will focus on that basic technology.

What does an ex-con do with a criminal record? A person found guilty of an offence faces a penalty which may include incarceration, but once that price is paid, their obligation to society is satisfied. While there are employers who will give people with records a second chance, most don't hire ex-offenders; it's doubtful someone looking for a job would find work at a McDonald's or in corporate entry level positions, regardless of qualifications.

That's why Jason Wang and joinfreeworld.com recruits ex-cons to become truck drivers. There's a severe shortage in the United States and Canada, and employers are willing to hire ex-con graduates from the organization's program if they have the proper papers. The plan is to introduce training in other trades as shortages arise...welders, tool-dye makers are possible examples.

Community initiatives don't relieve Correctional Service of Canada of its responsibility to return inmates safely to the community. That process must include adequate training to give these men and women a leg up in the job market considering the stigma of a criminal record.

Even so, CSC prohibited offenders coming into prison from including a personal computer in their property as of October in 2002. Inmates who already had a computer were allowed to keep them, but at this point there are likely only a very few in the system.

Since the ban came into force, the correctional investigator maintains that "CSC has remained steadfast and impervious to expanding or updating inmate access to technology and information behind bars." And "in 2011/12 CSC outright rejected the Office's (Correctional Investigator) recommendation to lift this ban and significantly expand the use of computers. These decisions continue to be in effect today."

CSC does have a short supply of computers in prison libraries and other designated areas, but with limited access, obsolete and out-date software (i.e. floppy discs), and a network that is equally vintage. There does not even seem to be a CSC policy for upgrading the hardware or software for technology in the institutions.

True, there are technology-based programs initiated by CSC. Desire to Learn (D2L) is a digital learning setting used by inmates in the community where resources are computer accessed. Bath Institution's Autodesk 3D Design has certified thirty students (as of last year) in 3D computer aided design, three institutions have a computer literacy training program which includes operating systems, hardware, software and networks, and an Ontario region plan allows offenders to upgrade their computer skills.

These are essential first steps to enhance an individual's skills and knowledge in a competitive labour market, but they enlist only a small number of men and women, projects that are in indeterminate pilot stages. These must be implemented in all institutions and accessible to all who want education and vocational training. Excluding willing participants is simply sabotaging a "correctional service" to favour a "prison industry."

Charles Klassen  
turnoverarocktoday.com  
Nov 21, 2021

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Going to prison is like dying with your eyes open.  
- Bernard Kerik

Canada's prison system needs to provide more rehabilitation options for drug addiction

Canada's prison system provides too few resources or programs for people suffering from drug addiction - all it does is make the situation worse.

Prisons exist to punish those who've committed crimes and to prevent them from being a further harm to society. However, prisons also exist to rehabilitate prisoners and to deter them from offending again.

While Canada's correctional system may fulfil the first two functions, they're failing in the latter two.

Those currently within Canada's prison system often aren't dangerous murderers, but people suffering from drug addiction and mental illness. Their charges may include drug possession, theft, or property crime to fuel their addiction.

Let's say an individual becomes addicted to crack cocaine. Like others addicted to hard drugs, they're probably struggling with other issues, causing them to use and eventually abuse to cope. They often can't fund their addiction, finding resources illegally through crime - usually minor property crimes, such as car break-ins.

The Canadian prison system can provide barely any treatment options for their addiction. Minor crimes mean entry into the provincial prison system, with a 60- to 90-day serving sentence.

Most of these people can't make bail due to court order breach or a previous criminal record. While they wait for their trial, they are put in remand centres until they plead out. Often, many end up finishing their sentence in the remand centre because of the complicated transfer process to a provincial prison.

Although provincial prisons offer very few resources for rehabilitation, remand centres offer absolutely nothing. The court even recognizes how awful remand centres are, mandating that 1.5 credit be given, meaning that a 15-day sentence would be shortened to 10, for example.

When they get out of prison or a remand centre, these folks have fewer job prospects than before due to their criminal record. While they may have been clean for the duration of their sentence, many people turn back to drug addiction and end up right back in prison.

The past decades saw the launch of Canadian drug treatment courts in response to the mass incarceration of offenders for drug-related offences. These courts create programs to support people suffering from drug addiction. While this initiative is a good starting point, the program doesn't receive enough support or resources. Unfortunately, not many get to benefit from the program.

The circumstances create a never-ending cycle in which people suffering from drug addiction go in and out of prison, never given a proper chance to improve their condition. While it will be a long and difficult process, the Canadian government must take further steps towards providing more rehabilitation programs within the prison system.

Nathan Carter  
The Queen's Journal  
Oct 7, 2021

#### Stark Raven - Prison Radio Vancouver

Our show went on a bit of a break during the pandemic (the radio station was closed, etc. etc.) but we're back on the air now! 1st Monday of the month from 7-8pm on CFRO 100.5 fm and on the web at [coopradio.org](http://coopradio.org)  
Write to us and share poems, stories or anything that we can read on our show:

Stark Raven c/o Vancouver Co-op Radio  
370 Columbia St.  
Vancouver, BC, Coast Salish Territory  
V6A 4J1

Prison is a second-by-second assault on the soul, a day-to-day degradation of the self, an oppressive steel and brick umbrella that transforms seconds into hours and hours into days.

- Mumia Abu-Jamal

It must surely be a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit that even a small number of those men and women in the hell of the prison system survive it and hold on to their humanity.

- Howard Zinn

## Lawsuit alleges physical, sexual abuse at youth facility in Newfoundland and Labrador

A Newfoundland and Labrador man is suing the provincial government for alleged sexual and physical abuse he says he endured as a teenager at a provincial facility for youth.

The statement of claim filed last month in provincial Supreme Court alleges plaintiff Stephen Miller was subjected to the abuse between 2004 and 2008 at the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre in Whitbourne, N.L. At the time, Miller was a minor in intermittent provincial care, the document says.

This is not the first lawsuit against the province alleging sexual abuse against minors at the facility. In 2019, a class action was certified alleging sexual abuse of minors at provincial facilities including the Whitbourne centre between 1973 and 1989 - the year Miller was born.

St. John's lawyer Lynn Moore, who is involved in the class action, said there is a summary trial scheduled for it on March 22 in provincial Supreme Court.

Miller's lawyer, Jennifer Helleur of St. John's, said she expects other claimants will come forward alleging more recent abuse at Whitbourne.

"Typically, if there's an abuser at an institution, you're going to expect that they're going to be abusing more than just one person ... that's the nature of sexual abusers," she said in an interview Monday.

A provincial government website identifies the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre as an active "youth secure custody" facility. The statement of claim refers to the institution as the "Whitbourne Youth Centre."

Helleur said the fact the alleged abuse of Miller continued until 2008 is particularly concerning because it means some of the employees involved could still be working there. His suit is the first she is aware of to allege abuse beyond the time period covered by the 2019 class action, she said.

In the statement of claim filed Nov. 8, Miller alleges he was subject to "numerous forms of child abuse" at the facility, including sexual abuse from female and male staff members and physical abuse from a male employee. In one instance, Miller alleges a male employee forced

him to wrestle while naked with other boys at the facility.

The statement says Miller suffered "irreparable psychological harm, substance abuse and other severe impairments" as a result of the abuse and alleges the provincial government knew or ought to have known that Miller was "exposed to serious harm" while at the facility.

In an email Tuesday, a provincial Justice Department spokeswoman said it would be inappropriate to comment on the matter as it is before the courts. Helleur said Monday the province has not yet filed a statement of defence.

The suit alleges the provincial government didn't properly monitor or investigate the operators of the facility, nor did the government adequately follow up on the quality of care provided there to Miller. The government also failed to correct any failings or shortcomings in his care, the suit claims.

Miller alleges the abuse left him with difficulties building and maintaining relationships and made it tougher for him to go to school and earn an income. He also claims he is continually plagued by distressing memories of the abuse and that he developed addictions issues and spent time incarcerated as a result of the distress, among other harms.

"As you can imagine, it takes an incredible amount of bravery to speak about childhood sexual abuse," Helleur said. "For many survivors, it takes years and years - decades - to feel comfortable talking about it."

She said Miller wanted his name to be public. "He is ready now to break his silence," she said.

Sarah Smellie  
The Canadian Press  
Dec 7, 2021

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Jails and prisons are designed to break human beings, to convert the population into specimens in a zoo - obedient to our keepers, but dangerous to each other.

- Angela Davis

I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.

- Rosa Parks

## Out of the residential schools, into the prison and foster care systems

Today has been designated as a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, but it's hard to reconcile the injustices faced by Indigenous communities in the past when the effects of that trauma are still being felt so acutely.

Take the survivors of residential schools. The last residential school closed in 1997 and if the youngest survivors were between six and 10 years old at the time, they would now range in age from 30-35. Many of them are living in First Nations communities, which have some of the highest crime rates in the country and are plagued by high rates of incarceration, suicide and large numbers of children placed into foster care.

These are inter-related, as we transitioned our children out of residential schools and into federal and provincial institutions, such as prisons and foster homes. There was no transition or support services in place for children going from residential schools back to their homes. Not only did children face abrupt life changes, they were also coping with the abuses and neglect they endured at the schools.

As a result of these traumas, Indigenous people now account for more than 30% of inmates in Canadian prisons. The numbers are even higher on the Prairies - Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta - where Indigenous-Canadians make up 54% of the prison population. This is alarming given that Indigenous people make up just 5% of the country's population.

Factors contributing to high incarceration rates include poverty and systemic inequities. Indigenous offenders are more likely to be sentenced to maximum terms. They are also more likely to be placed in maximum-security facilities and to serve more of their sentences before they are granted parole.

Female Indigenous prisoners currently represent 42% of the inmates in Canadian prisons. They face some of the harshest parole conditions, which makes it more challenging for them to return to their lives on the outside. And even when they are released, they often end up on reserves with limited social services and mental health supports, which is why we see so many repeat offenders.

Just as residential schools fell under the radar for so many decades, there is no accountability

from the federal government about the over-representation of Indigenous people in the prison system and the harms that stem from it. Another sad statistic is the number of Indigenous children in foster care. In Canada, 52.2% of children in the foster care system - around 15,000 kids - are Indigenous. It's hard to see how this is all that much different from a system that took children away from their families and placed them into residential schools.

Governments need to create clear and transparent systems for family reunification, to make it easier for parents to reunite with their children. We cannot continue to be over-represented in these systems. We have seen the trauma caused by residential schools and it did not get better, it got worse.

One of the biggest contributors to these statistics is poverty. Thirty-eight percent of Indigenous children live in poverty. If we do not start addressing poverty on and off reserves, we are going to have even bigger issues in the future. Jobs and training opportunities for Indigenous people should be part of a national plan to stimulate the economy and get Canadians back to work, not siloed under an Indigenous affairs department.

Flags at half-mast are not going to change the situation. Taking pictures at an Indigenous grave site is not going to bring the 15,000 displaced children home. Concrete actions are needed to reduce the number of Indigenous people in the prison and foster care systems.

Today, I will be honouring and remembering my grandmother and every child who stepped into a residential school. I will be telling my grandmother's story in hopes that my message will connect the government's past failures to the issues we are facing today.

We cannot create a better future if we do not acknowledge that our current problems stem from one single event in our history: residential schools. We must not allow history to repeat itself. Perhaps this is the true meaning of reconciliation.

Melissa Mbarki  
National Post  
Sep 30, 2021

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*The full-bellied child says to the hungry child,  
"Keep good cheer."  
- Herbert Agar*



*All oppression creates a state of war.*

- Simone de Beauvoir

*We've only suffered from America's hypocrisy...*

*If you go to jail, so what?*

*If you're black, you were born in jail.*

- Malcolm X

*Women will not simply be mainstreamed into the polluted stream.*

*Women are changing the stream, making it clean and green and safe for all:*

*every gender, race, creed, sexual orientation, age, and ability.*

- Bella Abzug

*Even the most subjected person has moments of rage and resentment so intense that they respond, they act against.*

*There is an inner uprising that leads to rebellion, however short-lived.*

*It may be only momentary but it takes place.*

*That space within oneself where resistance is possible remains.*

- bell hooks

*No matter how well meaning and astute the investigators are or how well-researched, witnessed and documented the incidents of cruelty are,*

*a prison is a prison is a prison.*

*The structure of authority that produces the oppressed and the oppressor alike is the key to understanding the problem.*

*Contained within this structure is the authoritative power to agendize language, which is simply another control mechanism.*

- Gayle K. Horii

*For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.*

*They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game,*

*but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.*

- Audre Lorde

*Prison has taught me that there is a part of you that no one can ever take from you, and that is your heart.*

- Babar Ahmad

*If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.*

- Zora Neale Hurston

*The walls are the publishers of the poor.*

- Eduardo Galeano

*Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it.*

*To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it.*

*With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness -*

*and our ability to tell our own stories.*

*Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe.*

- Arundhati Roy

*Nobody is going to pour truth into your brain.*

*It's something you have to find out for yourself.*

- Noam Chomsky



Sleeping on the cold floor: Canada doesn't accommodate prisoners with disabilities. Fund alternatives to incarceration instead

Last week on International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau released a statement reaffirming his government's commitment "to build a Canada that is fairer, more inclusive, and accessible for everyone." Unfortunately these words mean nothing to many prisoners with disabilities.

A few months ago, Kitten Keyes, an Indigenous woman at the Grand Valley Institution, was forced to sleep on the jail floor for 21 days straight. The reason? Keyes is a person who uses a wheelchair, but her cell wasn't accessible. Unable to move around easily, the federal prison did not accommodate her disability and in addition to being unable to reach her bed, Keyes defecated herself because she also couldn't reach the toilet in her prison cell.

While this is one of the few stories that emerge into mainstream news, the horrifying reality is that this is an everyday reality for many prisoners with disabilities.

It is reported on time and time again how Canada's prisons are deadly, discriminatory and dilapidated. It should be no surprise that such an institution and its facilities would be unaccommodating to those with disabilities. After all, the two highest complaints received by the prison ombudsman are the lack of health care available and the conditions of confinement, which exacerbate mental illness.

While the statistics on how many prisoners with disabilities exist in Canada are scarce and outdated, numbers from a 2015 report by the Federal government suggest that up to 68 per cent of federal prisoners suffer from a chronic disease such as diabetes, hepatitis or obesity. As much as half of all prisoners suffer from at least one form of a mental health problem. These numbers are likely a gross underestimate due to the lack of appropriate health care for people inside.

In addition to Keyes' case and other experiences of prisoners with disabilities, many reports have also confirmed that Correctional Services Canada (CSC), the government agency that oversees federal prisons, does not accommodate its prisoners with disabilities. For example, a recent Senate report assessing the human rights of prisoners admitted that CSC provides "limited

or no training" to staff on how to communicate with prisoners who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The agency has also done little to accommodate prisoners with learning disabilities. The denial of accommodations and services has all been exacerbated due to the mishandling of COVID-19 by CSC which has resulted in over 1,600 cases and a halting of critical programs that many prisoners with disabilities require.

The neglect is unacceptable given that the Canadian government has a legal responsibility to provide accommodations to individuals in federal prisons. Canada is the only country in the world that explicitly protects people with disabilities from discrimination in its constitution. Under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, individuals with physical or mental disabilities are provided equal protection and benefit under the law without discrimination. More recently, the government legislated the Accessible Canada Act which created mandates, goals and enforcement mechanisms that prohibits discrimination based on disability in all federally regulated organizations.

Yet even with all these laws across different decades and multiple parties in Parliament, the conditions of prisons and lack of accommodations to prisoners with disabilities remain largely the same - repugnant and negligent. These people are not just numbers, but human beings that deserve protection.

Since 2017, the Canadian government has wasted over \$5 billion-dollars a year in operating expenditures in its prison system. It is unconscionable that with such a tremendous operating budget, the government cannot adequately accommodate prisoners with disabilities.

In the midst of defunding police campaigns and decarceration movements, policy-makers need to rethink how money is being spent on prisons particularly when such a large population of prisoners are with disability and yet their basic human rights are being continually ignored. Given the prolonged mistreatment of prisoners with disabilities, it is clear that to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are upheld, we must commit to better solutions and programs than incarceration. We should be listening to the many solutions proposed by community groups working tirelessly to create compassionate and accessible spaces. The constant neglect of



prisoners with disabilities and the perpetual state of inhumane conditions in the Canadian carceral system is irreconcilable with the billions of dollars being burned yearly into maintaining these deplorable human cages.

Six months after being forced to sleep on the cold hard floor of her prison cell, Keyes filed a \$10 million-dollar lawsuit against the Attorney General of Canada for the discrimination and suffering she faced as a prisoner who uses a wheelchair. If Canada does not reconsider alternatives to prisons soon, taxpayers should be comfortable footing more bills like Keyes' because the Canadian government will keep shirking its legal responsibility to accommodate its prisoners with disabilities.

Instead of empty platitudes, Canada should work to defund prisons and invest in communities doing the real work in creating a more accessible and barrier-free society for all.

Matthew Tran  
The Star  
Dec 9, 2021

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Nova Scotia court to prohibit 'dry ceiling' practice in prisons

A Nova Scotia court will prohibit the federal prison practice of dry ceiling within six months unless Ottawa amends laws authorizing the restrictive search method to make it less discriminatory against women.

Under present laws, prison staff can place a prisoner in a dry cell when they are suspected of harbouring drugs or other contraband in a body cavity.

A dry cell lacks running water, preventing prisoners from flushing evidence. Prison staff monitor the prisoner 24 hours a day under constant illumination as long as it takes for the contraband to be expelled.

"Solitary confinement in any form is torture," said Emma Halpern, executive director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia. "However this particular form of solitary confinement is the most inhumane and the most harmful."

Ms. Halpern acted as co-counsel for Lisa Adams, a New Brunswick mother who spent 16 days in a dry cell at Nova Institution last year because prison staff suspected she was carrying drugs in her vagina. By the fifth day, her mental

health had declined so precipitously that she became incoherent while experiencing hallucinations and suicidal thoughts.

Throughout the ordeal, Ms. Adams admitted she had smuggled a cigarette into the Truro, N.S., prison, but denied she was harbouring drugs in her vagina. Body scans taken before she was admitted showed balloon-like packages concealed in Ms. Adams' vagina, the court heard.

She asked the courts to intervene through a habeas corpus motion. By the time a judge heard the matter, however, a doctor conducting a pelvic examination confirmed Ms. Adams' denials and she was released from the dry cell.

The Correctional Service of Canada, or CSC, initially argued that the release made the habeas corpus application moot. The argument failed to convince Justice John Keith, who wrote that Ms. Adams "remained an inmate and vulnerable to the uncertainties of the dry cell process identified in this proceeding," in a decision released on Friday.

Ms. Adams' lawyers argued that her duration in the dry cell was unlawful for violating several sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Crown lawyers conceded the placement was unlawful, but for much different reasons.

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act, or CCRA, authorizes dry cell detention where there's an "expectation that the contraband can be expelled." The caveat meant that the law only applied to suspected rectal contraband, the Crown argued, because there "can be no reasonable expectation that contraband could be expelled by a vagina."

In the Crown's interpretation, Ms. Adams' unlawful detention was an error by prison staff, not unconstitutional legislation.

Justice Keith rejected the Crown's argument. He observed that the CCRA specifically defines a body cavity as the "rectum or vagina" and dismissed the suggestion that a vagina cannot expel.

"The predominantly involuntary menstrual process by which bodily fluids or waste (including contraband) might be expelled through the vagina is not as frequent as through the digestive tract," he wrote. "As such, women may become subjected to longer periods of dry cell detention where reasonably suspected of carrying contraband in a vagina – as was the case with Ms. Adams."

Menopause increases those risks, he added, because the detention in dry cell is “potentially indeterminate.”

The law, he ruled, infringes the Charter’s protection against discrimination based on sex.

Justice Keith suspended the validity of his decision for six months to give Parliament time to remedy the legislative defect.

CSC spokesman Kyle Lawlor said the federal jailer is “closely examining” the decision and that it “takes seriously its obligations to provide safe, secure, and humane treatment while assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens.”

The Ottawa-based Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies lauded the decision, but said it didn’t go far enough. “It is an opportunity for the government and the new minister to remedy this and rewrite the legislation to get rid of dry celling,” said Emilie Coyle, the group’s executive director. “It’s an inhumane practice and there’s no reason that it needs to continue to be on our books.”

Patrick White  
Globe and Mail  
Nov 15, 2021

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## Corrections Service of Canada

CSC, mon ami  
Anne Kelly is driving  
We’re in good hands can’t you see?  
Don’t choke, I’m just kidding  
But let me be clear  
She’s blindfolded & cackling  
Attempting to steer  
Don’t bother trying to reason  
Or negotiate for what’s fair  
She’s busy on twitter & styling her hair  
The ‘Check Engine Light’ is on  
She’s driving in the wrong lane  
But she forgot we’re in the trunk  
And PTSD she will claim  
Why should we expect accountability from her?  
When she clearly enjoys the pains we endure  
Spewed smiling BS on every communiqué  
If I were Dr. Seuss I’d say, ‘Have a nice day!’

- Bad Company

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## How a local charity helps inmates in Canada and the U.S., one book at a time

For nearly two decades, Books 2 Prisoners Ottawa has sent free books to incarcerated people across Canada and their impact has reached the U.S.

The initiative began in 2003 out of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group at Carleton University with students collecting book donations and mailing them out to correctional facilities.

According to Jeffrey Bradley, a PhD student in legal studies at Carleton, who also co-chairs the group, it works like a penpal system.

“They send us a letter and basically they’ll have a description of what types of books they like,” Bradley told CBC Radio’s Ottawa Morning.

“From there, we will look into our library or book supply and see how we can best match that request and then we will send it out to them and we also usually respond back with a letter,” he said.

Bradley said he wanted to get involved because he “thought that this would be a very tangible way to be able to support people that are incarcerated and help them meet their objectives to eventually be reintegrated back into society.”

## U.S. inmates can have more books

The challenge arises when it comes to figuring out different policies and restrictions around book programs at different institutions.

Bradley said restrictions in the U.S. are looser, with some institutions allowing prisoners to receive two books per month, which is how they are able to send books to inmates in California and Texas.

It wasn’t until last fall, however, that the group was able to get books to the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

While Bradley says the organization did drop off boxes of books at the Ottawa jail when they started out, factors like staff changeover made it

harder for them to keep going. When he joined the group two years ago, the goal was to re-establish the relationship between Books 2 Prisoners and the jail.

"One of our volunteers was ... a retired probation officer and he had kind of helped me connect and the group connect with the librarian at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre," he explained.

Now, after having gone through the proper approvals, the librarian emails the group with requests for different types of books, which volunteers then drop off in the security area of the detention centre.

**Books 2 Prisoners helped inmate learn to read**

Jane Crosby, who also co-chairs the group, said the most common book requests from inmates include dictionaries, nutrition books, and a variety of fiction genres such as romance and mystery.

Crosby, who has been with the group for 10 years, says she can see the impact of the book donations.

"What really caught me was that people were waiting for my mail," she said.

Growing up as the daughter of a chaplain at the Springhill Penitentiary in Nova Scotia, she said she understands how important it is for inmates to connect with someone on the outside.

"When I joined ... there were people that were writing [to us] like every month. So you got to know the people because they got really personal with you through letters ... they would write to people specifically saying how they appreciated our books."

Curtis Copeland was a prisoner in Texas who used Books 2 Prisoners for years. Crosby said she remembers getting letters from Copeland over the years and she noticed the change in his tone.

"I really enjoyed [the books]. They kept me from losing my mind. I learned how to read and educate myself," he said.

"I know prisoners who don't have anything to read. They have no money or family to buy them anything. So these organizations are a great blessing and a great help to all the prisoners across the world."

In California, Crosby says there's an old man who they've been sending books to "forever."

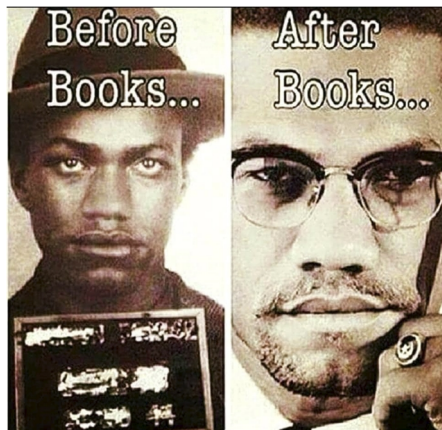
"He's blind. He's in a wheelchair. He's like 80 years old ... so I always make sure that he gets books," she said.

Four years ago, Crosby started sending inmates Christmas cards along with the books.

"The letters we got back were always, 'Oh, that's the only Christmas card I got,' and 'thank you so much for remembering me,'" she said.

"The personal connection to me is what really is important when you're serving your time."

Anchal Sharma  
CBC News  
Oct 23, 2021



I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me.

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life.

As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

- Malcolm X

Write what should not be forgotten.

- Isabel Allende

I am in a beautiful prison from which I can only escape by writing.

- Anais Nin

The human eye is a wonderful device.

With a little effort, it can fail to see even the most glaring injustice.

- Richard K. Morgan

## Facts about HIV and HCV

*With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.*

*In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.*

*In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.*

*In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.*

*While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.*

*Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.*

*Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).*

*These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.*

## Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

*These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.*

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

*Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!*

*Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.*

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

HEP C = 18-30% in prison

HIV = 1-5% in prison

Do Not Share or Re-Use:  
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs, ...  
... well, anything in contact  
with blood !!!

**BLEACH DOES NOT KILL HEP C**

**Toll-Free Support Line for SK Prisoners**

*For prisoners in Provincial jails & Federal prisons in Saskatchewan.*

*Funds will be used to help inmates purchase call packages to keep them connected to their family, help out with canteen for necessary things & for transportation home. Maintained by prisoner advocacy groups Beyond Prison Walls Canada and Inmates for Humane Conditions.*

☎ 1-866-949-0074 ☎

**Jail Accountability and Information Line (JAIL) for prisoners in OCDC**

*The Jail Accountability and Information Line takes calls from prisoners and their loved ones from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Mon to Wed. This line tracks issues experienced by people incarcerated at the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre.*

☎ 613-567-JAIL (5245) ☎

**Jail Hotline for MCC, OCI, TEDC, TSDC & VCW**

*The Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project (TPRP) provides prisoners with free links to advocacy, referrals, information, and support through the Jail Hotline. This hotline is run by volunteers. It will take calls on:*

**Monday - Saturday  
9-11am & 2-4pm**

☎ 416-307-2273 ☎

**Why a Jail Hotline?**

*Prisons and jails carry out human rights abuses every day because they do not think anyone is watching. We are here in solidarity and struggle with prisoners.*

**Who Should Call This Hotline?**

*Please share the hotline with your loved ones inside. We cannot accept calls from other prisons or jails or from people in the community.*

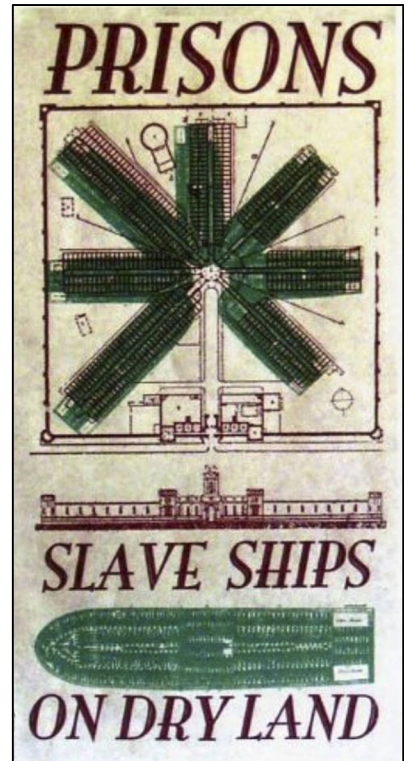
*If you need to contact us outside of the line, you can message us on social media or an email to:*

TorontoPrisonersRightsProject@gmail.com

**NEW! Jail Hotline for EMDC**

**Monday - Saturday  
9-11am & 2-4pm**

☎ 519-642-9289 ☎



*From the slave ship to the citizenship we faced a lot of bullship.*

- Amiri Baraka

*Today's lynching is a felony charge.*

*Today's lynching is incarceration.*

*Today's lynch mobs are professionals.*

*They have a badge; they have a law degree.*

- Michelle Alexander

**Penpal Program for Gay, Queer,  
Trans Prisoners**

*The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.*

*If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:*

Prisoner Correspondence Project  
c/o QPIRG Concordia  
1455 de Maisonneuve W.  
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

*Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.*



**Nov 20 is Transgender Day  
of Remembrance**

*Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), is an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.*

*And it's a Canadian problem too: 74% of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.*

☞ Respect ☞

**Incarcerated in Canada?  
Need Information?**

*Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:*

*General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.*

*Write to us at:*

**Write ON!**  
234-110 Cumberland St,  
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

**Prison Visiting Rideshare Project**

*The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.*

*If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com*

*Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869 (It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).*

**PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY**

☞ In Remembrance ☞

- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural  
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

*We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.*

*If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.*

**PJD@PrisonFreePress.org**

## A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

### The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration in Canada
- Over 5000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increases with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

### The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

### The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

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

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress/ trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

[www.kipcanada.org](http://www.kipcanada.org) ~ 416-505-5333



### K.I.P. Canada - Family Visitation

Kids with Incarcerated Parents (K.I.P.) was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

K.I.P.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, K.I.P. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email K.I.P. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at:

[info.kipcanada@gmail.com](mailto:info.kipcanada@gmail.com)

or by phone at: 416-505-5333



## PRISON RADIO

- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM  
*Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am*  
*Call-in 519-837-2378*
- Halifax - CKDU 88.1 FM  
*Black Power Hour - Fri 1:30-3 pm*  
*Youth Now! - Mon 5-6:30 pm*
- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM  
*CPR: Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm*
- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM  
*PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon*
- Vancouver - CFRO 100.5 FM  
*Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm*

*CPR: This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio & Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.*

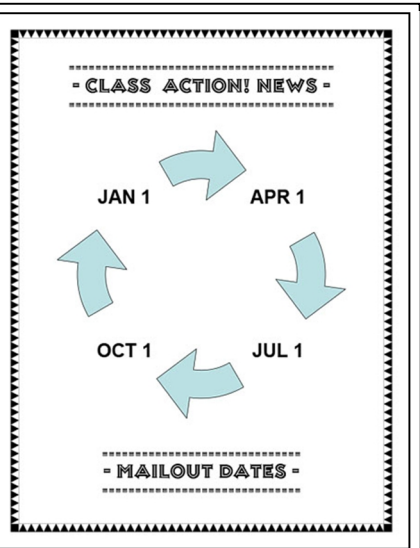
*The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.*

*Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.*

*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr Carruthers Hall,  
Queen's University,  
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6*

*Email: [CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net](mailto:CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net)  
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or  
music request to be broadcast on-air.*

☞ Prisoners Justice Day is Aug 10 ☞



☞ Issue #24 - Winter 2021/22 ☞

**Class Action News**  
PO Box 39, Stn P  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

download, print, contact:  
[www.ClassActionNews.org](http://www.ClassActionNews.org)

Next Issue: #25 - Spring 2022  
Deadline: Mar 1, 2022  
Mail-out: Apr 1, 2022

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that needs gettin' out?

... Hmm ... ?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

