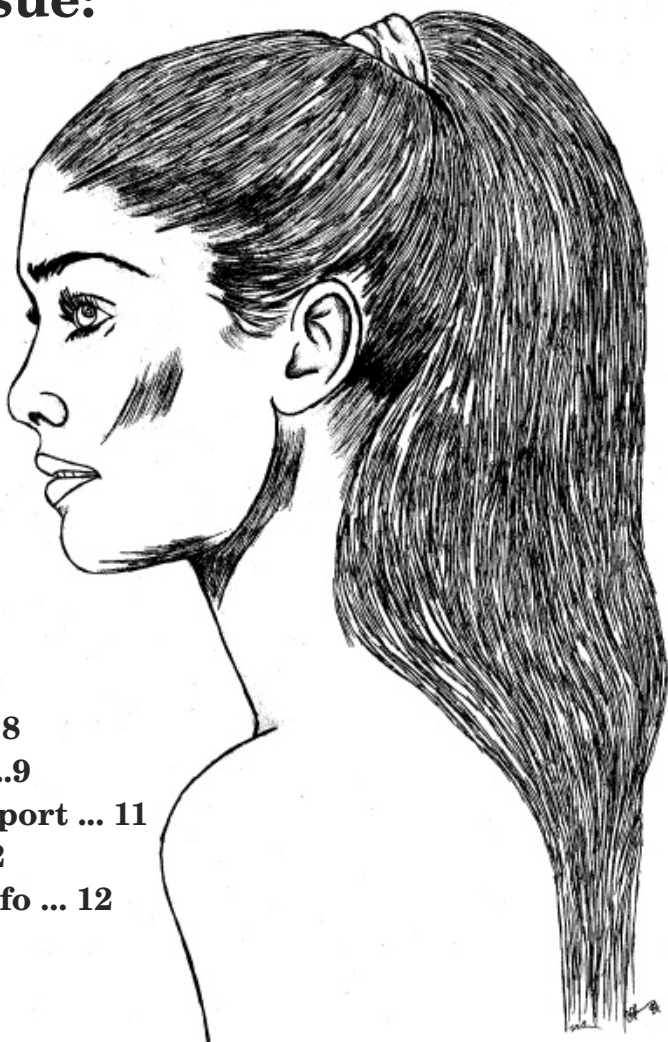


# *Hearts on a Wire*

**Issue 7      Winter 2013**

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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 Philadelphia at:  
William Way Center  
1315 Spruce Street

Tuesdays at 5:30pm

*tokens provided*  
heartsonawire@gmail.com



### THIS EDITION'S CONTRIBUTORS:

Barrett Marshall  
S. Luvme @MC7 NYS  
Katrina M. Delancey  
Boo Boo  
SharRon Cookes  
Jessica Rabbit  
Timothy Colman  
Finn Black  
Sadé Ali  
Najee Gibson  
Juicy Woods  
Jordan Gwendolyn Davis  
Christian Sheehy  
Shane  
Shay Shay  
Adrian Lowe  
Cliff Hunter

cover art: S. Luvme  
layout: Adrian Lowe

## Letter from the Outside Collective

Dear Inside Collective,

We are very happy to bring you this newsletter so quickly. Thank you for all the submissions and responses that made this edition possible and for always supporting our efforts. In the past couple of months, we have been lucky enough to acquire some new members and have the support and assistance of many community members and allies. As a result, we have been able to produce and mail this newsletter much more rapidly and we are excited to be in more regular contact with all of you.

Beyond the addition of new outside members, we have altered one of our mailing policies to include more out of state people. We are currently placing anyone on our mailing list who reaches out to the collective. Don't worry--we are still absolutely prioritizing people incarcerated in PA and will always do things that way. We felt that given the lack of support available and how many people were writing to us, it made sense to widen the distribution of our newsletter. We now have two mailing lists, one PA and one out of state, and will be doing our best to provide copies of the newsletter to anyone who asks for one.

We are continuing our work on the commissary campaign and will be sending along further messages about that soon. If you have any suggestions for the newsletter, the campaign, or anything else, please let us know. We are, as always, thinking of you.

Love and solidarity,

*The Hearts on a Wire Outside Collective*

# Z-Code by Juicy

Well GLBQT inmates I found out some information about Z Code that you can use and ask yourself if the DOC is following their policy or discriminating against you and harassing you. We can come off a Z Code if we don't want to be on. The DOC was getting away with murder, now we can get freedom from Z Code as long as we don't got no sexual assaults in jail.

DC 11.02.01 Reception and Classification Procedures Manual Section 5 - Single Celling ("Z" Code) and Double Celling Housing says the criteria for consideration for Z Code housing classification are:

1. mental health problems
2. medical condition (infectious disease, colostomy, etc, indicating a need for a single cell)
3. may be victimized as a result of double celling, multiple celling, or placement in a dormitory
4. documented history of aggressive or predatory behaviour towards cell partners or who staff has reason to believe would exhibit assaultive or predatory behavior towards cell partners
5. known or documented homosexual behavior
6. inmates of opposite gender shall not be celled together

This is what the evaluation for Z code states, but of course the DOC don't follow the policy they just discriminate and put us on a Z Code for being "homosexual" which might be a violation of equal protection law and considered harassment and hate.

According to the policy:

A Z code housing status can be assigned to an inmate anytime during incarceration. Staff should make the final determination regarding program code Z. Z Code should be reviewed annually and at any other staffing to ensure it is still the most appropriate housing classification. An inmate may request to be reviewed for the addition or deletion of Z Code housing classification. An inmate may have a Z code removed if she/he can demonstrate to staff that she/he doesn't pose a threat to a cell partner and that the code is not needed. Z code status that was assigned to an inmate for sexually assaultive behavior in prison shall not be removed without the approval of the regional deputy secretary.

**note: Z Code housing status due to an inability to double cell is not necessarily precluded from open dormitory housing if staff believe the inmate or others will not be jeopardized as the result of dormitory housing placement.**

First request to come off. If they say no for no reason but stereotyping for you being a GLBQT inmate then file a complaint on a grievance to get the policy enforced.

# The Nations First Residential Treatment Program Opens for Trans & Gender Variant Persons

Katrina M. Delancey

Morris Home, an eight-bed residential drug and alcohol treatment facility specifically for transgender people, is the first of its kind in the nation. Named after Nizah Morris, a local trans leader murdered in December 2002, it opened its doors on April 17, 2012. The nondescript row house on Woodland Avenue

has eight private rooms, newly furnished, and comfortable common rooms. It is staffed 24 hours a day.



*Nizah Morris*

Under the guidelines of the city's Department of Behavioral Health, Morris Home uses a holistic approach, treating not just substance abuse, but also mental health issues such as depression. Morris Home anticipates that those seeking treatment will stay for up to 2 years. Morris Home supports trans and gender variant individuals as they develop the knowledge, skills and supports necessary to promote sobriety, manage emotional and behavioral difficulties, choose and maintain safe and healthy lifestyles, and develop healthy relationships with peers, family and the community. Morris Home provides a safe, recovery-oriented environment for individuals in transition who may be coming from "the streets" and/or from shelter programs. Services offered include: Comprehensive assessments, Individual therapy, Psycho-Education and relapse

prevention groups. There is a clinical group held once a day during the resident's stay at Morris Home. Also included in the services offered are Hormone therapy, Residential housing Connections with community resources for medical care, behavioral healthcare, and legal name changes.

I personally recommend Morris Home to any Trans or Gender Variant Individual who wishes to seek treatment from substance abuse. While in the



beginning stages of your stay at Morris Home, it may seem like it is overwhelming, but stick and stay, it is well worth it if you wish to seek long term recovery from substance abuse.

To get on the waitlist for Morris Home:

folks that are locked up write to:  
Brandon McLaren C/O RHD  
4700 Wissahickon Ave #126  
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Folks on the outside call 215-951-0300  
or email [brandon@rhd.org](mailto:brandon@rhd.org)

DO NOT contact Morris Home directly



*Morris Home*

## Thoughts on Morris Home

Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

I am a person who has numerous disabilities which I am not out about, yet I do NOT have a co-occurring substance abuse issue. So why, in the name of the goddess, would Morris Home restrict itself only to addicts. I have been homeless in Philadelphia before, and while I was placed in a women's shelter, which was appropriate to my gender identity, I do not know if that would repeat itself if I ever became homeless again, as shelters here can be very mercurial about these matters.

So, what the Morris Home's founders and stakeholders are saying is, "we want to create a safe space for the trans homeless, but if you do not have a drug or alcohol history, you should be left out in the dust and have to deal with a shelter system that may or may not put you in the proper gender setting." Philadelphia often has a problem with privileging drug & alcohol cases (even the Social Security Administration does not recognize substance abuse as a disability) over other recognized mental illnesses. While Philadelphia's shelter system is the only one in the state of Pennsylvania which may be trans\* friendly, people who don't have drug and alcohol issues are often warehoused, and that's not right.

## Thoughts on Morris Home

Najee Gibson

Don't forget Morris Home is run like a treatment center. Don't get it twisted. Even though it's for those of us under the transgender umbrella, it's still an institution. You have to deal with people's ignorance and it's like being a number. Living there would be like being on Parole. It does not get into your individuality.

continued on next page . . .

5

# Morris Home - Nizah's Legacy Realized

Sadé Ali ("Mother" to some, "Auntie" to others, "sister" to many)

It took four years and much blood, sweat, and tears from a driven, determined group of folks. But the first eight people from Philadelphia's transgender and gender-variant communities are in residence and working together to save their lives. The Morris Home is my "heart child" (as opposed to "brain child"). It is the only program of its kind in the nation. There are no addicts or alcoholics, clients, patients, consumers, or other labels living there. There are human beings who are living with challenges. Some of them may have challenges with alcohol or other drugs. They are individuals and are treated as such by others who look like them and who are from the same communities. There is no such thing as "one size fits all," cookie-cutter treatment there. Each person develops their own plan and makes the decisions around what will be the best course of help for their own life. People are not chained to the Morris Home and may chose to leave if/when they wish.

Resources for Human Development (RHD), an agency located in Philadelphia with programs around the country and a four decade history of social justice advocacy, was chosen to create the Morris Home within their system. However, there were a few must-haves: 1) the program must be named The Morris Home; 2) the program must provide access to health at all levels (physical, emotional and behavioral); and 3) the program must employ staff from trans and gender-variant communities.

Because of the economy, the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health & Intellectual disAbility Services realized that the quickest way to get the program operational was

to apply for a license as an alcohol and other drug treatment program. This does not, in any way, imply that all of the people who may take advantage of the Morris Home need to have a current, acute substance use challenge. However, we have found that, just as in the general population, many people who have histories of abuse, oppression and trauma, either in childhood or more recently, tend to medicate the pain of that trauma. In our estimation, and in the hearts of the eight people who reside in the Morris Home, the fact that it is open, regardless of how it is licensed, is significant.

We know that there will always be detractors of any work, people who will say that they could have done it better, faster, or in a more appropriate manner. For many, many years, challenges have existed and the need was there. RHD and the Department stepped up. We will soon open ten more beds so that the people who have been with us since the beginning can start to transition back into the community with full citizenship, health and support.

On the 22nd of December, the people who reside in the Morris Home, RHD staff, friends of the Morris Home and I gathered there to pay tribute to Nizah on the 10th anniversary of the day of the attack that led to her death two days later on Christmas Eve of 2002. The people living within the Morris Home talked about Nizah, what her life meant to them and what the Home which bears her name means to them now. None of them are alcoholics, addicts, clients, patients or consumers. They are people living together and, in a self-determined manner, promoting their own healing.

# Tamara 1/2 Boo Boo

Tamara' morning is just a moment away  
And I am without you, Once again...  
You may laugh at me, you may even say that you never  
needed me; but I still wonder if you need me now.  
We've played the games that people play; and like many  
we've made mistakes along the way, Two people caught  
In a storm, Where did they go??? I know, somewhere  
lost in a heart, denying the fact that they shouldn't have  
found a reason to part, tamara, find me as I'll try  
to find you...because I do love you, still.  
[Remember the song you liked "you don't know a thing about me"]  
Well, I heard it today, and it made me wonder, were you trying to say  
what you didn't know how to? Lately every song is  
about you, it's funny how one strong emotion can tear you down  
(I'm talking about love) first day, it's fabulous, second day, it's  
scandalous, third day we crash and burn, Like girl friend sings,  
"Why do we love, love, when love seems to hate us?" I think  
in here and out most just don't want to be lonely the other few  
or so...just have that feeling to give despite the torment  
and short comings that comes with sharing that moment. Surely  
All the pain that comes and all the work it takes that moment will pass  
and we'll love again, (that strong emotion)  
(Breathe again and believe again).

## Who Says? s. Luvme @ MC7 NYS

Who says there's no freedom  
Who says I can't use more wisdom  
Who says they can understand my pain  
Who says I mustn't allow my eyes to rain  
    Who says I am one to folly  
    Who says St. Nick is the only one who can be jolly  
    Who says we must grow old  
    Who says trannies aren't bold  
Who says I'm heartless  
Who says I'm not full of happiness  
Who says I'm in hey-day  
Who says this is where I must stay  
Who says I can't be a she  
    Who says I was born a he  
    Who says they know me  
    Who says I can't be filled with glee  
Who says love is blind  
Who says I've lost my mind  
Who says I can't be a winner  
Who says homosexuality is being a sinner

I have to guess that our oppressors  
are the ones



# Prison Recipes

## Shay's Post Workout Protein Drink

- 4 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 cup powdered milk
- 1 package instant oatmeal
- 2 tablespoons honey

Put all ingredients into empty peanut butter jar. Add boiling water until jar is 2/3 full. Screw lid on tight. Shake well until contents are thoroughly mixed. Fill jar the rest of the way with cold water to cool it down and stir

## Prison Style Homemade Apple Turnovers by Shay Shay

- 12 flour tortillas
- 10-11 medium granny smith apples
- 1/4-1/2 lb butter
- 1/4 cup syrup or honey
- 1 lb granulated sugar
- some cinnamon (optional)
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 tablespoons salt

1. Peel apples. Add syrup or honey, 2-3 spoons of butter, cinnamon, 1/2 lb sugar and salt. Stir and mix up.
2. Cook apple filling stirring every 4-5 minutes 'til apples start to soften. Remove and add cornstarch mixing well. Drain extra juice, set aside.
3. Melt butter in a separate jar. Set aside.
4. Mix remaining cinnamon and sugar. Set aside.
5. Dip each tortilla in a bowl of water and add filling. Fold in half and press edges together with a fork to seal. Spread butter over turnovers.
6. Brown turnovers with an iron on both sides. Re-butter and sprinkle cinnamon/sugar mix.

Serve warm or cold.  
Makes 12 servings.

## We Should Be Treated With Respect

Juicy Woods

Each Day we wake up  
we should be treated  
with respect by you  
as you expect the same  
as a human being  
no matter what we did wrong  
we didn't ask to come here  
we was put here  
as a punishment  
we shouldn't be judged twice  
we should be treated with  
respect  
as a normal citizen  
not a slave or a bum  
we should have access  
to the materials for us  
to keep us happy  
just cause we're  
here don't mean  
we're supposed to be  
treated like Dirt  
We should be treated with  
respect



# 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.

## Face (Issue 5)

Pretty Boy's poem *Face* was moving. It brung back memories of my love aka soulmate that passed. I can relate to his pain, it took me 2 1/2 years to start dating again. For the first eight months I felt I was being disloyal so I broke it off with my boyfriend.

- S. Luvme @MC7 NYS

## Perspectives on Faith (Issue 5)

Its me Luvme, how's everybody doing? great I hope. I got issue #5 and thought I would weigh in on the issue of religion.

I am Hindu and also trans. I have been accepted by my family and the Yogis of my faith, they all understand.

I want to share a story with you all. One day while I was walking with Amma (mother). Noticing our Indian dress, a taxi driver who was of African descent asked me what religion we were. We laughed, as this is always a difficult question to answer. For someone like Amma who has totally gone beyond the confines of any religion and is trying to get us all to do the same, it is misleading to say that we are simply Hindus, but it is difficult to explain this effectively to others and expect them to understand.

Trying to avoid being categorized into the label of one particular religion, I replied that our religion was love and service to humanity. I could see by his expression that he was not really satisfied with my answer. I knew he wanted something as in a "label" that he was familiar with and so I acquiesced and finally replied, "we're Hindu."

Now, my reason for sharing that particular story with you is because most of the time when I tell someone that I'm a trans woman they look at me like I'm crazy, but when I say "I'm gay," that's when they understand because they're not used to the "trans" label, but they are very familiar with the "label" of gay.

So no matter who we're dealing with we must see them for their own label and not society's label of them. we do have a right of "FREE WILL" so we are able to make our own labels of ourselves and not others around us.

- S. Luvme @MC7 NYS

## Healing from Sexual Assault (Issue 6)

I read [this article] and I would like to make a whole issue of stuff we need to stand up for ourselves and make it through. We got to be strong and don't let the justice system bring us down nor fellow inmates.

-Miss Juicy



## Real Talk (Issue 6)

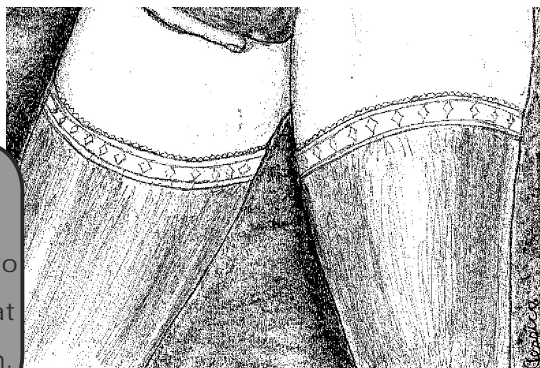
I consider myself a sexy chick, as do the majority of the brothers around me ... at the same time, I've met with this frustration more than once in my life. Prior to prison, it was nothing to catch me at a party, hoochied up to the max ... only to find a boy diggin on a chick like "damn mami, you fine..." All would go well right up til they figured out that this chick comes with a little something extra. In here of course the boys already know, but even then there's still plenty of that "damn you'd make one fine ass chick if it weren't for..." It was that whole "you'd be fine if you were different" that led me to draw this picture. The idea is what "do you mean I'd be fine if I was different, I'm a sexy bitch just the way I am, deal with it."

-Jessica Rabbit

After having read [this] article I felt compelled to touch upon the subject. Allow me to personalize: There was a Queen that I grew deep feelings for, and in some ways am still trying to pick up the pieces from the wreckage. We met at my current institution and long story short we had a very intense romance, the plan was forever. But in the end I was left hurt and confused. My question to more seasoned Queens: Is the lifelong quest to be accepted sometimes so great that you depreciate your own self-worth by being an object used for sex? I need to know...

-Shane

editor's note: we love Jessica's drawing, but because of our experience with prison censorship we decided to leave the details up to your imaginations so that newsletter 7 is not stopped in the mailroom.



artwork by Jessica Rabbit

As a young queen who hid things I had to come to terms with if this is going to harm myself or my family, I need to stop. Those that love you don't want to lose you. Take it from someone who knows, you may not know what's going to happen to you until it's too late. Take the situation [you described] as a wake up call, everything that look good ain't safe.

Love,  
your sister Juicy

### **Trans Community Mourns Loss (Issue 6)**

I knew Miss Kyra Cruz Cordova and I'm sad because the judicial system don't care, just one less person they got to worry about.

-Miss Juicy

### **You (Issue 6)**

Nobody knows you but yourself. Don't forget who you are or where you came from because you will need that community in the long run. Don't try to hide who you are 'cause that opens drama for yourself and those around you. How is it you know you're who you are but only act it when you think somebody you want to be with likes it. Baby if you can't be yourself 24/7 how do you expect to be loved and treated right? Searching for love will only give you a broken heart if you can't be yourself. I love my life and being who I be. I can't wait to get out and stand strong.

-Miss Juicy

## **trans/gender variant imprisonment in PA**



**Experiences of Trans and  
Gender Variant People in  
Pennsylvania's Prison Systems**

**A Report by the Hearts on a Wire  
Collective**

Remember the survey some of us participated in a few years ago? The report of the results is now available!

We have free paper copies of the report available for people who are currently locked up in Pennsylvania.

Fair warning: we have had some trouble with censorship in some institutions. Please let us know if you want us to try to get you a copy!!!

The report is also available online at:  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/56677078/This-is-a-Prison-Glitter-is-Not-Allowed>

# 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**

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