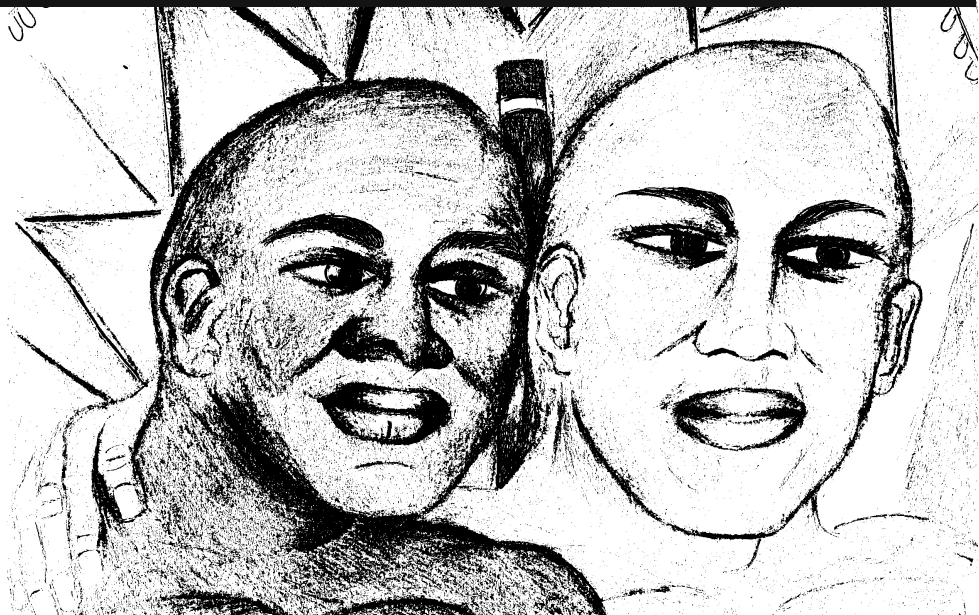


Hearts on a Wire

Issue 6

Fall 2012



* support incarcerated and detained trans and gender variant people *
* build community through bars *
* organize for justice *

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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 Philadelphia at:
William Way Center
1315 Spruce Street

Tuesdays at 5:30pm

tokens provided
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Letter from the Outside Collective

Dear Subscribers,

We are so happy to bring you this newsletter. You have not heard from us for some time and we hope that you're doing well. Unfortunately, over the past six months our outside collective has been dealing with a number of challenges. Many of us have had to focus on other parts of our lives and were not able to participate fully in the collective's efforts and at the same time our meeting place disappeared.

Faced with limited resources and nowhere to meet, we have worked very hard to regain some stability in the outside collective and also see to the business of the newsletter. We are now very pleased to have a regular place to meet at the William Way Center. Also, we are excited to have this newsletter completed and to be in regular contact with you again.

We are working very hard to continue to develop our commissary campaign and move that effort forward. Also, we are welcoming back members to the outside collective and always looking to find more people to organize with. As we navigate writing, public speaking, and the many challenges of keeping a roof over our collective's head, we want you to know that you are always our top priority.

Thank you for all your patience, understanding, and contributions to this issue of the newsletter.

Sincerely,
Hearts on a Wire

cover art: Brakie

layout: Adrian Lowe

Trans Community Mourns Loss

Katrina Delancey



Kyra Kruz Cordova, a leader within the Trans Community was found dead September 3, 2012 in a wooded area just off Adams Ave in Philadelphia. She was shot in the back of the head. The news spread fast within the community, bringing up other unsolved Trans murders within the city of Philadelphia. Members of the community gathered for a candle light vigil at the William Way Community Center on September 13, 2012. Kyra's immediate family, including Dawn Maher, Kyra's mother, was present to express their concerns as well as to share their own personal experiences of love for Kyra. It was a very emotional moment for us all. Since then, some community members have formed a Justice for Kyra organization through Facebook.

Kyra had a long history within the community. Most recent involvement included employment at GALAEI (Gay & Lesbian Latino AIDS Education Initiative), a non-profit organization focusing on AIDS education and Harm Reduction. Elicia Gonzalez, Executive Director of GALAEI states, "Kruz turned up one day in 2010, wanting to know what she could do to help. She was initially stationed at the front desk, but later got a job counseling clients. She just immediately made the office light up," Gonzales said. "She didn't think of it as her job. It was her life's calling to give back to the community."

As of press time, this murder remains unsolved. There is a reward for information leading to arrest

We remember her as glitter. "Kyra was like glitter, once she got on you, she never went away."

Talk to Me

Juicy Woods

Talk to me
about what makes you
happy

Talk to me
about how you feel

Talk to me
about anything that's
bothering you.

Talk to me

and tell me what makes
you feel good

Talk to me
and tell me what you need
in a relationship

Talk to me
and tell me what you want
from me

Talk to me

about your feelings

Talk to me
cause I'm your friend

Talk to me
because I love you

Talk to me
So you'll feel better

Talk to me
cause I'm there for you

Talk to me.
So this will work out for us
Talk to me.

Real Talk

by lexi-nonymous

I've never lost a close friend to murder. But the death of Kyra, a beloved member of our community whom I had never met, confronted me with the fact that the color of my skin might be the only thing that has protected me thus far from being murdered, thrown in jail, searched/harassed by the police, and countless other abuses that my brothers and sisters of color face every day, unwitnessed by me.

I have a habit of not being able to say no to sexual advances. Especially when I get high or drunk, I will do anything to feel wanted. As soon as someone initiates contact that might be sexual, my desire to please and feel sexy takes over, and I throw all regard for my safety out the window.

Recently I was walking home drunk, alone, in the middle of the night, and this black dude hollered at me from his car. I felt so happy that this man thought i was hot enough to holler at, that i gladly got into the car with him - and didn't even think about what was really going down. I asked him why he hollered at me - he told me he liked white girls. Like a fool, I waited til I had thrown up all over his car from gagging on his dick, and had brought him into my house to help clean the throw-up off his clothes - I waited til THEN to tell him the unfortunate news. That despite the fact his dick was still in my mouth, and despite the fact he wanted to "tape me" (videotape not duct tape!! haha), I had a penis. He kindly removed his condom, and left the situation. He was visibly upset, but assured me he wasn't angry at me.

I know that I was behaving recklessly, but I also just didn't know -- when is the RIGHT TIME to say, "I have a dick -- do you still wanna fuck with me?" When is the RIGHT TIME to name my price if I have one? How do I balance my concerns for my own health and safety with my taste for a fleshy cock and my desire to connect with people? I know that I can only do so much to stay safe, and that I can't figure everything out on my own.

I don't know what true justice looks like, but I do know this: Blaming me for "getting into that situation" is not justice. Blaming a dude for wanting to get his d**k wet is not justice. This is not one man's problem but everyone's problem. Whatever happens to me in this life, it is futile to look for a scapegoat to blame and punish for my suffering - even if that scapegoat is myself. I would rather see the day when everyone can love, respect, trust, support, and share with one another without fear.

Healing from Sexual Assault

Miley Selena Grow

more information:

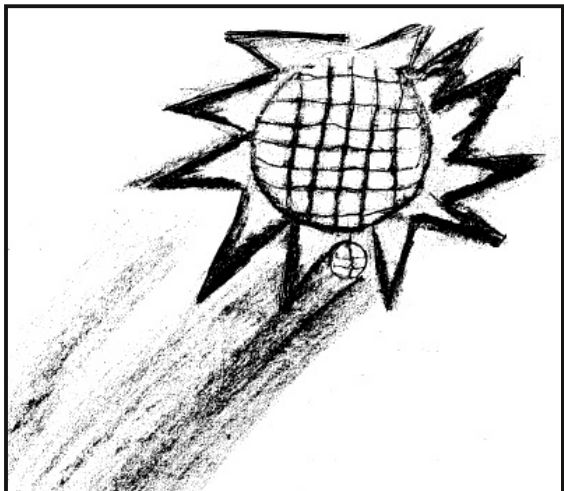
Just Detention
3325 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 340
LA, CA 90010

This is not just for transgender persons, it is to all survivors of rape and sexual assault, incarcerated and outside person of all gender roles.

Survivors of rape experience the assault and healing process in a very personal way. However, the crime occurs within a broader cultural context that accepts violence against certain groups of people. All parts of your identity such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and particularly gender, will effect your experience as a survivor of sexual assault. Rape is a highly personal crime in which you are treated like you do not matter. It is a deeply hurtful and dehumanizing experience for anyone. The feelings of disgrace and shame are deep. After an assault, survivors of all gender identities, races, and cultures tend to question who they are, what they want, and how to reorganize their very selves. Survivors do this successfully all the time. Healing is possible! The following is intended to help you think about how your experience as a survivor is impacted by your understanding of gender roles and your gender identity.

Transgender people: Transgender prisoners are at particularly high risk for sexual assault. Transgender people are very likely to think, and may have been told, that the rape happened because of who they are. This message often leads a survivor to feel like a bad person who deserves such treatment. Transgender people are likely to have been targeted for sexual assault in the community as well. Multiple traumatic experiences compound each other and complicate healing. It

is tough enough to survive the oppression that transgender people face, without additional trauma. Please remember that the assault did not happen because of who you are. It happened because someone else decided to commit a violent crime. Part of the healing process will be to honor your strengths and recognize what a powerful person you can be on the other side of this time of turmoil...



Discoball - envelope art by Miss Brakie

You

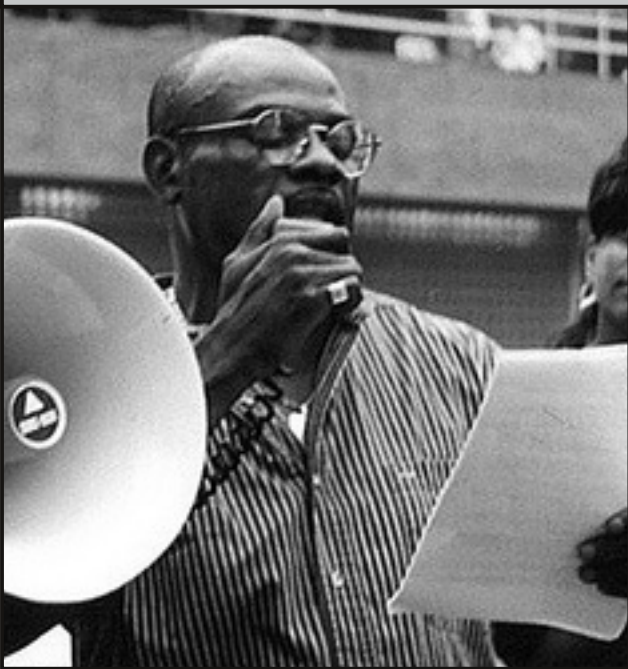
Bree Cavalli Johnson

when the sun shines so
bright on my day
i think of you!
when the slightest breeze
chills my skin
i think of you!
when i go to sleep at night
i dream of you!
when i feel the softness of
cotton it reminds me, of
lips that could only
belong to you!
my mind races a million
miles an hour, fueled by
your love's power!
it's all the energy i need
and it's from you!
when i'm feeling a little
down i just listen for,
that sound that comes only
from your heart!
when i'm looking for
someone special i'm
looking for you!
so now you know why i'm
so damn hot for you!
because no matter what
i'm your top Bitch
and you're my chocolate
you

I love you JJ
Ya Boothang BCJ

*Half of your rights haven't been
written yet, because you haven't been
here to demand them.*

John Bell 1946-2012



It is with deep sorrow that we inform you of the passing of John Bell. An activist, mentor, teacher, and friend, John transformed his lived experiences of racism, stigma, incarceration, war, and disease into an inspirational body of thought and knowledge to help make the way easier for the people who came behind him.

We remember who he saw in us and will continue to fight for the liberation he believed we were capable of.

What's up out there on the streets I hope all is well with everyone at Hearts on a wire. I send my love out to all my brothers and sisters of the rainbow. I'm currently in my 4th year of being locked down at SCI Huntingdon. At first it was hard but i learned that it gets easier when you see that you're not alone, which I now know I'm not. I got my loving sister Juicy and my sexy ass nigga JJ and I hope you guys will put this in Hearts On a Wire so they both can see how much I love them and what they really mean to me.

I love ya sis and to my chocolate boothang you already know! Hugs and kisses never misses

In the past year we have seen some movement forward for the rights of transgender and gender variant (T/GV) [people] within the federal government. These changes have come in the form [of] regulatory and policy changes within the current administration. While we have not seen many of these changes tested in the courts, they are certainly an indication of some changing attitudes and the attempts of the Obama administration to forward the rights of T/GV people in certain settings.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: The EEOC is responsible for investigating claims of employment discrimination against many different kinds of people. This agency has decided that in determining whether or not employment discrimination has occurred in a given situation, they will consider discrimination based on gender identity as violating the law. The theory is that if you discriminate against someone based on their gender identity, this is discrimination based on sex, a protected class under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. While this is only an administrative policy and not yet a law, it is certainly a step forward for a federal agency to acknowledge discrimination of this kind as unacceptable and requiring redress.

Housing and Urban Development: HUD, the agency that provides federal money for subsidized housing, released a statement in which they changed their non-discrimination regulation to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. This means that landlords who are accepting federal funds to provide housing to low-income people (i.e. Section 8 vouchers or project housing) may not discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or they will no longer receive federal funds to support them. Again, this is not a change in the law, but is a powerful reason for these landlords to treat people equally as many of them rely heavily on federal subsidy to run their housing complexes.

Department of Justice: The Federal Bureau of Prisons has changed their regulations to include medical transition services in the medical care that they will routinely offer to people incarcerated in federal prisons. Now, if someone is diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder, before or during their incarceration, they can receive medical transition services provided by the prison. This is a major change from the previous regulations which did not even acknowledge the existence of T/GV people. Unfortunately, state prisons have not changed their regulations and still do not provide medical transition services to incarcerated people.

We want to hear from you!

This newsletter depends on your submissions for content.

We welcome your:

- * Responses to this edition
- * Poetry
- * Artwork (black and white)
- * Ideas
- * Articles
- * Commissary recipes
- * Contribuciones en español son muy muy bienvenidos!
- * We are looking for additional help translating articles into Spanish. If you are bilingual and would like to help with this project, please write to us!

If you contribute something, make sure you tell us:

1. Exactly how you want to be credited [anonymous, legal name & ID number, the name you use, a nickname, etc.]
2. Whether it's OK to say the facility you are/were in

Send to:

Hearts on a Wire
PO Box 36831
Philadelphia, PA
19107

subscribe

If you would like Hearts On a Wire mailed to you, write to us and let us know. Subscriptions are FREE for incarcerated and detained people in any PA facility. If you are getting out soon and want to stay on our mailing list, please keep your address up to date with us.