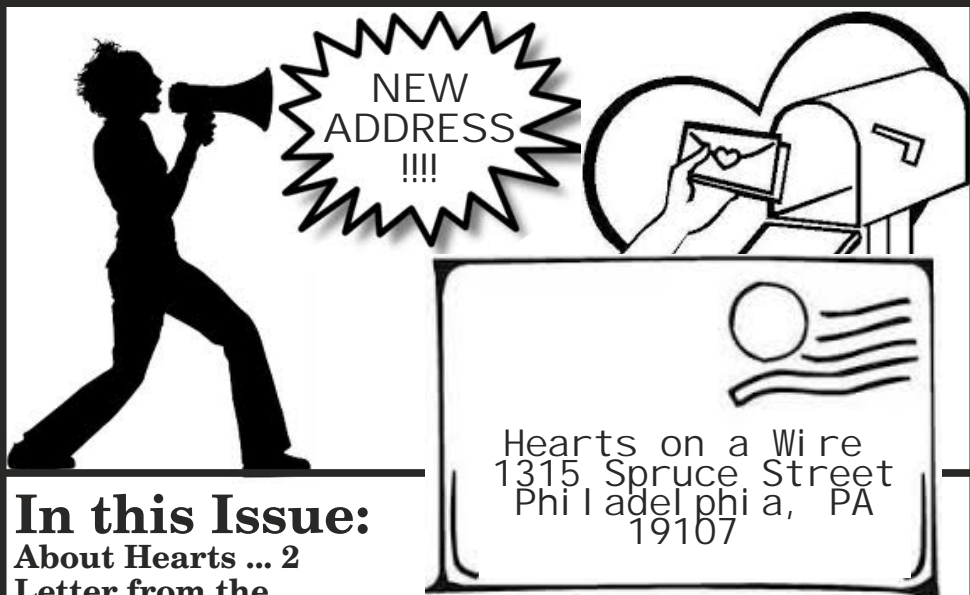


Hearts on a Wire

Issue 8

Spring 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



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Heath Mackenzie Reynolds
Leslie
Pablo
Boo Boo
Adrian Lowe

Letter from the Outside Collective

Dear Inside Collective,

As we are getting settled into our new meeting space, the outside collective of Hearts on a Wire is really beginning to pick up speed! We are getting so much good writing from inside and outside collective members and are getting support for our mailings and commissary campaigns from individuals and organizations alike. In addition to bringing you our next newsletter we want to address two pieces of news with you.

First, we have changed our address! Our new meeting space allows us to receive mail and we have opted to do that. Unfortunately, there has been some trouble with our PO box. Because of some confusion and federal postal privacy law, it appears we will not be able to gather all of our mail from our previous address. Anything you may have sent us between March 1st and April 1st, we probably did not receive. We are so sorry and appreciate that your letters cannot be recreated. We are saddened by the loss of your communications and have done everything in our power to try to get them back. If you are able to resend anything that was sent in that time, that would be great. We will continue to try to retrieve that mail, but in the meantime please send all future mail to:

Hearts on a Wire
1315 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Second, we are planning to send out materials for the commissary campaign. The outside collective, based on your suggestions, has designed a brochure that can be used to collect signatures in support of our commissary campaign. We are looking for inside collective members to work as contact people for these signature sheets. We would be sending you signature sheets and asking that you send these sheets back to us once they are signed. If you are interested in assisting us with this, please write to Hearts on a Wire and let us know!

In solidarity,
Hearts on a Wire Outside Collective,

Hearts on a Wire is sad to inform you that Miss Ebony, formerly of Pittsburgh, SCI Houtzdale and SCI Forest, died in custody last summer. She was a lifer known for coming to the defense of her sisters. She was only 35. She had two children and many friends. Our hearts break for those who knew and loved her.

Miss Ebony

by Lil' Rob Grow, AKA Grizz

I know Miss Ebony and am sorry to say Miss Ebony has passed away here at SCI Houtzdale around June or the beginning of July 2012. I was good friends with Miss Ebony and Miss Ebony's lover. I was the one who gave her lover the news. It was a sad day for us all. For Ebony was loved by many. She spent the last two weeks of her life in medical. If you ask me the DOC gave up on my friend because she was never going home. There were two COs with her and they say she was singing when she passed away. There was a memorial held for her and all showed their love for her.

I don't feel sorry for my friend Ebony. I feel sorry for the ones who never got to know my friend. Ebony showed her love freely therefore she was more free than anyone I know. My heart goes out to the ones who lost a friend in Miss Ebony. For they lost someone sweet, kind, strong, and free in her love for others.

Miss Ebony: I'm sorry I had to say goodbye so soon. You are loved and missed.

I Made It

Juicy Woods

To the people who said
I wouldn't make it
To the people who said
I wouldn't amount to
anything
To the people who said
I wouldn't live to see 21
I made it

To my friends who said
I couldn't make it in life
To my friends who said
I would fall over and over
until I give up
I made it without a bruise
on my body

To my ex-lovers who said
I would never be anything
without them in my life
To my ex-lovers who said
I couldn't make it through
without needing them
I made it through

To my family who said
I was going to hurt without
them I made it
To those who thought
I was going to give up
I made it

Princesa

Boo Boo @ SCI Forest

My love, the one person
I truly believed needed me
as much as I them.

I unintentionally
hurt and pushed
out of my life.

You are so far away now and
I see you every day.

My love, my angel
I pray for your safety and
well-being despite
the pain I may've caused
you and truly believe that
one day

you and me
will be together

because that's all I got.
The many days I've taken
you for granted
was based on my own
insecure nature
and the thoughts of what
others wanted me to have.

You're special, one of kind,
rare as a rose in winter
intelligent, beautiful...

Even your anger is beautiful

Princesa

Anyone who has had love go
away too soon and believed
in it, should never allow
other people to determine
its worth. Nor should you
stereotype a person who's
probably trying to show
you something worth
holding on to.

Even if it's for a short time,
hang on to what you got
it's beautiful.

PA Legislative Subcommittee on Corrections

Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

Did you know that in the Pennsylvania state legislature, there is a subcommittee dealing with corrections-related issues? Do not let the fact that you are on the inside stop you from mailing key stakeholders about the conditions transgender people face while locked up. Currently, several county jail systems, including in Washington, DC; Cook County, IL (where Chicago is); and Denver allow for transgender inmates to be placed in the proper gender setting regardless of surgical status, and it is time to make your voices heard and try to get change in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

I encourage anyone who reads this to contact the state representatives listed later in this article, and demand the following (in a respectful manner: no swearing, no shade):



1. That the commissary items for "male and "female be desegregated;



2. That all transgender prisoners get their healthcare needs met, including all necessary transition-related care;

and last but not least;



3. To place people who are transgender in the proper gender setting, regardless of genitalia or birth certificate, and to transfer prisoners who are in the wrong gender setting to the right gender setting.

continued on next page . . .

Please stress that the current system is a perpetuation of rape culture against transgender females, one of the most vulnerable types of women out there, and that regulations passed in 2012 REQUIRE that federal prisons implement guidelines that allow for transgender people to be housed in the proper gender setting:

* http://www.transequality.org/Resources/PREA_July2012.pdf

The elected officials leading the Corrections subcommittee are as follows:

Timothy Krieger (chair)
101 Ehalt St.
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 834-6400

Matthew D. Bradford (minority chair)
1846 Markley Street
Norristown, PA 19401-2904
(610) 270-1150

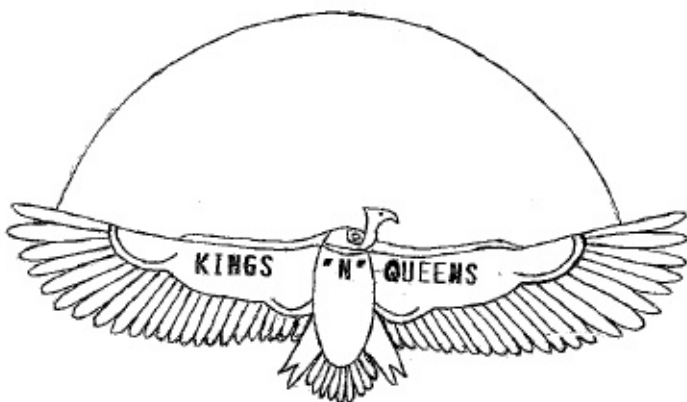
The following people are NOT on the subcommittee, but may evince interest in trans* issues

Brian Sims (openly LGBT individual in state legislature)
21 S. 12th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19170
(215) 246-1501

Mike Fleck (openly LGBT individual in state legislature)
301 Penn Street
Huntingdon, PA 16652
(814) 644-2996

Michael H. O'Brien (not an LGBT individual, but gave a good answer about transgender prisoners in a survey put out by Philadelphia LGBT political organization)
610 North 2nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
(215) 503-3245

We must begin with sensitivity to gender choice and insure transgender people go through the system in a proper gender setting.
-Michael H. O'Brien



todo sobre estrógeno

This is a translation of an article that was originally published in issue 2 about estrogen and 'moning'. If you missed the English original article and would like a copy, let us know and we can mail you a back issue.



¿Qué es el estrógeno?

El estrógeno es la hormona responsable por el desarrollo de las características sexuales secundarias de las mujeres. En las comunidades de mujeres trans, el acto de tomar estrógeno se llama 'moning, terapia de reemplazo de hormonas (HRT), o transición médica. El estrógeno puede estar en forma de pastilla, parche, inyección, gel o crema.

Elementos adicionales de la transición médica:

Antiandrógenos (bloqueador de testosterona) reduce el nivel general de testosterona. Usado en conjunto con el estrógeno para acelerar sus efectos. Ocasionalmente se usa solo para retrasar la pubertad en adolescentes MTF. (Pastilla)



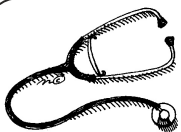
Progesterona es una hormona del embarazo que puede tener un efecto sobre el desarrollo de los senos. Las opiniones con respecto a la necesidad de la progesterona en la transición varían, es posible que incluso afecte la feminización negativamente. (Pastilla)
Hay personas que toman **Vitamina B** con su inyección de hormonas on en forma de pastilla. Aunque no hay evidencia de que esto sea necesario para la transición, no tiene efectos dañinos y contribuye a sentirse llena de energía y feliz.

El estrógeno es más efectivo cuando se bebe mucha agua

Pastillas o crema de **vitamina E** suavizar la piel.

Tomando decisiones inteligentes con respecto a hormonas del mercado negro/gris

- * aunque sea de la internet o de un proveedor clandestino, acude a alguien que tenga buena reputación entre tus amigos
- * compartir agujas te pone a riesgo de contraer VIH o hepatitis C
- * si estás compartiendo un frasco, existe un riesgo de transmisión de VIH y hepatitis C
- * Si acudes a alguien por una inyección y no VES la aguja salir del empaque, corres riesgo.



hormonas de un doctor

No hay regulaciones ni leyes que dictan si un doctor puede prescribir hormonas, la decisión la toma el doctor--es un mercado libre. Es posible que hayas oído que los doctores requieren que los pacientes atiendan años de psicoterapia antes de prescribir hormonas. **¡No tienen que hacer esto!**

El estándar de cuidado en centros de salud LGBT y de doctores progresivos es **consentimiento informado** lo cual quiere decir que prescriben hormonas siempre y cuando el paciente entienda completamente sus efectos.

Ventajas de acudir a un doctor

- * sabes exactamente que vas a recibir
- * hormonas prescritas son más baratas que las se encuentran en el mercado negro/gris, aunque tengas que pagar en efectivo
- * No es común que el seguro de salud pague por las hormonas. Preguntale a tu doctor (o a tu empleador si tu seguro es a través de tu trabajo)
- * Si un doctor estás supervisando tu transición médica, periódicamente te harán exámenes de sangre:
 1. niveles de estrógeno: para asegurar de que sea la dosis correcta
 2. función del hígado: para chequear por efectos secundarios
- * Si tomas alguna medicina prescrita, es posible que tenga alguna interacción con tus hormonas. Debes consultar con tu doctor.
- * Si llegas a ser encarcelada, hay más chance que la prisión te administre hormonas si son prescritas por un doctor.

Medicación para el VIH afecta el estrógeno. La transición se retarda. Sin embargo, el estrógeno no impacta la eficacia de la medicación para el VIH.

¿cuánto es mucho?

El cuerpo y la composición genética de todos es diferente. La dosis correcta para alguien no es necesariamente la dosis correcta para ti. Existe la tentación de tomar más de lo recomendado. Tomar mas estrógeno del que tu cuerpo puede procesar incrementa el riesgo de efectos secundarios y es una pérdida de dinero. No va a acelerar la transición: orinas el exceso.

¿Qué puedes esperar cuando empieces a tomar hormonas?



cuerpo

- * brotes de senos se desarrollan después de 2-6 meses de tomar estrógeno
- * la sensibilidad de los pezones aumenta

* Senos toman años para

desarrollarse por completo, generalmente a un tamaño similar a los de mujeres no trans en tu familia

- * grasa corporal disminuye en el abdomen, aumenta en los muslos y los glúteos
- * disminución general de masa muscular
- * senos son permanentes, aunque dejes de tomar hormonas.
- * cambios en niveles de grasa y músculo no son permanentes

estallando los brotes de seno no acelerará su crecimiento

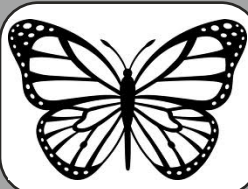
el estrógeno te dará cuerpo, aunque tengas silicona



Todos aquellos con senos deben chequear por síntomas de cáncer de mama. Aprende como darte a ti misma un examen de mama mensual y recibe un examen anual de tu doctor

suavidad

- * capa delgada de grasa bajo la piel de la cara
- * la piel será más suave
- * vello facial será más claro y fino (pero no dejará de crecer)
- * el crecimiento de vello corporal desacelerará, y puede llegar a ser más claro y fino
- * estos cambios no permanecerán si dejas de tomar estrógeno



emoción

- * Varias mujeres trans reportan un rango de efectos emocionales, como cambios de actitud y llorar fácilmente

* Algunas mujeres trans tienen "serenidad de estrógeno," un sentimiento de bienestar, calma y paz, mientras otras sufren depresión.

- * Cambios emocionales a causa de hormonas son temporarios.



el estrógeno disminuye el número de espermatozoides. Sin embargo, sigue siendo posible impregnar a alguien

sexo & genitales

- * Con el tiempo, el estrógeno puede cambiar el deseo sexual y como se siente un orgasmo.

* Después de años tomando estrógeno, el tamaño de los testículos, el pene y la próstata disminuirá.

- * Eventualmente, la dureza de las erecciones no será suficiente para sexo penetrativo.

* Estos efectos pueden desaparecer si dejas de tomar estrógeno

Si eres mayor de 50, deberías seguir recibiendo un examen de próstata anual.

los efectos secundario

- * Durante los primeros meses de terapia de estrógeno, varias personas sufren de náusea similar a los mareos del embarazo.

* riesgo de coágulo de sangre.

* presión arterial alta puede ser elevada por el estrógeno.

los riesgos asociados con el estrógeno se reducen considerablemente cuando se deja de fumar.

Lo que el estrógeno no hará

- * el estrógeno no elevará el tono de tu voz.
- * la nuez de Adán no se encogerá.
- * el pelo no crecerá
- * hormonas no crecerán una vagina, útero u ovarios.
- * no tendrás menstruación.

esta información es una reimpresión de un folleto creado por Adrian Lowe para el Trans-health Information Project y traducido por César Mantilla

Recursos Philadelphia

Trans-health Information Project (TIP)

1207 Chestnut Street, 5th floor
ofrece clases gratis para personas trans y de género variante sobre hormonas y como administrar inyecciones a una misma, y también un Especialista de Recursos

Mazzoni Center

809 Locust Street
Centro de salud LGBT donde los proveedores prescriben hormonas con consentimiento informado

Jonathan Lax Center

1233 Locust St
Clínica de cuidado de VIH donde los proveedores prescriben hormonas con consentimiento informado.

Confession

Pablo

Every time you tell me what you did
It hurts like the first time.
You're killing me slowly and you're getting away
with the crime.
You talk about what you did to me with humor in
your voice.
My feelings were irrelevant,
You made your choice.

The pain you've caused me feels like blunt force
trauma
I never knew loving someone could be so much
drama
You told me to love you
That, within you, I could confide
Yet, every time you said, "I love you" to me
You lied.

The emptiness I feel, will it ever subside?
All I wanted was your heart
And for that, I was denied.
Everyone told me you were playing me like a fool
I didn't want to believe that you could be so cruel.

I will struggle free from your spider web of lies
Each day the pain passes and my spirits start to
rise.

So Many Times

Juicy Woods

So many times
I've been told I was
nothing
So many times
I was lied at
So many times
I was hated on for being
different
So many times
People turn their back
on me
So many times
I've been abused
So many times
I felt like giving up
So many times
I felt discouraged
So many times
I felt helpless
So many times
I felt like giving in
But I realized
I did nothing wrong
So many times

Haters

s. Luvme @ MC7 NYS

Haters surround me everyday
Lock within the walls can't get away
How is it they know my business before I do
Sad thing about who said what I said
How easily small minds can be led
Gossip is an everyday norm
The ugly thoughts a mind will form
They walk around like they're all that
All I can say is where it at
Bumpin' their lips like that's what's up
Than asking God to fill their cup
And if he don't then who's to blame then
Oh - My bad, that's when they hate again
Don't get me wrong in god I trust
But he never said in humans I must
So I'll stand alone like I've learned to do
So mind my own and they should too
Look at themselves, take their own inventory
Allow people to tell their story.

a response to mail we recieved

Jordan Gwendolyn Davis

Hello from Philadelphia. My name is Jordan and I am a 28 year old MTF transsexual lesbian woman, a feminist, and a survivor. I am a devoted member of the outside collective. While most of the entries are either great or routine, one piece of mail from a transwoman locked up in Indiana really angered and triggered me, and it made me think about how some transgender women really are a threat to the furtherance of our rights.

The person's letter started innocently enough, talking about issues that transwomen often face in prison, and the story seemed to be very heartbreaking and sympathetic. However, the letter then went on to describe, in pornographic detail, sexual assault towards a little girl. Now, while I do believe that there are too many people on the sex offender registry that **SHOULDN'T** be and the criminal justice system is not nice to transgender or gender variant people, I have **ZERO** tolerance for pedophiles. I was sexually abused while at boarding school by a person in a position of authority, and this has had a profound negative effect on my life, and to be triggered again is not what I needed when I was trying to do a service for an often vulnerable segment of women and men.

And this person's actions have **FAR** reaching consequences beyond my own personal triggers. As you all are well aware, with very few exceptions, transgender people are housed based on their genitalia because corrections authorities fear that the cisgender women would be raped. On the outside, this has manifested itself in gender identity protections being eliminated or watered down because some people are loudly accusing us of trying to use public accommodations protection to rape women in bathrooms, dressing rooms, homeless shelters, etc. I believe strongly. that allowing transwomen to use women's facilities will not only **NOT** result in sexual assault towards cisgender women, but will help greatly reduce the rape culture that is so prevalent on the inside and out, and this woman's letter adds more fuel to the hateful bigoted fire and may result in transgender people's rights, both inside and out, being trampled.

I am a feminist, I oppose the perpetuation of rape culture towards all people, especially when it comes to transwomen being forced into men's facilities, both on the inside and out. However, we cannot tolerate it when a member of our community is a pedophile or a textbook rapist who brazenly describes her awful crime to a collective of people who may or may not have survived sexual abuse. It hurts the people reading it, it affects the people in the room (we all open mail together for this very reason) who have to support the triggered individual, and it affects our community, a misunderstood group as it is, in a negative way.

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.

Why are GLBQT inmates and non-inmates always coming at eachother instead of helping eachother out? Its a big probelm that we can't stick together in jail or on the streets because we are the same and at the end of the day all we got is each other cause the trade aren't worried about nothing but fucking and getting their head done if they need braids, they not really worried about us and we should talk to each other about our problems instead of being ready to fight or take each other's neck off and I'm speaking from the heart. We shouldn't talk about the way each other look, cuz its not about the way we look its about what's on the inside of us. I aint gunna lie, I used to not to talk to queens [who's looks i didn't like]. It's never to late to change your ways. i know cuz i changed some of mine but its takes time. i'm writing this because i love ya'll and want to see all of us come together and love eachother for whats on the inside. I love all my sisters even if we fight.

- Juicy Coward

Jessica Rabbit's Letter (Issue 7) response to Real Talk (Issue 6)

*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..."*

The boys that made these statements to you either are interested, have a desire for trans, have experimented, could be in the closet or else they'd not have made these comments to you. Fear of the unknown of prison drives these boys to seek others who are similar to themselves and the peer group provides them support and reassurance during this time of prison insecurity. For these boys in prison, peers are the most important aspect of their lives. These boys will go along with anything, respond in any way, just to belong.

Baby, the same way you accept positive response you should also accept negative response and go along with it and make a joke and laugh with them and they'll stop bothering you. Don't never allow anybody to know that these responses bother you or else they'll keep making these responses.

-Big Bird

Condoms (Issue 5)

The DOC don't permit or sell condoms on commissary. Why? Cuz they claim ain't no sex going on, but there is one out of every 10 males are either messing with their cellie on the low or a Queen and that's transmitting diseases and putting people at risk or HIV more and some men look at us as their girls or wife and we should be allowed to purchase condoms or get them from medical like in the county jail [Philadelphia].

-Juicy

Trans Community Mourns Loss (Issue 6)

Too many of our sisters are being murdered, why? One thing, our transgender sisters have to be up front with these men before the first kiss.

-Big Bird

From the Mail (Issue 7) and Real Talk (Issue 6)

This article and the varied responses to it illustrate the tension between putting blame for transphobic violence squarely on the shoulders of those who hate and hurt us, and blaming the victims because there might have been concrete steps she could take to be safer (i.e. disclosing her anatomy).

I think there is something our community can learn from the way feminists have responded to sexual assault: rape is always the rapist's fault, no matter what the victim was wearing or where she was walking or how much he [the victim] had to drink. At the same time feminists have taught ways to reduce the risk of being sexually assaulted, like watching your drink and not going places alone.

-Anonymous

Just a little note concerning other inmates

When someone is afraid to come near me or talk to someone because they are talking to me. I see those people as weak and without independent thought, followers, whatever the mass is doing. It takes courage and character to be us. Otherwise we would be pretending to be something else. For note to others, be happy who you are. Rules were made by man. And sometimes to hide secrets. Keep your head up at all times, it demands respect.

-Ceci

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
- * Artwork (black and white)
- * 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, please write to us!
- * Poetry
- * Ideas
- * Articles

Next Issue:

We are hoping to focus on Pride (and publish to coincide with June's Pride events). We are looking for **articles from you** addressing topics related to Pride. With props to the fine folks at Montreal Prison Correspondence Project for the inspiration, here are some questions to get you started thinking about this:

- (1) How do you see trans/gay/lesbian/queer pride happening in prison?
- (2) How is this different from outside?
- (3) What role do Pride movements play in your understanding of your trans/lesbian/gay/queer identity?
- (4) Do you feel that mainstream Pride movements ever discuss prison issues and should they?
- (5) Does your prison have any kind of LGBTQ organizing? Does it draw on a history of Pride movements?
- (6) How is Pride related to resistance? What does that mean in a prison setting?
- (7) How is Pride related to solidarity?
- (8) How important is being out and what emphasis is put on visibility?

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

NOTE NEW ADDRESS

Hearts on a Wire
1315 Spruce Street
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.