

At last, the door to the visiting room. We are directed to hard plastic chairs. I have my favorite place, close to the guard station at the end. I count out change saved all month and buy two flavored coffees – a special treat. I can't stop my feet from tapping as I watch the inmate door.

Today, my man is first. I stand up to greet him. For roughly two hours I forget the doors, forget the guards watching our every move. We talk of dreams and the future. We pray. We giggle. We stroke fingers and palms because we can't touch any closer than that.

All too soon they call five minutes, and cruel reality comes rushing back. Until the next session...

CK: I live in Springfield, Oregon. My fiancée is 12 months into a 20 month sentence currently at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton.

Getting Out of Prison is Never Easy

October 18, 2005 as written by WM in Bozeman

Getting out of prison is never easy. I've had the unfortunate experience of being released many times from jails, prisons and institutions. This time is no different... or is it?

Prior to release I was fortunate to come in contact with Casey Rudd and Connections, a Montana based organization that gives a hand to those who need a place to land upon release. The one thing we all share is having no place else to go, non-existent or estranged family... lives in ruin.

Upon release I convinced the administration at the Great Falls Regional Prison to cut me a check for a hundred dollars, plus \$18.50 for working in the prison laundry. Inmate Welfare Fund By-laws say we are entitled to a particular amount of money from the account that we have as inmates paid into our whole incarceration. I have \$450.00 coming, but I'm told I'm getting nothing. They don't have the account. Finally they say they won't give me money to go and party with. The pressure begins.

I have less than four hours to report to the parole office and a three and a half hour drive to Bozeman. The pressure is on... I'm lucky to have Casey and Eddie waiting early this morning to pick me up (the head honchos of Connections). I don't have to take a bus and spend what little money I have on a bus ticket to start my journey into the unknown.

I find out that on Intensive Supervision Parole (ISP) I'll have to report in daily and account for every hour of my day. I produce an itinerary and a plan for finding employment. I have a few dollars and

My parole officer tells me the screening committee that approved my ISP had reluctantly approved my application but did not really want me in Bozeman.

a few suggestions on where to find work. I'm expected to take the first job that comes along. Washing dishes, flipping burgers, construction, jobs which I'm not able to do. Pressure mounts...

I am Hepatitis C positive and bi-polar. A week ago I had a catheter put in. Four strikes, you're out. The parole officer asks why they didn't know about all of my problems and limitations. All I can say is, "Oh well. I'm here now." Pressure mounts and keeps coming.....

My parole officer tells me the screening committee that approved my ISP had reluctantly approved my application but did not really want me in Bozeman. The committee is made up of members of the community, the Police Chief, parole department staff and social workers. They would give me a shot, but I know I'm on tenuous ground. Pressure, pressure, pressure....The rest of the day I'm in awe, being out in the world again, getting used to the over-stimulation of everything around me. Being around real people, beautiful women and taking the time to smell the roses, coffee, perfume. Peace and quiet, outside at night with no lights, no fences, no prison guards.....

WM is a former prisoner who is living (and working) in Bozeman, MT.

Daily Routine in a Special Offenders Unit

September 25, 2005 as written by RH

6:30 AM I awake to a voice over the intercom in my cell. "Yard. Razor. Phone." I respond.

7:00 AM Breakfast arrives and is passed through a small slot in the door. Pancakes.

8:30 to 9:30 Yard time. Two officers come to escort me to the "silo." I place my hands out the slot in the door and am handcuffed

behind the back. I am asked to kneel down. The door is opened and officers place leg restraints on my ankles, stand me up and attach a leash around the link in my handcuffs. This is regulation for anyone being moved in “segregation.” The silo is a round cement construction 20 feet across and 20 feet high with a screen on top so the sun can shine in. Before being returned to my cell the same process of security restraints is repeated.

9:30 to 12:00 I sit in my cell facing the window. There is nothing to see but the prison. I let the sun shine on my face and hands. My skin is the palest white that skin can be from my time in segregation. I enjoy this time of day the most. Segregation units are usually noisy from yelling back and forth through the steel doors. It’s quiet right now.

12:30 Lunch is passed through a slot in the door. Same meal: soup, sandwich, fruit and cookies. I save the fruit and cookies for later. I start my exercise routine and don’t stop until the officers come to pick up trays.

13:45 Shift change. The officers are going home. After six years I’m due to be going home next May. DOC plans to release me straight from this unit (segregation) into society.

14:00 Counselors bring around books and magazines. I used to get subscriptions to newspapers and magazines. The counselors stopped my subscriptions because I refused to take medication or talk to them “one-on-one.” For this reason I’m not able to get a TV or radio either. I take 2 books.

17:00 Dinner arrives through the slot in my door. Franks and beans. 1 of the 20 different selections we get for dinner. We also get 2 rolls, jello, fruit, and peanut butter. The meal is cold.

20:00 I read the books I received off the cart today. Today is Sunday. No mail today. For prisoners mail or contact from the outside world is one of the few things that really matter. When I do receive a letter I sometimes read it so many times the paper gets thin and oily.

22:00 I push the “call button” and ask for my lights to be turned off. 1 day closer to freedom. I go to sleep.

RH: I am a 23 year-old White male. This is my fourth time in prison. I am in super-maximum security level and have been for the past two years. I work sheet metal by trade.



**Today is Sunday. No mail today.
For prisoners mail or contact
from the outside world is one of
the few things that really matter.
When I do receive a letter I
sometimes read it so many times
the paper gets thin and oily.**



Aerial photos courtesy of Washington DOC

Profiles by Arwen Bird, Kathleen Pequeño, Terrie Quinteros, and David Rogers

Oregon

Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (OADP)

Background:

OADP works for the repeal of the death penalty by promoting research, education, and discussion relating to the death penalty. They have members across the state of Oregon, and have been working since 1984, when they were founded as “The Oregon Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.” Besides education efforts, they correspond with most of the men that are living on Oregon’s death row. Breaking the isolation of people on death row lessens the chance that individuals faced with the death penalty will choose to abandon their appeals. The only executions in Oregon in the last decade have been of two men who abandoned their appeals in 1996 and 1997.

In 2005:

The Oregon legislature faced at least a dozen bills that would have expanded Oregon’s use of the death penalty (generally by expanding the definition of “Aggravated Murder”). This year, bills to expand the death penalty included several new categories of murder (based on the identity of the victims) and also methamphetamine-related legislation. OADP leaders and members attended one-on-one meetings with legislators, testified before legislative committees, wrote letters, and sponsored a one-day rally at the state capitol. Thanks to the efforts of OADP and other groups, none of the proposed expansions of the death penalty were successful.

OADP is also working on a web-based database to share information about who is on Oregon’s death row. In addition to



Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty member Kathy Pugh practicing prior to lobbying the state legislature

informing the public about Oregon’s use of the death penalty, it will also be a resource for attorneys representing these men to share information about legal precedents and the status of cases. The website will go online in 2006.

Oregon CURE

Background:

Oregon CURE is a chapter of International CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants) founded in 1975 in San Antonio, Texas by Charlie and Pauline Sullivan. Oregon has had a CURE chapter since 1991 and now has approximately 400 members across the state. Oregon CURE works to reduce crime by advocating for effective criminal justice policies and practices. For example, Oregon CURE encourages a pro-family policy throughout Oregon’s prison system, in part because of the connection between family contact during incarceration and successful re-entry into the community by people leaving prison.

Prisons in Oregon

Number of Prisons

13 prisons plus one under construction

Number of Prisoners

12,954 people as of 12/1/05

Women Prisoners

990 of Oregon’s prisoners were women as of 12/01/05

State Population

3,594,586 (estimate based on 2004 figures from the US Census)

DOC Budget

The Department of Corrections budget for the 2005-07 biennium is approximately \$1.1 billion.

Death Penalty?

Yes, Oregon uses the death penalty

Racial Disparity

Although Black/African-American people make up less than 2% of Oregon’s population, they make up over 9% of Oregon’s prison population.



Oregon CURE president Cindy Van Loo participating in a training prior to lobbying the legislature

In 2005:

Oregon CURE was one of many Oregon groups involved at the legislative level to help legislators see the impact of corrections policy on community safety. Oregon CURE members wrote letters to legislators, participated in one-on-one meetings, and provided legislative testimony. This was part of a successful effort to stop new mandatory minimum sentenced from being enacted, and part of an unsuccessful effort to stop Oregon from committing to yet another prison. As part of their ongoing support for family members of prisoners, they held monthly orientations for new family members of prisoners, and monthly support groups for family and friends of prisoners. Approximately 50 people attended support groups and orientations this year through Oregon CURE.

Seventh Step

Background:

Seventh Step works to reduce recidivism through transitional services and mental fitness. Seventh Step was founded by Bill Sands, a former San Quentin prisoner, in the 1960's. The Willamette Valley chapter of Seventh Step was founded in 1973.

Their transition support includes county-specific resource packets for prisoners, assistance with parole planning, and an annual "Transitional Fair." They also do more intensive support by and for members in the form of an ongoing six-month class called Pre-release Transition Enhancement Program (PTEP). The program invites DOC staff, Oregon CURE members, victim/crime survivors' groups, and others to talk about job skills and housing options on the outside, along with other opportunities for learning and personal development. In the 2 ½ years since the class began, over 250 prisoners have gone through the class (not all have left prison yet) and there has been almost no recidivism among graduates.

As part of their service to others, Seventh Step has hosted "Victim's Impact" classes for prisoners since 1999 and also conducted fundraisers to allow the members to make a positive contribution to the community.

In 2005:

During the last year Seventh Step engaged in what is quickly becoming known as a "Reciprocal Empathy Circle." Survivors of crime come in to share their stories and talk about the impact violence has had on their lives. What is different about this "Victim Empathy Circle" from previous "Victims' Impact" panels is that the men of Seventh Step also get to share how violence has impacted their lives. It is an attempt to recognize the circular patterns of violence and to recognize that someone in prison may also be a survivor. Seventh Step members see this as an important step in the prevention of future violence and crime.

Seventh Step held a fundraiser for the young son of an annual club visitor. The boy's family received money to help build the child a tree-house he had asked for during his chemotherapy.

Washington

Justice Works!

Background:

Justice Works! was founded in 2003 in the King County area, but now has 1,600 members and contacts across Washington state. Justice Works! (JW!) works to create a safe, affirming and unique community whereby African-Americans, with the support of their allies, use self-determination to solve problems encountered with or created by the criminal justice system.

JW! is made up of teams led and staffed by volunteers working to create change through transition support and advocacy. Support begins with a Court Watch team for

Prisons in Washington

Number of Prisons

15 prisons including two that hold women prisoners, sends prisoners out-of-state

Number of Prisoners

17,825 as of October, 2005 according to DOC (over 750 held out of state)

Women Prisoners

Approx 8% of Washington's prisoners are women, according to WDOC in Spring 2005

State Population

6,131,000 (based on latest figures from the US Census)

DOC Budget

\$1.4 billion for the current budget cycle (annual)

Death Penalty?

Washington uses the death penalty

people facing criminal charges. It continues with incarcerated people working in partnership with outside people to create needed programs and projects. A "Welcome Back" party is one part of the support provided for people re-entering the community. The JW! Education and Media teams lead the advocacy work. Justice Works! is one of the principle groups in the creation of the Washington State Safe Communities Collaborative (see page 21). Justice Works! produces a weekly television show and two newsletters: the Inside -> Out Newsletter written by incarcerated people for those on the outside and the Outside -> In Newsletter written by the outside community for people in prison. The combined circulation of these newsletters is currently just under 1,200.

In 2005:

Justice Works! served nineteen people with Court Watch, and worked with incarcerated people to create eight ROOTS correspondence courses for prisoners. Their transition support work has supported eighty-five people re-entering the community. JW! members have developed four educational plays, including one called "Set Up to Fail" about the barriers people face when returning to the community from prison and how to reduce those barriers. These plays have been performed twenty times in four different counties for audiences at churches, mosques, festivals, community halls, universities, cable television shows, and living rooms.

"Most of us, in the beginning, hadn't done anything like this before. So, we intentionally focused on building a series of small successes upon which to build. By doing that, we were able to prove that we're capable of doing what we set out to do. Recently some foundation visitors were asking us how we manage to do so much with so little... we let them know we're ready for the next level."

Washington State Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

Background:

The mission of the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP) is to unite agencies engaged in the elimination of sexual violence through education, advocacy, victim services and social change. The coalition is made up of over forty sexual assault /crisis programs and supporting members throughout Washington State. The Coalition has begun working on the issue of rape and sexual assault in prisons under a federal grant through the federal Prison Rape

Elimination Act, which was passed in 2003 to eliminate sexual assault in prison.

In 2005:

WCSAP will help create curricula and provide training for people who are entering prison as prisoners and as staff. The Coalition is assisting the DOC in writing and revising their policies and procedures relative to their responses to sexual assaults in prison, including the care that DOC provides to sexual assault survivors and DOC investigations of assaults in both adult and juvenile facilities.

One barrier to accessing and providing services to sexual assault survivors in prison is funding. People under the custody of the DOC cannot apply for Crime Victims Compensation and as a result are unable to access those funds for services such as counseling. Similarly, victim service agencies who use Victim of Crime Act funding cannot provide services to incarcerated victims due to funding restriction within the Act itself. There is significant concern that resources are not available to assist in providing needed support to survivors transitioning out of prison and into the community.

Allen Trimmings, Program Manager for PREA with the coalition, is working to raise the public's awareness about the problem of sexual assault in prison as well as the fact that work is being done to eliminate prison rape. "We care about individuals under the care of the Department of Corrections; just as we care about the communities that they are returning to... that is why this work is so important."

Utah

Citizens' Education Project

Background:

In addition to working to stop prison privateers from penetrating Utah, CEP advocates for social, economic and environmental justice on issues of civil liberties, nuclear

waste, and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

In 2005:

CEP led opposition to the Governor's proposal to move the state's main prison to make way for real estate development. They pushed for the legislature to require opportunities for public hearings and comments in the process of considering relocating the prison. Now CEP is taking on another legislative push for prison privatization. They're building on their previous track record: in 2003 and 2004, they helped torpedo proposals to build a private women's prison and privatize prison medical services. They're continuing their efforts to roll back drug penalty enhancements and newly proposed mandatory minimum sentences for certain offenses.

Prisons in Utah

Number of Prisons

2 prisons and some prisoners held in county jails on a contract basis

Number of Prisoners

According to the Salt Lake Tribune, there were over 6,100 prisoners in UT as of April, 2005.

Women Prisoners

This figure is not reported by UDOC on their website.

State Population

State Population: 2,389,039 (based on 2004 figures from the US Census)

DOC Budget

Not available on their website.

Death Penalty?

Yes, Utah sentences people to death.



PIN Director Marianne Johnstone interviewing newly released prisoner.

CEP was also one of the groups (along with PIN) backing DORA, a state legislature bill that passed in 2005 and will direct a number of drug-addicted people into treatment instead of to the prison system. They also opposed new drug penalty enhancement legislation.

Prisoner Information Network

Background:

Founded by Kent Madsen and Marianne Johnstone in 1995, PIN works with people in prison and people leaving prison to support their successful re-entry into the community. In addition to re-entry support, PIN works with the Department of Corrections (DOC),

Workforce Services and other human services groups to create employment and other opportunities for people with felony convictions. PIN members regularly attend DOC community meetings to talk about concerns raised by prisoners or by family members of prisoners.

In 2005:

PIN provided re-entry services to over 650 prisoners and former prisoners. PIN volunteers greet people at the visiting/release areas of the prison as they are being released on Tuesdays (standard release day). Many others come to PIN's office within 24 hours of their release, and others are transferred to one of Utah's four DOC halfway houses. PIN's volunteers visit the halfway houses weekly. PIN's



PIN volunteer interviewing newly released prisoner.

PIN was a supporter of the DORA (Drug Offender Reform Act) and was also one of several groups who opposed a proposal for the Utah DOC to contract prison medical services to a private company. The legislature listened and the state-run medical system is still in place.

assistance includes transportation, hygiene kits, felon-friendly employment and housing lists, books and clothing. PIN registers close to 80% of these ex-prisoners to vote.

PIN was a supporter of the DORA (Drug Offender Reform Act) and was also one of several groups who opposed a proposal for the Utah DOC to contract prison medical services to a private company. The legislature listened and the state-run medical system is still in place.

This fall, representatives of the prisons-for-profit industry appeared at interim legislative meetings, hoping to convince legislators to open up Utah to a prison-for-profit and looking for other ways private companies can benefit from Utah's prison population. Legislation is planned to ask prison-for profit

Prisons in Idaho

Number of Prisons

13 prisons and work centers, including 1 prison operated for profit by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). As of fall 2005, IDOC was sending prisoners to a CCA prison in Minnesota.

Number of Prisoners

6,677 as of September, 2005 according to DOC

Women Prisoners

11.5% of Idaho's prisoners are women according to IDOC (above national average of 7%)

State Population

1,393,262 (based on 2004 figures from the US Census)

DOC Budget

The Department of Correction's current annual budget is \$118.5 million (2006 fiscal year)

Death Penalty

Idaho uses the death penalty

Racial Disparities

African-Americans make up about half of a percent of the population of Idaho, yet make up about 2% of Idaho's prison population and Latina/os make up about 8% of Idaho's population and make up about 15% of the prison population. Native Americans make up about 1.5% of Idaho's population but 3.5% of the prison population. Figures based on IDOC Quick facts, September 2005).

to build treatment centers to house prisoners. The committee is split on support. PIN will be educating legislators about the true picture of prisons-for profit and the need to reduce Utah's prison population.

Idaho

ACLU Idaho

Background:

Founded in 1993 as an affiliate of the national ACLU, ACLU Idaho works on many issues including freedom of expression, immigrant rights, gay and lesbian rights, prison issues, and voting rights. Based in Boise, Idaho, the Idaho ACLU is currently the primary group that addresses legislative issues having to do with corrections issues in the legislature.

In 2005:

The ACLU partnered with the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence to address the issue of sexual assault of people confined in prisons and jails. Together they approached the Idaho Department of Correction and the Idaho Counties Risk Management Program, the group that insures Idaho's counties and so handles lawsuits against the counties for sexual assaults that happen in county jails. Together the four parties talked about ways to support prisoner survivors of sexual assaults by other prisoners or prison/jail staff.

The current plan will create a hotline available to prisoners (as a toll-free number) that will connect them with existing community-based sexual assault programs. It also calls for a clear follow-up procedure so that if a prisoner needs to be moved for their safety, it can be done quickly. Negotiations will continue through 2006 to determine the best way to support survivors in these circumstances. The ACLU also

Prisons in Montana

Number of Prisons

Montana DOC operates 2 prisons and holds a number of prisoners in 2 contract regional (multi-county) jails, 5 pre-release centers, and a for-profit prison operated by Corrections Corporation of America.

Number of Prisoners

2,776 (not including pre-release) according to MDOC's daily population report on 10/19/05

Women Prisoners

300 of Montana's prisoners are women according to MDOC's daily population report on 10/19/05.

State Population

918,000 (based on latest figures from the US Census)

DOC Budget

The Department of Corrections budget is \$107 million for the current budget cycle (annual).

Death Penalty?

Montana uses the death penalty.

Racial Disparity

Although Native Americans only make 6% of people living in Montana, they make-up over 25% of the female state prison population and about 17% of the male state prison population.

Parole Violations

51% of prison "admissions" are not based on a conviction for a crime --- they are for "technical violations" of parole.

continues to monitor conditions in Idaho's prisons and lead opposition to Idaho's death penalty.

Montana

ACLU of Montana

Background:

The ACLU of Montana was founded in 1973 as a chapter of the National ACLU. Their mission is to advance, preserve, and defend civil liberties and civil rights in Montana. The ACLU takes on voting rights, the rights of immigrants, the death penalty, and issues with Montana's prisons and jails. The ACLU is the only Montana organization that defends prisoners' rights as human rights. Membership in Montana now approaches 2,000 households.

In 2005:

In addition to their work opposing Montana's death penalty and their opposition to expansion of private prisons in Montana, the ACLU focused on improving Montana's public defender system. The ACLU was party to a lawsuit that challenged the constitutionality of the previous public defender system in Montana. They argued that public defense attorneys were underfunded, resulting in poor legal representation and making it more likely that innocent people could wind up in prison, jail, or even death row. After three years in court, the lawsuit was put on hold so the 2005 Montana state legislature could have an opportunity to overhaul Montana's public defense system.

The ACLU worked closely with bill sponsors and other legislators, and brought people who had been affected by poor legal representation (through the old public defense system) to the state legislature to participate in the process of crafting a better system. The legislation called for adopting nationally recognized standards for legal representation, the creation of an eleven-

member public defender oversight commission, and funding research and training for attorneys who are working as public defenders. The legislation passed with broad based bi-partisan support and creation of a new system has begun, and is to be implemented in July 2006. The ACLU is now monitoring this system to ensure it is fair, just and meets

Earlier this year, Connections initiated a letter-writing campaign to let Montana Governor Schweitzer hear from people opposed to the DOC proposal to ship prisoners out-of-state to relieve overcrowding. At the moment, the plan is on hold, but is likely to re-surface in 2006.

the needs of all Montanans who need legal representation but can't afford it.

Connections

Background:

Founded in 1998 by a former prisoner, Connections works for "any positive change" for at-risk populations including prisoners and former prisoners, homeless youth, people infected with HIV and/or Hepatitis C and with intravenous drug users. Connections' services include support for prisoner re-entry, Hepatitis C education and HIV counseling and testing.

In 2005:

Connections assists people with planning for their re-entry into the community. In a typical month, they are working with close to 200 prisoners or former prisoners. Every month, Connections corresponds with approximately 170 people in prison about

their re-entry needs and plans. Prisoners will be anywhere from 1 month to 1 year away from release, and need referrals to potential employers, mental health clinics or medical clinics, addiction and recovery resources, and of course, affordable housing. Once they're released from prison, Connections will help them with transportation or following up with referrals. In addition to the prisoners they're corresponding with, Connections is working with an average of twenty-five former prisoners a month.

At the same time Connections is doing re-entry support, they are registering people to vote and also collecting contact information so that they can keep people informed of key issues to get involved in. With over 2,500 people on their mail lists, Connections is able to mobilize large numbers of people who have been directly impacted by the corrections system in Montana. Earlier this year, Connections initiated a letter-writing campaign to let Montana Governor Schweitzer hear from people opposed to the DOC proposal to ship prisoners out-of-state to relieve overcrowding. At the moment, the plan is on hold, but is likely to re-surface in 2006.

Connections plans to be mobilizing people in support of community-based treatment and community-based re-entry programs that focus on keeping the prison population down, relieving the need to expand the prison system or ship people away from their family and community.



Casey Rudd, from Connections

Working Together for Change

We wanted to profile a couple of “groups of groups” that are working for change in the criminal justice system. We chose one from outside our region, and one from within our region to show different ways that groups can work together.



Scene from the short play, “Set up to Fail”

Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

Background:

Since 1990, Colorado has built twelve new state run prisons as well as four new private prisons. In 1999, the Colorado Prison Moratorium Coalition was formed to fight the absurd level of incarceration growth in their state. A year later the Moratorium Coalition evolved into the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (CCJRC): a statewide network of organizations, faith communities and individuals who have united to stop perpetual prison expansion. CCJRC engages in legislative advocacy, grassroots organizing and public education around drug policy, sentencing reform, prison expansion, and parole reform.

In 2005:

CCJRC was part of a coalition of groups who fought a citywide ballot initiative in Denver that called for a \$600 million bond sale for jail and courthouse expansion. Out-fundraised by over \$750,000, the ballot initiative ultimately passed, but in a 12 week campaign they changed the public perceptions of the issue and turned the election into a close race. Participating in over 60 community debates on the issue and distributing over 120,000 pieces of literature, the opposition campaign built a grassroots base. Some of the money from the bond measure will be focused on alternatives to incarceration and a city commission was created to look at criminal justice reform strategies.

CCJRC has also been working on a Survivor’s Guide to Parole, which will be available in 2006. This re-entry guide will not only identify helpful community resources but will also provide an overview of how to maneuver through the various rules, regulations, and expectations associated with parole. Additionally, the Coalition is shifting their voter education and registration work to take advantage of a new law that provides people still incarcerated but charged with only a misdemeanor the right to vote. They will be building on their 2004 work of voter registration and education in the Denver County Jail.

Washington State Safe Communities Collaborative (WSSCC or “Wisk”)

Background:

WSSCC’s mission is to create change by redirecting public funds from mass incarceration to investment in people, communities, housing, employment, education, health care and other social needs. WSSCC is made up of fourteen groups who work in many different issue areas impacted by the growth of Washington’s prison system, including groups that work on racial justice, immigration, anti-poverty groups, housing advocates, public health experts, employment specialists, educators and more.

In 2005:

The WSSCC member groups began meeting this year to dialog about common ground, develop plans for change and create educational resources for member groups to share. For thirteen different issue areas the WSSCC collaborators have created an analysis that documents the problems created by current public policy and lists specific recommendations for change.

In late November WSSCC hosted its first networking/fundraising dinner. The evening included dinner, live music and a performance of the short play “Set up to Fail,” an educational piece created by one of the WSSCC member groups to dramatize the barriers faced by people leaving prison. WSSCC has also launched its website and is working on plans for 2006, when Washington State will again be faced with the difficult task of finding money for needed social services while paying for a growing prison system (Washington is currently building another state prison at Coyote Ridge). Collaborative members will be highlighting that current public policy is expensive and not nearly as effective in creating public safety as investing in communities and people.

Number of US residents age 12 and over who experienced a property or violent crime in 2004:
24 million

Number of US residents age 12 and over who experienced a property or violent crime in 2003:
24.2 million

Percent decrease in violent crime rates from 2001 – 2004 nationwide:
9%

Percent decrease in violent crime rates 2001-2004 in the west:
17%

Percent of 2004 crimes committed by an offender with a firearm:
6%

2004 Percent of violence against men committed by someone they know:
50%

2004 Percent of violence against women committed by someone they know:
64%

Percent of people murdered in 2003 who were killed by someone they knew:
78%

For every 1,000 people, the number of violent crimes committed against people who earn less than \$7,500 a year for 2004:
38.4

Against people who earn \$75,000 or more a year:
17

Homicides in 2003

Percent of murder victims who were male in 2003:
78%

Percent of murder victims in 2003 who were white:
49%

Percent of murder victims in 2003 who were African American:
49%

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey, September 2005, September 2004

Contact Information For Groups Profiled in this Issue:

American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho

www.acluidaho.org
PO Box 1897
Boise, ID 83701

ACLU of Montana

www.aclumontana.org
PO Box 1317
Helena, MT 59624

Connections

www.connectionsmt.org
1117 N.7th Ave #3
Bozeman, MT 59715

Justice Works!

www.justiceworks.info
PO Box 1489
Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

www.oadp.org
PO Box 361
Portland, OR 97207-0361

Oregon CURE

www.oregoncure.org
1631 NE Broadway, #460
Portland, OR 97232

Prisoner Information Network

www.prisonernetwork.com
Office: 35 S 900 W
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

Mail: PO Box 165171
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

www.wcsap.org
2415 Pacific Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Washington State Safe Communities Collaborative

www.wsscc.net
PO Box 1489
Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Note: Since the majority of these groups are not able to accept collect calls, we have omitted phone numbers.

WESTERN PRISON PROJECT

PO Box 40085
Portland, OR 97240
www.westernprison-project.org
503 335-8449

YES, I WANT TO JOIN WESTERN PRISON PROJECT!

Name _____

Institution /ID # (if nec) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

H or W? _____

Donation amount: _____

Email _____

Suggested membership donations: \$15 - \$25, \$7 for people in prison. WPP relies on member support --- any gift you make above \$25 helps us a great deal. If you are a prisoner or low-income in our region (OR, WA, MT, ID, UT, NV, or WY only), and cannot afford to make a donation, you can still become a member by checking here:

Contact me about making a monthly pledge using my credit/debit card or checking account!

Sign me up for the Oregon Action Alert list Sign me up for Survivors Speak

Checks/money orders can be made payable to Western Prison Project.

You can also give using a Visa or Mastercard by filling in the information below:

Name as it appears on card _____

Signature _____

Visa/Mastercard number _____

Exp. Date _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

WESTERN PRISON PROJECT

A Day In The Life Debuts!

Justice Matters readers are invited to tell us about one day in your life as a prisoner, a survivor of violence or crime, or as a family member of a prisoner or survivor (or victim). Check out page 12 to see the debut of this feature. Want to submit something?

- Please send 500 words or less. If you are handwriting on lined paper, that's the front and back of a page at the most.
- Please type or write neatly.
- Focus on one day or incident (include the date). Tell us what you see, smell, hear. Make the experience real for our readers.

A Day in the Life can cover anything you want to share about the reality of surviving prison, or surviving an act of violence or crime.

Please include:

- Your name and the best way to reach you (mail, phone, or email)
- Do we have your permission to edit? Yes or No You can ask us not to edit, but that makes it much less likely that we will be able to use it.
- Is it okay to publish on our website? Yes or No.

Western Prison Project
PO Box 40085
Portland, OR 97240-0085

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Please include one or two sentences describing yourself. Mail submissions to: A Day In The Life -- WPP, PO Box 40085, Portland, OR 97240

Submissions cannot be returned. Be sure that your name and mailing address are written clearly somewhere on your submission.

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Thank you to the many people who have begun or renewed their Western Prison Project membership this fall. Brigitte Sarabi talks in this issue (pages 3-4) about the importance of becoming a member of the Western Prison Project. Membership dues start at \$7 for people in prison and \$15 for people on the outside.

Check the address label below for the date your membership will expire. Remember, if you can't afford a paid membership, just send us a membership form to let us know that you want to continue to be a member and can't afford to make a contribution. This will ensure you continue to receive Justice Matters. (Free prisoner memberships are only available in our region: OR, WA, ID, MT, NV, UT and WY.) Use the membership form on page 23!

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