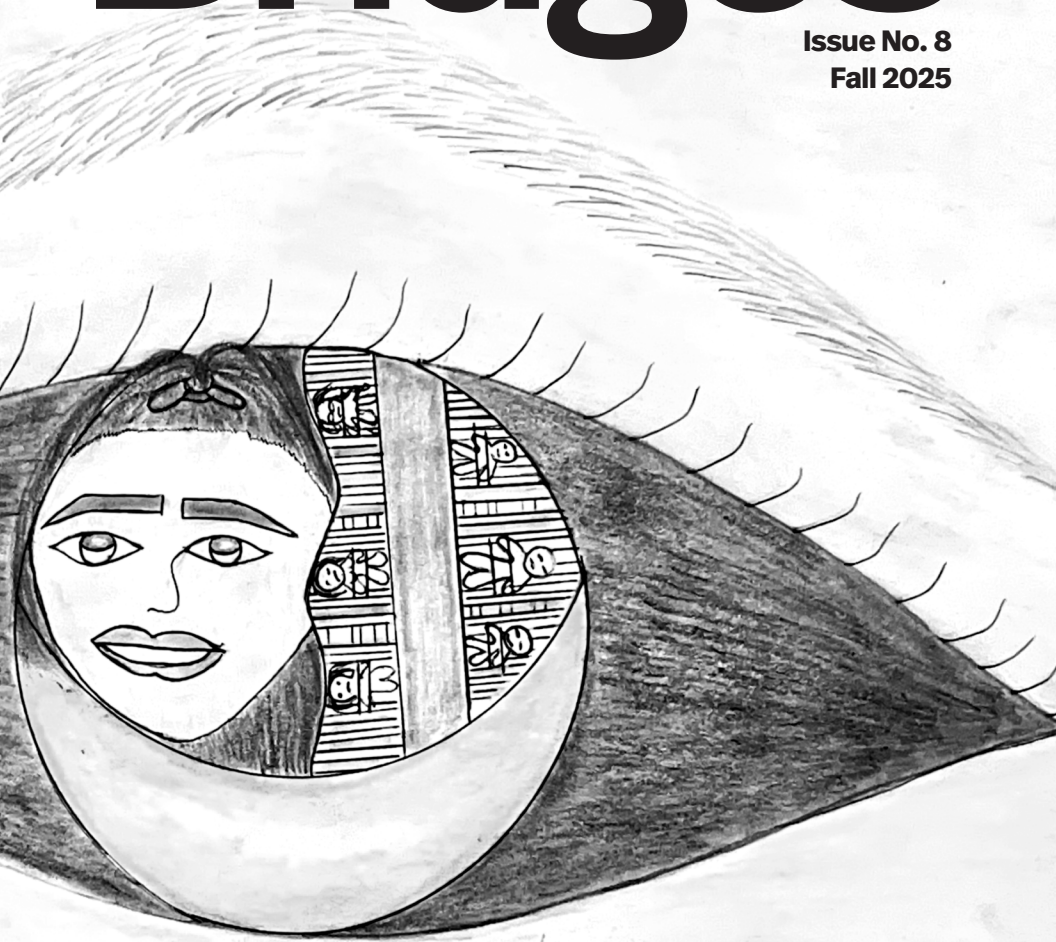


Bridges

Issue No. 8

Fall 2025



In the darkness you can find light

From: Cici

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Cover Artwork: *Even in the Darkness You Can Find Light* by CiCi

Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the eighth edition of *Bridges*, a zine brought to you by Justice Initiatives at Brooklyn Public Library, written by and for individuals incarcerated in New York State.

We open this issue with updates on legislation and events shaping life inside. In June, the state legislature passed the Omnibus Prison Reform Bill in response to the killings of Robert Brooks and Messiah Nantwi. We break down what made it into the bill, what didn't, and what advocates are still pushing for, complemented by a walk-through of new data that shows worsening racial disparities in parole decisions. We also provide an update on Rikers Island, where violence continues as the 2027 deadline to close the Island approaches. Upstate, DOCCS has announced that phone calls are now free, though how this will be implemented remains uncertain. Also in this issue, you'll find an updated reentry resource guide for Albany, Rochester, and Buffalo.

We begin the Writing & Art section with *As Freedom is Given*, where April Stone recounts the emotional, spiritual, and relational work of preparing for release. In *Anonymity's Lament*, Greatness a.k.a. Tracy Boyce explores what it means to create art behind bars, asking questions about authorship, erasure, and invisibility. Theodore Simon offers a sharp critique in his poem *Eureka!!!*, using humor to call out hypocrisy, apathy, and performative despair. In *The State of the New York Inmate*, Jeremy Fulton reflects on life inside New York State prisons, where promises of progress—from tablets to pay raises—often clash with the daily realities of confinement. Elliott D. Morales shares a raw account of childhood pain, addiction, and survival in *Generational Trauma*, connecting his history with a vow to break generational cycles. Alongside these writings are powerful

visual contributions from CiCi and KnaBorn Allah. Together, these works explore ideas of resistance, each challenging what it means to be seen, to survive, and to speak truth within systems built to silence.

We hope you enjoy this issue and that these works inspire your own writing, art, and reflection. As always, we want to hear from you—see the next page for how to submit your work to future issues of *Bridges*, or write to us at the address below:

In solidarity,

Justice Initiatives
at Brooklyn Public Library

Write to us anytime at:

Justice Initiatives—Bridges Zine
Brooklyn Public Library, Outreach Services
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

How to Submit Writing & Art

- ▶ You may submit up to six poems, up to two essays or stories, or up to four pieces of visual art.
- ▶ Submissions can be typed or handwritten. Please keep a copy of your work and provide an address where we can reach you, including your legal name, ID number, and your pen name, if you want to use one.
- ▶ Please specify if you would like your submission to be returned. If so, we will make every effort to either return your work to you or to an outside contact whose address must be provided. If you do not want your work to be returned or do not specify otherwise, we will archive your work at the library.
- ▶ Submission deadlines are rolling—you may submit your work at any time to be considered for future zine issues.
- ▶ If selected, we will write to you within 4–6 months of submission to confirm acceptance and set up payment. We offer a \$100 honorarium for each published artwork, poem, or work of fiction and nonfiction. Thank you so much in advance; we can't wait to see your entries.

Send submissions to:

Justice Initiatives—Bridges Zine
Brooklyn Public Library, Outreach Services
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Welcome Home

Reentry support through the library

Welcome Home is a Justice Initiatives program here to provide you with comprehensive support as you navigate reentry. At the heart of Welcome Home are our Reentry Navigators, Paul Rivera and Donald Washington. Having both been through the system themselves, they know how overwhelming it can be to come home and use their own experiences and perspectives to help guide you through your own reentry journey. They'd love to connect with you ahead of your release and invite you to get in touch using the number or address on the next page.

When asked to describe the program, Paul shares that for formerly incarcerated New Yorkers, Welcome Home is not only "a main support program but a way to restore their humanity and bring them back into society. It helps by making individuals understand that they are not alone in the process and to give them a one-on-one personal approach to help navigate the system that has separated them for so long."

"We help individuals navigate the systems and the bureaucracies they will face, moving forward," Paul explains. "We teach participants how to make meetings, we attend meetings with them to show that they have a support system. This is what the Welcome Home program is about. What they learn from us are things that will continue to guide them and keep them on the path they seek for themselves. It is not something we do that is one and done, we make sure it is something that is continuous throughout."

"What makes Welcome Home special," Donald adds, "is our focus on supporting patrons to achieve their goals. This is our primary focus. Our hope is that patrons walk away feeling empowered and capable."

"We are all committed to the work that we do," says Paul, "in our culture, in our policies and procedures. It's about giving community to one another, helping people join together in unity, I think there is strength in the way we work with each other within our team. We work with a sense of camaraderie, friendship and a common understanding that we are committed to the same cause, knowing that we are all working as one mind and one body as we help individuals not only restore their body but their minds upon returning to society. We hope to continue to expand the community one individual at a time."

Who is Welcome Home for?

The program is available to anyone directly impacted by the criminal legal system, from those arrested without charge to those who have been incarcerated for many years. People of all backgrounds, ages, abilities, and genders are invited to participate.

What services does Welcome Home provide?

- ▶ one-on-one appointments with Reentry Navigators to help you identify your needs and goals and map out your reentry journey
- ▶ guidance on housing, health, reconnecting with loved ones and more
- ▶ monthly dinners where you can join a supportive community of peers and share resources
- ▶ connections to free library services, local groups and the compassionate, dignified help you deserve

Call 929.561.9789 for more information about Welcome Home or **write to us at:**

Justice Initiatives–Welcome Home
Brooklyn Public Library, Outreach Services
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Telestory

Video calls through the library.

If you are in one of the following facilities and you have family in New York City, you may be eligible to join Brooklyn Public Library's TeleStory program:

- ▶ Altona
- ▶ Cayuga
- ▶ Elmira
- ▶ Fishkill
- ▶ Franklin
- ▶ Mid-State
- ▶ Riverview
- ▶ Ulster
- ▶ Washington
- ▶ Wende

TeleStory allows families to make FREE video calls to incarcerated loved ones from the comfort and convenience of a Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) branch. The program is made available as a supplement to in-person visits.

Please note:

- ▶ Video calls are for 60 minutes
- ▶ Family members must be approved by DOCCS
- ▶ Video calls are by appointment only
- ▶ Family members must show identification
- ▶ Video calls are a supplement to—not a replacement for—in-person visits.

Please contact your Offender Rehabilitation Coordinator (ORC) for more information. To apply, request an application from your ORC or call BPL at 718.916.9408.

News & Current Events

Omnibus Prison Reform Bill

On June 13, in response to the killings of Robert Brooks and Messiah Nantwi by prison guards over the winter, the New York State Legislature passed the "Prison Reform Omnibus Bill," a collection of separate measures aimed at increasing oversight of and transparency in New York state prisons. Below, we've included a rundown of what's in the bill, and importantly, what's not.

What's in the Omnibus Bill?

- ▶ Requires that prisons increase the coverage of security cameras to ensure there are no areas within the facility not clearly recorded.
- ▶ Requires any footage related to the death of an incarcerated individual involving corrections officers to be disclosed to the attorney general's office within 72 hours of the death.
- ▶ Requires autopsy reports to include photographs, x-rays and other relevant documentation reviewed by the medical examiner.
- ▶ Requires DOCCS to notify the next of kin and any designated representative of an incarcerated individual of the circumstances surrounding their death and publish a public notice of the death on the department's website.
- ▶ Expands the State Commission of Correction from three to nine members and requires the commission to conduct a study on the deaths in state correctional facilities to provide insight into ways to improve prison conditions.
- ▶ Expands authority of the Correctional Association of New York (CANY) and reduces the advance notice required before visiting a prison from 72 hours to 24 hours.

- ▶ Expands the statute of limitations to three years from the date of release, allowing formerly incarcerated individuals to recover damages from physical, psychological, or other injury or conditions incurred during incarceration.

What's Not in the Omnibus Bill?

After the death of Robert Brooks, State legislators put together a package of 23 bills they called the “Robert Brooks Blueprint for Justice and Reform”. Many of the measures in the Blueprint were not included in the Omnibus Bill. Some of the key ones that were stripped out of the final bill were:

- ▶ **Earned Time Act**—would have expanded the ability of incarcerated individuals to reduce the length of their sentences through “good behavior,” vocational training, and education.
- ▶ **Fair and Timely Parole Act**—would have made it easier for eligible individuals to receive parole.
- ▶ **Second Look Act**—would have allowed for judicial review and reconsideration of excessive sentences, offering an opportunity for incarcerated individuals to present evidence of rehabilitation.

Advocates were critical of the legislature for leaving sentencing and parole reform out of the final bill. Jose Saldana, executive director of Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) Campaign wrote, “Yesterday, both houses of the Legislature conferenced a legislative package/omnibus bill that, whatever its merits, leaves every single one of the ~32,300 imprisoned New Yorkers behind in the very system that murdered Robert Brooks and countless others.”

In order to become law, the bill needs to be signed by the Governor. As we go to press, three months after it passed, the bill is still sitting on Governor Hochul’s desk. She has not indicated whether she will sign it.

New Data on Worsening Racial Disparities in Parole Decisions

A report released in May 2025 by NYU’s Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law found that racial disparities in New York parole release rates have worsened in recent years. Using data directly from New York State’s Parole Board, obtained by Vera Institute of Justice, the study found that from January 2022 through March 2025, the New York Parole Board was 32% less likely to release an individual of color than a white person. This is the widest gap seen in release rate racial disparities since the data began being collected in 2016 (the release rate racial disparity from 2016 to 2021 was 19%). **According to the report, if Black, Latinx, and other prisoners of color had been released at the same rate as white prisoners, 4,150 more prisoners of color could have been granted parole since 2016.**

The new data adds to a growing literature demonstrating the systemic racism entrenched in Parole Board releases, just one part in New York’s carceral system steeped in racism and white supremacy. The report issued the following two recommendations in response:

1. Amending the statute governing parole decisions (Executive law 259-i) to require Parole Board’s to use a person’s current readiness for release as a primary determination in decision-making (rather than solely the crime of conviction)
2. Enacting a provision to grant all people age 55 and over, who have served 15 years or more in prison, parole consideration.

Rikers Updates

People have been trying to close Rikers Island for a long time. Known by many as “Torture Island,” Rikers has been the site of overcrowding, decrepit facilities, numerous deaths, and generalized violence going back at least 30 years.

The jail gained national attention after the death of Kalief Browder in 2013. Kalief was arrested at 17 for allegedly stealing a backpack. He spent 3 years at Rikers, including over 700 days in solitary – repeatedly refusing plea deals because he insisted he was innocent. While there he was beaten multiple times by both Corrections Officers and other incarcerated people. He attempted suicide twice. The charges were finally dismissed in 2013, and he was released. Not long after he died by suicide.

In 2016, the NY’s City Council created the Lippman Commission to study conditions on the Island. The following year the Commission recommended that the jail population be reduced to under 4,000 and that Rikers be closed and replaced by four smaller borough jails. In 2019, the City Council and then Mayor Bill de Blasio passed and signed a law requiring the jail at Rikers to be closed. The deadline for its closing has been set as August 31, 2027.

In the meantime, things have not gotten better on the Island. Although all four borough jails are either under construction or in the design phase, none are on track to meet the 2027 deadline. The jail population was 5,354 when Adams took office; that number is now 7,537. And the violence continues.

12 Deaths this year at Rikers

On September 4th, Carlos Cruz, a 43-year-old man from Staten Island, died on Rikers Island, making him the twelfth person to die this year at Rikers, and the 45th person to die in custody since Eric Adams became Mayor in 2022. Here are the names of the eleven others who have been killed by Rikers this year: Jimmy Avila, Ardit Billa, Edwin Quispe, Christian Collado, James Maldonado, Benjamin Kelly, Dashawn Jenkins, Sonia Reyes, Ariel Quidone, Terrence Moore, Ramel Powell.

Judge Blocks ICE Presence on Rikers Island

On September 8th, State Supreme Court Judge Mary Rosado issued a final order blocking New York City from allowing US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to open an office on Rikers Island.

ICE has been prohibited from establishing a presence on Rikers since 2014 when the City Council passed a law establishing itself as a Sanctuary City. But in April of this year, six days after corruption charges against Mayor Adams were dropped by the Trump Administration, the Mayor issued an Executive Order re-establishing ICE’s presence on Rikers. The City Council immediately sued to block the order.

Judge Rosado’s September 8th decision strikes down Adams’ executive order. The judge cited the “apparent conflict of interest,” since federal prosecutors acknowledged that they dropped the corruption charges against Adams in exchange for the mayor’s cooperation on Trump’s immigration agenda in a quid pro quo arrangement. The City has indicated it will appeal the decision.

Free Phone Calls in New York Jails & Prisons

As we go to press, DOCCS has announced that starting on August 1st of this year phone calls for individuals in NY State prisons will be free. This long overdue policy change finally reverses a system that costs New York families over \$13 million dollars per year in charges for phone calls with their incarcerated loved ones. For many families, struggling to make ends meet as it is, that has meant a choice each month between buying groceries or staying connected with their family members upstate.

Before the 2000s, phone services for incarcerated people were provided by phone companies, but the State added on extra charges that came directly to them – essentially kickbacks. In 1999, for example, under NY State's contract with MCI, 60% of the company's income went directly to the State.

Since then, as mass incarceration has surged, a \$1.4 billion prison phone industry has arisen, controlled by three corporations who continue to charge incarcerated individuals and their families exorbitant rates to stay in touch with each other. In New York, that corporation is Securus.

Going forward, calls from tablets or prison phones will be free of charge. Securus will, however, continue to charge for downloading music and films. Our hope is that the new phone policy will be implemented as promised and encourage you to write us to share your experiences with the new phone policy.

by April Stone

As Freedom is Given

As everything comes together, slowly of course. It seems that it's only the right time to sort out and do all my laundry. It's a "must", (at least common sense,) that all my laundry be done well before my upcoming date of release from the horrid, and brutal phase of my Journey Through Life - that meant for me to be incarcerated for a season.

There seems to be an ever looming question that leads into a myriad of curiosities, like; is the strength to make it through sadistic acts, unimaginable tortures of oppression enough to fill me with the confidence and courage to embrace true freedom, choices, and reaching for all my goals? Is it real enough, to help me in the most important part of my existence - the reclaiming of my life, and doing all I dreamed of, but have not gotten to yet; corrections that I desperately need to make; solidify bonds of love, and cultivation of my family's. All I ever dream of, time will tell the tell-right?

"Anonymity's Lament"

(2004)
by: Greatness
A.K.A

Tracy Boyce

I am not a poet,
these words I speak are not my own.
Without permission, the voices in my head borrowed from,
lent to me on consignment by the Universe in a dream.
My body within, no little songs - nay Shakespearian bone,
it seems.

Home to the unconventional rendition's,
no couplets, trimes nor quatrains,
my audience is perished from birth. Hunched over scraps,
wrestling w/ my novice to keep the editor at bay,
for perfection I search, Church!

Forever lost, my most noteworthy anecdotes are dwarfed
compared to Langston's scribbles.
Stuck in the pose of unweened prose, still born,
and undelivered.

Whence passionless diameter despises pentameter,
rhythm and rhyme doth pine.
Devouring itself alive from within, to escape the curse
of fame's reward upon life's graceless shrine.

Frustration ableeds, no swan reflected save the feathers
of my pen; The grace of an oath, Juliard's deepest regret.
Forever invisible them amongst to walk, mine seal befated,
disowned by my Frankensteins since dawn of days created.

I am not a poet,
these words I speak,
are not my own.

Eureka!!!

By: Theodore Simon

I'm convinced that he's just a two-bit

Time-travelling plagiarist. Yup, that explains it...

He travelled into the future and stole someone else's quotes,

Or at the very least took notes,

Came back and then improvised.

All of his accomplishments? Lies.

You can tell by his eyes.

(The color of his aura)

My mind has been blown, and not in the good way

That you usually have to pay

Twenty dollars for either.

Our teachers, preachers, and leaders

Are all using "the B-word."

So you ask: "What's my problem?"

The answer is absolutely nothing because I've resolved 'em.

Should've caught me a year ago though, I'd have said EVERYTHING.

Anything just to complain.

My brain, back-pain, planes and trains.

The education system. Mass incarceration. Inflation... Deflation.

The Matrix. Rogue international infiltrations. Racists.

Shall I continue? Is this the venue for romanticized insanity?

Profanity in the form of negativity being transmitted verbally?

Oral absurdities? Hypothetical hyperboles?

Issuing invitations to a trip down "memories lane?"

The Matrix. Rogue international infiltrations. Racists.

Shall I continue? Is this the venue for romanticized insanity?

Profanity in the form of negativity being transmitted verbally?

Oral absurdities? Hypothetical hyperboles?

Issuing invitations to a trip down "memories lane?"

Playing the blame game? Cause, I'd rather not if it's all the same.

Such a shame, that you'd waste that beautiful brain, let it decay,

Degrade. All in the name – of being a "realist?"

Funny that everyone who uses that term reeks of pessimism.

Seemingly seeking permission to stop making decisions

Because, "Nothing matters anyway."

Or, "There's no black and white. There's only gray."

And, "Everyday... Sucks. It's just the same 'Plain-Jane,'

"Shit-stained pity parade with 'What's his name,'"

Oh and, "Don't even get me started on those Gays...

"Wait, you're gay? I meant that the gays are GREAT!"

Or, "Did you see her face??? She looked hideous."

Insidious for the fact that it's so contagious.

Being the raging alcoholic who keeps praying

That God'll save him, yet who hasn't tried abstaining.

You know... The basics.

The State of the New York Inmate

By Jeremy Fulton

Still dressed in green with a brand new tablet in hand, the New York Inmate has slowly crawled into the twenty-first century. Finally releasing the need of purchasing outdated cassette tapes as pictures and video of family members and loved ones are only a click away. The state of the New York Inmate looks positive. The governor's office is considering a pay increase that should help the New York Inmate dramatically. Giving them the ability to make more money while in jail to help with daily food and toiletries while lifting financial weights off of their families shoulders. Sadly, there're still some problems that will always outshine any looks of positivity until they are actually fixed.

The need for a sentencing reform for all crimes as a real focus on rehabilitation should be the Correctional Service's actual goal. Understandably, this may not be a popular subject, especially if you have been or known someone that has been the victim of a crime. You really do not feel this as a hardship unless you have gone through the system. The unbalanced amount of time a person gets based on race and financial background is not justice. Then, most inmates are just sitting in prison surrounded by negativity with no further educational experience to give hope a chance for a better future. The tax payer should not be focused on paying to keep people incarcerated for half of their lives. Other countries have lower sentencing policies as they work on a person who will be someones neighbor one day.

Inmate brutality is still a big problem. Despite the new camera installations, and the new body cameras for the Correctional officers, there're still some unprofessional moments. All of which is another stack of problems thrown onto the back of the incarcerated men and women, who are then launched back into society. Maneuvering through a newly shaped society dealing with no sound future, mental and physical scars from jail; while having to explain your record, is counter productive. The State of the New York Inmate still needs changing.

New York City's Riker's Island is set to shut down as the need for smaller operating jails is once again needed. The creation of smaller incarceration units, similar to multiple schools in the same building, it can reduce the entire jail's mentality drastically. Lowering inmate fighting, create proper programming, lower use of force rates and place a better structure in treating psychological problems. The State of the New York Inmate is IMPORTANT. Everyone should be concerned with what our judicial and criminal system actions are at all times. Sadly, it could be you one day as a defendant. You disagree? You may pay taxes and cross the street at the corner but that doesn't stop false accusations, misidentifications, DWI—when you felt fine, emotional distress encounters or deaths from a self-defense moment. These are just some of the situations you can face that has the possibility of having you wearing green. If not you, then your children or your cousin, neighbor and even one or both of your parents. One may think the law would be upon them and still have them knock on your door one day. You should not just judge

from the sidelines, but understand the inner DNA of what a person, supposedly "innocent until proven guilty" faces in the court of law and in jail. Understanding that the state of the New York Inmate is human.

Again, if you have not gone through this or know someone who has, your view is that of a person of the "us" caliber. Because where the light is not shining on you there is no reason to worry about the rays. This same view point comes when there is an earthquake or a hurricane in parts of the country. So many tend to turn a blind eye to that which needs attention since one death in any situation is too many.

Politics does this to the country far too often where if it benefits the other political view then we do not want to do it. As if there is a variation to the definition of the word "United" part of the United States of America. During Katrina, the 2020 fires in California, and New York's Covid-19 battle, most Americans who did not go through those pains just watched "us" v. "them". Some have uncaring thoughts of anyone else's life other than their own and our criminal justice system absorbs the same. The New York Inmate's state of mind is never part of the agenda until there is some sort of scandal or issue where someone dies.

When the Department of Corrections launched a tablet program into its jails, you would have thought that each inmate received a time cut with how the officers reacted. Officers would do whatever they could to delay on Inmate's ability to download songs, music, games, or even emails

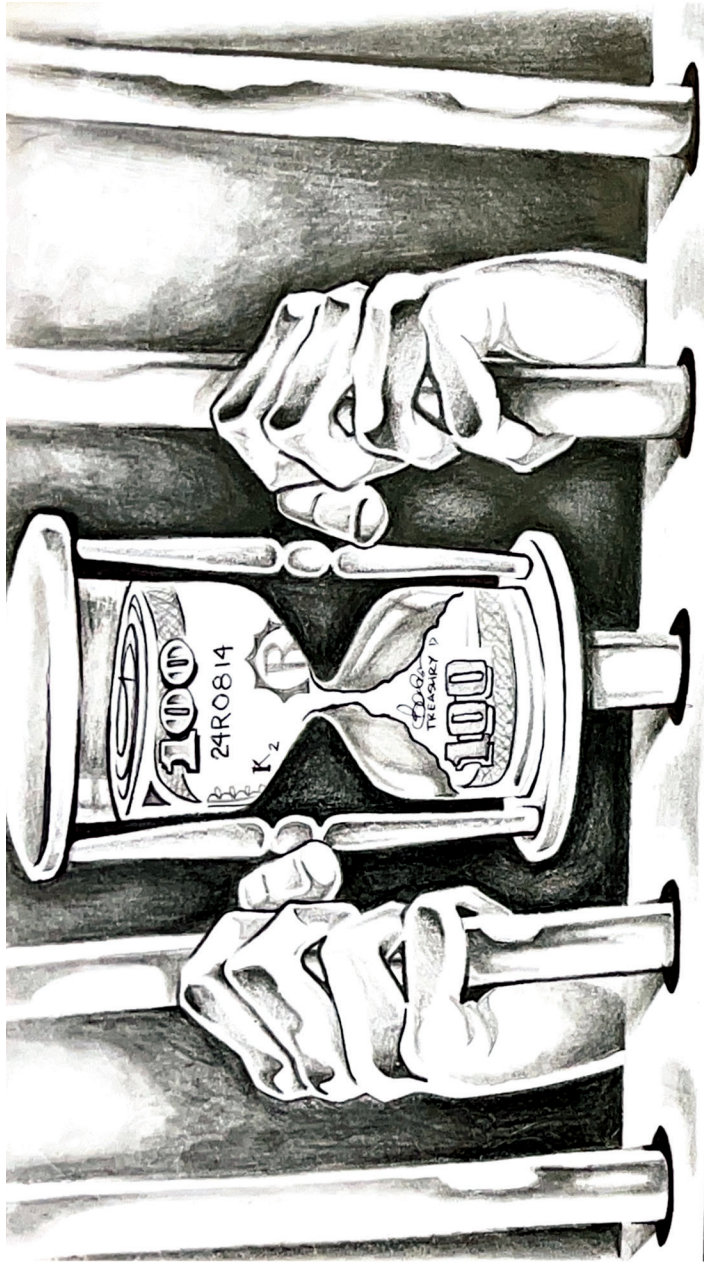
from their loved ones from the kiosk. As if having the ability to play off-brand games is so much of a luxury to inmates, they would rather want to stay in jail than go home. The "us" way of life is always pushing "them" down mentally so that any sign of fun or thought of happiness is infiltrated with depression. The state of the New York Inmate is hardship.

Having the ability to overcome anxiety in prison is equivalent to curing the common cold in a room full of Covid-19 patients. Most inmates have no clue that they suffer from anxiety due to the mindset of not wanting psychological medication. While others cannot go long without medication or else the ability to control thoughts beyond uncertain actions, especially when dealing with their daily challenges. Some Inmates even think if they seek help for psychological needs it will extend their jail sentence with the staff influencing the courts. Anxiety is passed out daily like candy from an old lady in church; managing anxiety in prison is not only done through medication but remedying the triggers. Since the intenseness of prison could have an Inmate facing a situation before them without notice at any moment when their subconscious mind is anxious 24/7; even sleeping is not real rest. Before any remedy can be created, identification of their trigger is important while a series of counter actions are placed until a permanent blocker is found. Triggers are concepted from each person's anxious levels and experience that reacts from seeing an altercation to hearing a book dropped on the floor. Once you know what triggers you and how you should react, training the mind is done through repetition. The State of

the New York Inmate is extreme.

Living in an extreme environment like prison is not mentally easy on a person, guilty or innocent of any crime. Society tends to forget that they too are air-breathing, blood-in-the-vein-pumping, human beings. Many can learn from the anxious battlefield of an Inmate's mind by inquiring about this unwanted source then applying that knowledge gained accordingly. Many feel that what can be learned only comes from the rebuking of their actions, while there so much more to discover behind those bars. Using an extreme situation like prison to quiet the storm clouds gathered in your mind can be highly beneficial to securing mental stability. In the end, you do not have to commit a crime to learn essential daily applications that can make your life on the outside better.

"Us" can be methodical humans that use anxiety in their bidding against any and all of "Them". During the 2020 Covid-19 crisis, Trump claimed he :did not want to cause panic" so he down played the pandemic. While in all of his other speeches he used anxiety to obtain votes for him. From the Mexican rapist' crossing the border to announcing how the Democrats are going to steal the election by voting by mail. In all, the State of the New York Inmate is in trouble, and needs help and a change.



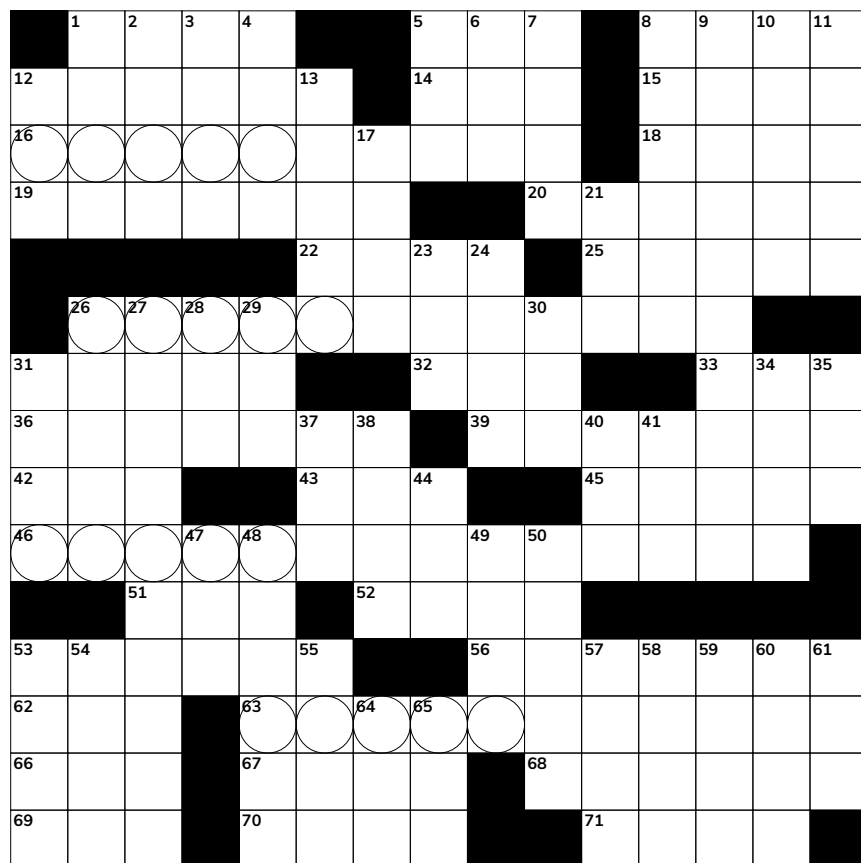
Untitled by KnaBorn Allah

Since a little boy I've been fighting with myself/
I've been dealing with some demons that been messing with my health/
Since they played with my emotions I embraced the way it felt/
Cuz the angels that I called upon would never come to help/
Only time I spent with mommy was when she would get the belt/
So I grew up thinking love manifested into welts/
And it all made sense since they told me love is pain/
So I acted out a lot just so I would get the blame/
But deep down inside I've always felt a little strange/
Cuz both my other brothers weren't being hit the same/
My sister in the bathroom smoking crack cocaine/
While my uncles in the living room shooting up their veins/
Guns on the table, drugs on the floor/
Seven years old and was forced to be mature/
How was I supposed to know it went against the law/
When school ain't ever teach me how to deal with what I saw/
I even had a hard time discerning right from wrong/
Cuz everything I saw growing up was the norm/
The trauma in my life came in all different forms/
So it made it easy for me to get caught up in the storm/
Raised without a father figure, never had a role model/
To erase the pain I made sure I drank the whole bottle/
But deep down inside it stil felt like my soul was hollow/
That's why I lived every day like there was no tomorrow/
I cried for help but it seemed like no-one listened/
Only time I got attention was when I went missing/
Only time I felt alive was when I was drinking/
My stinking thinking's the reason why I kept on sinking/
And it made it hard for me to see how much I was worth/
Cuz the most I've ever smiled was watching the Smurfs/
Ruminating about my past only made things worse/
I was put behind a glass because they said I was cursed/

But I could see the evol in "love" when read in reverse/
So when I said "Ef the world," I wasn't the first/
There's a lot of people like me all over the earth/
That's been dealing with some stress from the time of their birth/
That's why I'm breaking the cycle and re-inventing the wheel/
I'm taking hold of my thoughts so I can control how I feel/
So my behavior's different, and so the hurting could heal/
That way my future is brighter than what my past has revealed!

Sitting in Circles

Nate Cardin



Across

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- 52 Folded Mexican food
- 53 Potato sack material
- 56 People who can sense what others are feeling
- 62 Single-stranded genetic molecule
- 63 Single-serving condiment pouch
- 66 Contribute
- 67 "Frozen" ice princess
- 68 Indulges
- 69 Pedicure digit
- 70 Not shallow
- 71 "___ is more" (idiom that sounds like an impossibility)

Down

- 1 Group of cattle
 - 2 Colorful part of the eye
 - 3 Document for an immigrant
 - 4 "Piece of cake!"
 - 5 "Like a square ____ in a round hole"
 - 6 Sense of wonder
 - 7 Restaurant review app whose name means a sharp cry
 - 8 Chicken tikka ____
 - 9 Dusk-to-dawn cram session
 - 10 Piece of cake
 - 11 Promoted excitedly
 - 12 ____-fi (genre that often features space travel)
 - 13 Endures
 - 17 Gaming novice, slangily
 - 21 Curved chest bone
 - 23 Puggle (pug-beagle mix) or Pekepoo (pekinese-poodle mix), for example
 - 24 Praiseful poems
 - 26 Baby bird's sound
 - 27 New Year's Day event in Pasadena
 - 28 ____ and aah
 - 29 Jamaican music genre adapted by The Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Reel Big Fish
 - 30 "Are we ____?"
 - 31 Spanish equivalent of Miss, for short
 - 34 Have another go at
 - 35 Have a go at
 - 37 ____ up the engine (hit the gas)
 - 38 Give off
 - 40 ____ Arbor, Michigan
 - 41 Single push-up or squat, for example
 - 44 Canada's neighbor to the south
 - 47 ____ Jon (rapper who placed third in a bodybuilding contest in 2025)
 - 48 Cleaned the whiteboard, say
 - 49 Slurpee alternative
 - 50 That extra something
 - 53 Annoying kid
 - 54 Reverse the effects of
 - 55 Drained of color
 - 57 Actor Rudd of "Ant-Man," "Anchorman," and "I Love You, Man"
 - 58 Wile E. Coyote's supply company
 - 59 Certain boxing victories, for short
 - 60 That girl's
 - 61 Wall, Main, and Sesame: Abbr.
 - 64 Take advantage of
 - 65 Snapback or fitted hat

solution on page 39



Brooklyn Public Library patron carrying books to or from the bookmobile in a shopping cart, 1950s. Source: Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History.

Upstate Reentry Resources

In this section, we provide a guide to some of the organizations providing reentry services in three upstate counties: Albany County, Monroe County (Rochester), and Erie County (Buffalo). Each county has a Re-entry Task Force, through which most services are coordinated. Individuals can connect with the Task Force through their ORC pre-release, through their parole or probation officer post-release, or by calling the office directly once they are in the community. Each also has an employment program run by the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO). See below for details.

Albany

Albany County Re-entry Task Force (CRTF)

c/o Department of Mental Health
260 South Pearl St.
Albany, NY 12202
(518) 447-2003

Services:

FIRST STEPS

- ▶ The Task Force will provide assistance getting IDs, including birth certificates, Social Security Cards
- ▶ They will cover the costs of a birth certificate, a non-driver ID or a Driver's License, including the renewal of a license that was expired.
- ▶ If an individual wants to get a driver's license, they will also pay the cost of a five hour class for the permit.
- ▶ The Task Force will also provide each individual with a 30-day unlimited bus pass for the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- ▶ Assistance with setting up a health insurance plan
- ▶ Each person is assigned a Case Manager when they enroll.

EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ Ready, Set, Go—a 10 session job readiness program (two sessions/week)
- ▶ CRTF partners with the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)—see below for details
- ▶ The Task Force also partners with the NY State Department of Labor (DOL) for employment services and job development
- ▶ DOL has a Commercial Drivers' License (CDL) Simulator

HOUSING

- ▶ The Re-entry Task Force provides referrals to housing services
- ▶ In Albany, housing organizations partner in a consortium and use “coordinated entry” to ensure a single point of entry to the system.
- ▶ Housing placements follow HUD (Housing and Urban Development) guidelines. Individuals are not placed first-come, first-served, but on the basis of need.

OTHER SERVICES

- ▶ The Re-entry Task Force also provides referrals to organizations in the community for a range of other services.

Capital Region Connections

Center for Law and Justice, Inc.
Pine West Plaza Building 2
Washington Ave. Ext.
Albany, NY 12205
Phone: (518) 427-8361

The Center for Law and Justice publishes Capital Region Connections, a resource guide for Capital District residents presently or formerly incarcerated and their families. The full publication is available on their website (www.cflj.org/connections), if you need help accessing a copy, please feel free to contact us or The Center.

Rochester

Monroe County Re-Entry Task Force

c/o Delphi Rise
72 Hinchey Rd.
Rochester, NY 14624
(585) 467-2230

RAWNY—Reentry Association of Western New York

186–188 N. Water Street
Rochester NY, 14604
Phone: (585) 851-8886

RAWNY is a reentry organization in Monroe County offering wraparound services for people coming home from jail and prison.

ELIGIBILITY

- ▶ RAWNY provides reentry services to individuals 18 years and older
- ▶ Generally services are limited to people released within the last year or under supervision
- ▶ However if a person did an exceptionally long bid and have been out for longer than a year, they will serve them as well.

FIRST STEPS

- ▶ Bus passes, welcome home kits (backpacks, toiletry needs, socks, etc.) for people recently released
- ▶ Help securing ID, birth certificates, social security cards, etc.
- ▶ Help getting set up with health insurance
- ▶ In house peer groups/mentoring led by formerly incarcerated staff.

EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ Mostly one on one. Employment Specialist meets with individuals to determine their needs; works with the person where they're at. Help preparing a resume if they need that.
- ▶ If they want to find a job quick, the Employment Specialist connects them to temp agencies they work with
- ▶ For training/longer term skill development, they connect people to partner organizations
- ▶ If they need to develop job skills, RAWNY connects them to a 6 week program (3 days a week), where they can learn some basic carpentry skills and get workplace experience.
- ▶ Once they're done with that, they meet with a job specialist.

EDUCATION

- ▶ Education specialist works one on with folks. In some cases, tutors them in GED prep. Helps also with other educational needs

HOUSING

- ▶ If folks are homeless, they most often refer them to emergency services offered by DHS.
- ▶ In some limited situations, they can refer them to a local organization that runs a shelter with a smaller setting. But that depends on whether there's available space and the person is the right fit.
- ▶ They can provide a security deposit and/or first month's rent for a person who is moving into an apartment – if they will have the means to pay the rent going forward.

MEDICAL

- ▶ Through a partnership with the University of Rochester, they offer a medical clinic twice a month.
- ▶ They also have a partnership with a mental health provider

Moving Forward at Rochester Public Library

Rochester Public Library digitally publishes reentry resources and strategies for overcoming barriers from arrest and conviction records on the Moving Forward webpage (www.roccitylibrary.org/services/outreach/moving-forward). If you need help accessing information from the website, please feel free to contact us or Rochester Public Library.

Rochester Public Library – Moving Forward
115 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604
(585) 428-7300

Buffalo

Erie County Re-entry Task Force

c/o Spectrum Human Services
1280 Main St.
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 385-2724

Peaceprints of Western NY

1001 E. Delavan Ave. #22
Buffalo, NY 14215
(716) 856-6131

Peaceprints has two main components:
Bissonette House and Project Blue

BISSONETTE HOUSE

a residence for men recently released from incarceration.

- ▶ Eligibility: a referral from P.O.
- ▶ There are 24 beds and residents can stay for up to 120 days.

PROJECT BLUE

a community based program with intensive case management

- ▶ Eligibility: participants have to be 18 years or older, have been in jail or prison, or have some other criminal justice involvement.
- ▶ Services:
 - ID – upon release, project staff help participants acquire ID they will need.
 - Employment – mostly one on one. An employment specialist works individually with participants on job readiness, helps them build resumes, acquire interview skills and clothing. Then the Employment Coordinator places them in employment through referrals to employers with whom they have built relationships over the years.

- Project Blue has linkages to other community organizations that provide housing, mental health services, education programs, etc.
- Food pantry – for local residents and program participants
- ▶ Project Blue works with participants for up to 12 months

Back to Basics Ministries

971 Jefferson Ave
Buffalo, NY 14204
(716) 854-1086

ELIGIBILITY

- ▶ Back to Basics Ministries provides reentry services to men and women 18 years and older
- ▶ Generally individuals are referred through the Erie County Re-entry Task Force or through their probation officer
- ▶ However, they also accept walk-ins and people who are referred through their family.

PROGRAM BASICS & SERVICES

- ▶ Back to Basics is built on a “Credible Messenger” model. Many of their staff are formerly incarcerated themselves and have experiences similar to those of their participants. Credible Messengers offer mentoring and guidance to support participants’ successful re-integration into the community.

EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ Mostly one-on-one. Employment Specialist meets with individuals to determine their needs; works with the person where they’re at.

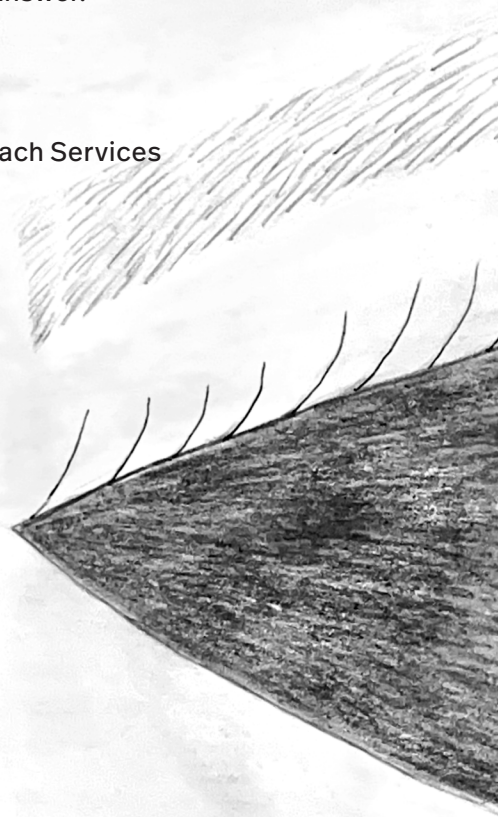
Contact Us

As library workers, we believe that access to information is your right! Have questions about something? It can be about almost anything: recipes, sports, history, nature—whatever comes to mind. Send us a letter and we'll find the answer.*

Write to us at:

Justice Initiatives
Brooklyn Public Library, Outreach Services
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

*NOTE: At this time, we can only answer letters and questions from individuals in New York State. We cannot answer questions about someone's personal address or information.



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