

We want to hear from you!

We welcome your:

- Letters responding to this edition
- Artwork (black and white)
- Articles
- Poetry
- Ideas
- Commissary recipes
- Contribuciones en español son muy muy bienvenidos!

Send to:
Hearts on a Wire
1315 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Next issue:

We are hoping to include some discussion about **hate crimes legislation**.

Background: There was recently a pretty brutal gay-bashing in Philadelphia, and as a result there has been a push to add sexual orientation and gender identity to Pennsylvania's hate crimes enhancements. In the outside collective we have been discussing this, and there are conflicting strong feelings both for and against hate crimes laws, and we would like to include voices from the inside in the discussion.

Questions to get you started: So what do you think? Do hate crimes laws provide any protection? Is strengthening the power of the police and prosecutors to lock people up ever a good idea? Since there is a list of people it is especially not OK to target because of their membership in a group, shouldn't LGBT people be on that list? Is there a way to respond to our communities' experiences of violence and need for safety that does not depend on the criminal legal system? What does "justice" mean?

If you contribute something, make sure you tell us:

1. **Exactly how you want to be credited** [anonymous, your legal name & ID number, the name you use, your nickname]
2. Whether it's OK to say the facility you are/were in
3. **Please respect other people's privacy**; only make disclosures about yourself.

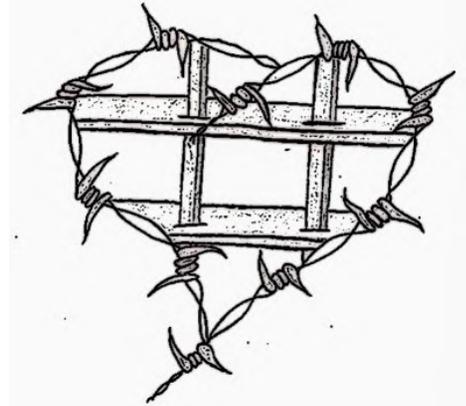
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If you would like **Hearts On a Wire** mailed to you, write to:

Hearts on a Wire
1315 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Subscriptions are **FREE** for incarcerated and detained people.

Hearts On A Wire



Issue 13

Fall 2014

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♥ support incarcerated and detained trans and gender variant people ♥

♥ build community through bars ♥

♥organize for justice ♥

Hearts On A Wire

We are trans and gender variant people building a movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and an end to policing and imprisoning our communities.

We meet in Philly at William Way Center 1315 Spruce Street

Tuesdays at 5:30pm

tokens provided
heartsonawire@gmail.com



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Letter from the Outside Collective

Dear Hearts on a Wire Community:

Since our last issue, Hearts on a Wire's outside collective has started to make homecoming grants. We were the focus of a feature article in the Philadelphia Inquirer that included interviews with several of you on the inside, and were guests on Decarcerate PA's radio show on WPEB 88.1FM.

**Welcome Home
Miss Brakie!
You're Almost There
Miss Jayme!**

Many of us attended the Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, the Prison Health Summit, and the Prevention Summit. One of us attended the first ever National Conference on HIV criminalization in Grinnell Iowa. One of us sat for the Pennsylvania bar exam. Everyone cross your fingers for Mal.

At the same time, the Outside Collective has been having a serious lull in meeting attendance (due to people having complicated lives, and not because people don't care) which is affecting our capacity to do our core work. Publishing this newsletter and distributing it to folks on the inside remains our top priority. We are looking for ways to re-energize our outside collective membership and are hopeful that the next newsletter won't have such a long delay.

Love always,

Hearts on a Wire Outside Collective

Homecoming Grants

Hearts on a Wire's Homecoming Project is a small grant for transgender and gender variant people coming back from prisons and jails in Pennsylvania who have been away for longer than 6 months. You can receive this grant only one time.

If you are coming home soon, please write to us and request an application!

**Hearts on a Wire
Homecoming Project
1315 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107**

From the Mail

Disclaimer: We get a lot of mail, and cannot publish every letter we get. If you write to us responding to something you read, please let us know (1) if we can print an excerpt from your letter, and (2) how you would like to be credited.

Harassment

It is really hard here in this all male prison. Most of the CO's are ex-military and don't believe women have any rights anyway and treat you anyway they want. I just keep walking and report it to unit manager. Now our regular CO's don't do it anymore as they know I encourage all inmates to report the nasty sex thing they say to all of us. I know that they want me to snap but I won't give them what they want.

Thank you Hearts on a Wire family. You all give me courage.

-Susie Lynn Moon @ SCI Rockview

To Hearts on a Wire

Thank you for accepting me into your family! It just really sucks how some people could be so mean to others just cuz of who they are. Here is a little drawing:

Keep up the Good Work.

-Luis A. Vega

Letter to the Young Ones

I'm writing because I want you to know that Hearts on a Wire has made me feel that I'm not alone.

Before coming to prison I used to be involved in the gay community as was well accepted, but prison is a whole different place. I find that the younger people don't understand. We're talked about and looked at as trash. I have found myself not letting people know that I'm gay because I don't take well to people talking about me. I am proud that finally in PA we can get married. I never thought this time would come in my lifetime. I look forward to returning to the streets knowing that I have a chance to meet someone and maybe get married. I want the youth to know that freedom in in who you are isn't wrong. be who you know you are. Be strong young people because unity is the true way for the community to be accepted in the world, and in prison. Freedom isn't just leaving prison. Its being free to be who you are. For the young ones that think they don't have a chance to live because they have time to do, I'm living proof that time doesn't do you, you do the time.

Now after almost 20 years in prison I will leave here and can live my life as I always wanted to be. I'm proud and strong and nothing the DOC can do can change that.

Hold your head up and be proud of who you are!

-J. Wilk Proud @ SCI Forest





CAPRICORN – You are the biggest prize at the fair, carried upon the shoulders of its winner along with a corn dog, cotton candy, some funnel cake, and a fizzy drink. Anyone who gets to bathe in the glory of you and all the delights that surround you is currently feeling not only proud of you but also proud of themselves for having the good sense to keep you around. Now is the time to question your worth or your esteem. Open your eyes, ride the biggest roller coaster you can find with your hands up over your head, and take comfort you can find in the fact that you are the winner and the winnings combined. Flawless...

You have rightly noticed, **AQUARIUS**, that now is the exact correct moment to begin to end all of your statements with a question mark all of your questions with a definitive period. Do not take hard line positions when you could open up fact to numerous and sometimes, admittedly, conflicting possibilities. On the other hand, you do not want to risk asking for something you need and having those around fail to meet your requests. If you remain steadfast in your boundaries but soft and fuzzy with your preconceived notions, you will be pleasantly amused if not completely taken by all things to come...



PISCES – If you woke up tomorrow and everything around you was monochromatically pink, would you miss the large spectrum of color previously available, or would you be wowed by all the cotton candies, bubble gums, magentas, and hot, hot pink? I ask, **PISCES**, because what may soon initially present itself to us as devastating loss could in fact open up a ticket to becoming more rosy and gay. Do not lose sight

of the daily colors of your spectrum, but I challenge you to do whatever it takes to bring out your softer, pinker, hotter you...

Love (pronounced Luv) is pure action! (excerpt)

by Pablo

Imagine you were luvd, but didn't know it... How many lovers can, with proof, truthfully say they know? True luv must be both seen and felt.

The greatest thing about luv is not loving or being luvd; oh yes, these are a great experience to luv and be luvd in return! But the greatest thing about luv is **KNOWING**... You having that undoubtful knowledge that you are deeply luvd, you knowing trustfully that you are intensely and dearly connected to that someone...

The crazy unexplainable thing about this type of luv is that the **KNOWING** can only come after a fight, after the anger, after the cry, and after the moment of difference! It's these moments that provide the lovers with the depth of their luv, it's these moments that clearly define the measure for two people to know that they together are in the embrace of someone that truly cares...

DEAREST, I can truthfully say with proof that I've been highly favored and blessed with the opportunity of a lifetime.

PA DOC Issues Policy Recognizing Transgender Prisoner Issues

Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

In June of this year, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections issued DC-ADM 008, which seeks to bring the system in compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act final rule of 2012. The provisions of this act, although binding on federal facilities, are required to be adopted by state facilities under penalty of loss of funding. After reviewing this policy, it turns out that the DOC, at least on paper, has taken into account several of the major issues affecting transgender inmates.

The new policy includes the following concessions towards our community:

- Section 2(A)(8) specifies that, absent exigent circumstances, no cross gender patdowns should be done on inmates, that staff of the opposite gender must announce their presence in the room, and that transgender inmates may not be searched solely to determine genitalia status.
- Section 2(B)(2)(g) states that LGBTI inmates should be considered as potentially vulnerable to sexual abuse in terms of initial screenings.
- Section 2(C) is a big one, it states that in determining whether to place a transgender inmate in a male or female prison, they have to do it on a case by case basis, and that the transgender inmates views of their own safety should be given a lot of weight in this process, and that transgender inmates should be able to shower separately from other inmates. It also states that every six months, the PREA Compliance Manager should reassess the placement or program assignments of a transgender inmate to document news threats of safety, and even has a "Transgender/ Intersex Reassessment Validation Form (Attachment 2-G)" for this purpose.

Other major points of DC-ADM-008 include: designating the Corrections Classification and Program Manager at each facility as a compliance manager for this policy [Section 2(A)(1)(b)], bans usage of protective custody to "protect" vulnerable inmates unless all other options have been weighed [Section 2(A)(5)], requires that corrections officers learn how to communicate with LGBT populations [Section 2(E)(1)(a)], freeing inmates from the grievance process and allowing for an option to call a telephone number (1-800-472-8477) to be displayed at all inmate phone banks) leading to the PA Crime Stoppers Tip Line, thus allowing for an outside reporting mechanism.

It is safe to say that **POLICY DOES NOT ALWAYS EQUAL PRACTICE** and that it is up to all of us on the inside and outside to make sure that the DOC is accountable to this policy for it to have any meaningful impact on the lives of trans inmates.

Love Unconditional

Bam Bam
@ SCI Forest

The Fires of my
loneliness
Once filled my life
with much distress,
And constantly they
did suppress
My every chance at
Happiness
In truth I lost all zest
for life,
And every day was
filled with strife,
Until, that is, the
day you came
Into my life and
called my name,
With tenderness
you gave to me,
The strength to set
my spirit free,
And then you
showed me
lovingly,
How wonderful my
life could be.

As our new
relationship grew
and grew,
a joyous feeling did
ensue.
I know that I was
born anew,
when I realized my
love for you.

This new love has
bound I cannot see,
it is universal
poetry;
and with its
durability,
It shall continue
endlessly.

4

Why I'm Maxing Out

Angel De Jesus

The only obstacles are the people who work there. The "inmates' best interests" isn't what they have at hand for us. I was paroled April 14 2014. After serving 1 1/2 years. It's probably a small bid (time) for some but for my first time it felt like an eternity. I was paroled to Pittsburgh (I am from Philly).

Once I arrive at the 1/2 way house an-employee sees me and goes off talking about I shouldn't have come there dressed as a female now she is going to make sure "they" keep a close eye on me. She confiscates all my belongings claiming my female clothing is considered contraband!

On April 15th my counselor calls me to do intake. We speak and I explain to her what happened and she tells me it's all bulls*\$t and returns my belongings. As soon as the person who took it sees what happened she calls my counselor. I guess to complain. I put my belongings away and go to eat breakfast. Once I am eating I hear them call my name so I go to the front desk. The lady with the vendetta is standing there smiling while I walk up. She then orders me to face the wall and pat searches me. She asks if I have any contraband or controlled substance on me. I reply "No." In no time the cops are there to take me back to jail on "Contraband, possessing of contraband or drug paraphernalia."

I beat the charges after sitting in Allegheny County Jail for a month and 1/2. The parole board still gave me a 6 month hit (meaning I have to do six months jail time as punishment). That is why I believe it's better to max out as I am going to do now. So my future isn't in someone else's hands.

Hormones Fight Win!

Susie Lynn Moon

As far as I know I am the first to receive hormones in the PA DOC that wasn't taking them prior to coming here.

That is a big win!

However, it was a long process of evaluation and then a long wait for the treatment to begin but for me it is worth it as I no longer hide who I am behind drugs and alcohol. And I stood up for myself and I share my dual diagnosis recovery with all I can!

**Congratulations to
Ms. McC. and Mariah
who also recently
started receiving
hormones!**

on the line between too much and not enough. EASE those around you into tasting what you have to offer and you will have an easier time keeping the banquet under control.



Well hello **VIRGO** – Surely you already know that you are getting more delightful and witty as time passes along, but I'll remind you in this astrological moment that in the coming months you will not only gain a very becoming (and I must say radiant) sense of yourself but critical advice you offer those around you will enrich everything and everyone who has the benefit of taking the time to listen to any unsolicited advice you may dole out. You are a tiny kitten dancing on a surfboard in an orange sunset over a skyline of alien hovercrafts and raindrops and rain. Do not forget your fabulousness and you will manage to help those closes to you make tough decisions and overcome significant pain.



LIBRA – You may have noticed that with Saturn shifting across the course, small details that normally feel completely unimportant now appear to hold the utmost significance. The tone in a stranger's voice, scuff marks on a floor, the taste in your lover's mouth, and the cuticles on your nails now suddenly seem to hold more meaning than a secret diary. What to make of all these tiny signs the Cosmos is sending your way? My recommendation is to simply observe without judgment, anything that you take to be attention grabbing, interesting, or even mundane. The details may not carry answers or warnings or even advice but right now they will inspire a pause and a much-needed break that will allow you to push your own limits when the time comes in the not-so-far-away...

SCORPIO – You are a tenderheart in this astrological moment. It might feel like you are being "too sensitive," but I am here just to offer the gentle reminder that there is, in fact, no such thing. Mercury and Saturn urge you now to feel all the feelings and to cry boxes and boxes of Kleenex into a sea of emotional mermaids and tiny fish, swimming in a lake of pineapples, pansies, persimmons, and whatever else you can drag up from below the emotional surface. Your tender heart will benefit not only you but all those nearby that can pick up some of the release that comes with this outpour of whatever may come. Do not be bullied into stoicism...remain on the verge of tears.



SAGITTARIUS – In the coming months, your skills for telling the best jokes, laughing the catchiest laughs, and making the friendliest friends will come in handy in getting you not only the most social advantages but also in concrete outcomes for whatever else you would like to accomplish. Everyone who is cackling at your wittiest puns is also eager to help you construct whatever solid or metaphorical thing will make a giant chunk of progress in an unfinished project, goal, or idea. If you can use the irresistible pull of your own charm to get down and dirty in your own work with the help of those already around you, your budding relationships will not only flourish but I envision you will be more than satisfied with the results.



continued on next page...

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Baby, What's Your Sign? by Anonymous



ARIES – You are stunning! Whatever it is that you've been doing to update your look, put a skip in your step, and challenge your mind, is working like a tiny charm that is lodged inside a heart-shaped locket and then strung on a flawless golden chain. Good work! With the planets shifting as Mercury moves out of retrograde I encourage you to spread your glory with those around you. The tips and trips that have been making you sparkle can be shared, and we all hope you are feeling generous.

TAURUS – You have been taking aim. You have targets and goals ahead and you are shooting toward them with every ounce of direction and power at your disposal. In light of recent planetary shifts and upcoming solar configurations, I certainly encourage this progress dazzling display of ambition. You are sparked and charged to progress gaily forward. However, I must advise you that it may also be quite pleasurable and even educational to begin to aim not just for the center but also to veer wildly off course. Looking not for straightforward, goal oriented outcomes but also attempting to waver and explore will yield a treasure that is equally bizarre and unexpected.



GEMINI – You have been having some strange dreams lately – perhaps they are the kind of hot and steamy shower scenes where everybody remains fully clothed, or perhaps they involved coordinated aerobics workout routines in matching purple jumpsuits and violet beehive hairdos. What the stars are saying about this nightly trips is that whatever is going on in your subconscious right now can actually tell you a lot about how to behave in your relationships. If you are dreaming of swan diving into a fountain of chocolate, this is the week to divulge something sweet to a crush. If you dream of slowing morphing into a glimmering blue gemstone in a velvet case, it could be the time to give a loved one a compliment or a back rub. Pay attention to the subtle clues of the night, and you will surely SHINE bright like you always do.



CANCER – You have us all on the edge of our chairs with what to us feels like birthday cake but to you just feels like toast. While you walk through the world with a careless ease, we remain taken by your high style, your girlish giggle, your charming smile, and your playful gaze, even when you aren't even gazing at anything in particular. We all dream that you might be gazing at us. Why are we clinging to your every word and savoring your every glance? Well, that is because you have a delicate wonder that will only increase in the coming months. Do not be afraid that acknowledging this power will make it disappear. It will, in fact, only enhance its reach and keep the rest of us waiting at your wings and begging on our knees for more, more, more.



LEO – This season is heating right up and you are hot pants, radiator, smoking, fire. It is hard to say whether those around you will be delighted to roast marshmallows in some of your heat or whether the extreme temperatures you are bringing to the forecast may be perceived by some as “a little bit much.” What the stars are warning, Leo, is not to tone down the glow that makes you, well, you, but to tread carefully



Successful Appeals Over Alleged Censorship: Security or Obscenity Issues

Anonymous

1. Initial memo is issued by the Incoming Publication Review Committee (IPRC) stating reason or reasons as to why a publication or magazine or newspaper, etc., was being withheld.
2. Make two copies of this memo and do the 1st level IPRC superintendents appeal and send one copy of memo with it to him stating reasons why you feel publication should be sent in and relief sought which must be done within 7 days from the date of memo. Even though it is done on a grievance form, it is not considered an official grievance nor is it issued a grievance number, as like with general grievances.
3. You will receive either your publication, if overruled and approved, or a superintendents denial as such to why not.
4. Do your final appeal to central office and attach copies of initial memo, your superintendents appeal, your superintendent's denial, four pages in total to be sent is a must! Fill out both appeals and all sections and always sign your name and submit within stated time frames.
5. You will receive either your publication, if overruled and approved, or final appeal denied as such to why not.

The IPRC appeals procedure is much easier and less paperwork than that of a general grievance submitted. I always appeal since someone took the time to send me notice, I reciprocate with afforded procedures since either the supt. or final appeals director cab always overrule initial memo decision.

Be advised though that a publication withheld for security reasons can be difficult to overturn/overrule, but not impossible although the odds here are against you for the so-called overall good and safety and security of the prison.

Also be advised that a publication withheld for obscenity issues are much easier to have decision reversed but you have to cite reasons why and it is contingent upon the publication. For example, Playboy, Penthouse, Easyriders, Hustlers, or any of Larry Flynt's magazines, Playgirl (Yes this too), you can forget about appealing as these all will always be denied since the magazine's intent initially intended for sexual arousal. While magazines such as Esquire, MAXIM, GQ, Details, Vogue, Rolling Stone, Complex, Interview, Star, U.S. Weekly, Vanity Fair, etc. all have other literary benefits, despite depicting a nude section, which is considered “incidental nudity” subsequent to the publication's initial reasons. (Art, photography, National Geographic all okay).

Always remember the initial memo is not written in stone and you have two appeals in which to pursue to hopefully overrule this. Keep in mind that if the mailroom staff continually issue memos over frivolous withholdings, if you were superintendent or other staff involved would you appreciate having to constantly do extra paperwork?? A valid reason is one thing. A frivolous reason is wasteful and time consuming....



Call For Submissions

Dear Hearts on a Wire Community:

The Outside Collective is working with another Philadelphia-based group called the Philly Survivor Support Collective. PSSC offers support to people who have experienced sexual abuse or assault. They help survivors attain a sense of justice and safety while consciously avoiding the legal system and envision a world without sexual violence. Often, survivors don't find that the legal system is useful or helpful in their healing process and it that it increases harm.

We plan to collaborate with PSSC on a booklet that focuses on incarcerated transgender and gender variant people's day-to-day survival. This publication will be made available to everyone on the mailing list and online. The goal of the publication is for survivors to know that we are not alone and that there are ways to resist, stay safer, and take care of ourselves and one another. We are seeking submissions from incarcerated transgender and gender variant people.



Here are some questions that might help you get started thinking about what you want to share. You are welcome to use these questions as a guide, or not. Feel free to submit art, poems, rants, observations, or any of your strategies for survival:

1. If you were to mentor someone or act as an older brother or sister to someone who was in prison or jail for the first time, what would you want them to know in order to be able to take care of themselves? What are some things you wish someone had taught you?
2. What do you do throughout your day on the inside that helps you maintain a positive sense of self?
3. What is a moment you are proud of in day-to-day survival? Perhaps a time when you felt you were able to more freely express yourself and/or your gender - a time when you didn't give in to something that you didn't want to think, feel, do?
4. Who is someone on the inside you can count on for emotional or spiritual support? How has this person helped you? How have you expressed vulnerability?
5. What motivates you?

While we want there to be a lot of space for reflection and sharing of stories and experiences, we are also looking for practical material that other incarcerated folks can access as a resource for dealing with their own situations in the hostile environment of incarceration. We have in the past received "how to" guides for identifying abusive relationships, filing complaints, and other strategies for staying safer.

We want your thoughts, stories, and reflections to reach others. We will be editing submissions with our experience of prison censorship in mind with the goal of keeping this publication from getting on the banned list. In constructing your answers, keep the censorship rules at your facilities in mind. As always, please tell us how you want to be credited (name and facility, nickname, anonymous, legal name). Please address submissions to:

**Hearts on a Wire
ATTN: PSSC Submission
1315 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107**

Finally, we want to give a special thank you to Miss Juicy who first envisioned this project.

Love,

Hearts on a Wire Outside Collective & the Philly Survivor Support Collective

I Love You

Jeffrey @ Forest

C., you know I love you more than the air I breathe. I've proved it time and time again. Yes, sometimes, I know I am a real jerk. I don't try to be when really, you bring out the best in me. When I see the hurt or pain I have caused make rain from your eyes, it is intensified inside of me. I hurt when you hurt only more so when I am the one to blame for your pain. I am wrong if I say I am not the one to blame for the pain you experience. I will give you my word as a man and as your man that I will try to be better as your man. I know your heart is in my hand and I will be your best man to date. I hate to see you jump from fright when I joke around, all because of your past abusive relationships. I am not my father, I will never lay hands on you to cause you more pain and fear. I am not my father, I will not ever lay my hands on anyone I love.

Yes, C.M.A., I love you, when we are 100% positive. No negative actions will be taken against us by the DOC. Will you make me the happiest man alive and marry me? I love you, C.M.

Tips from a Queen Upstate

by Ms. Janel

Sexual relations is apparent upstate, whiles condoms are none. Here's a few tips to still enjoy good, safe sex.

anal sex receiving: use a latex glove with KY lube from medical, there's always a nurse to help with these items

sucking cock: again use latex gloves, tied at the base so no cum seeps out

eating ass: good old saran wrap or thin plastic from a trash bag always does the trick

or if you prefer, cut those nails boys and girls and use your hands.

The Miracle of Friendship by Fly

Every person desires friendship from family and friends, as true friendship is a great blessing, and can be of great benefit to all people. True friendship is something that has to be earned, and many sacrifices and positive compromises have to be made to achieve it. A person has to be a good listener, as well as being a good talker and needs to be understanding, patient and loving, as love and understanding are so necessary for true friendship to survive.

The essential features of love's expressions are twofold: "effective love" shown by deeds and action, its typical form are dependability and helpfulness, and its qualities are generosity and concern; then "affective love" is shown by the expression of feelings, and its typical forms are care and compassion, and its qualities are warmth and tenderness.

In order to have true friendship, one has to try to be always diplomatic, even under pressure. This isn't always easy, but it's necessary in order to make friendship a permanent reality. True friendship is a love of intimate caring and sharing between mature adults. There are friends in a personal sense, and friends for work and advantage, as well as friends for leisure activities. In a marriage and family situation, caring and sharing in a positive way will guarantee a lasting friendship and success.

To have true friendship, one has to have strictness and unity, as well as positive purpose, and in disagreements, one has to always try to be diplomatic and truthful and have the right facts on hand. True friendship uplifts the spirit and makes the heart exceedingly glad, and it can solve all sorts of problems which affect people; no matter what the cost, it is always worth striving for. In order to have friendship, one has to try and show friendship to others, always.

Congratulations to our ally at SCI Dallas whose case was recently taken up by the Innocence Project. We're pulling for you!