

We love it when you write us!

If you contribute make sure you tell us...

1. Exactly how you want to be credited [anonymous? ID number? Chosen name?]
***** **we will only use your government name if you explicitly say that it is okay** *****
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.

You can send us...

- .: Letters responding to this edition
- .: Artwork (black and white)
- .: Commissary recipes
- .: Articles
- .: Poetry
- .: Ideas



J.E. Forbes, FG-4445, 2015

Subscribe with us!

If you would like our newsletters, write to:

Hearts on a Wire
1315 spruce st
philadelphia, PA 19107

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



artwork by
Miss Ceci

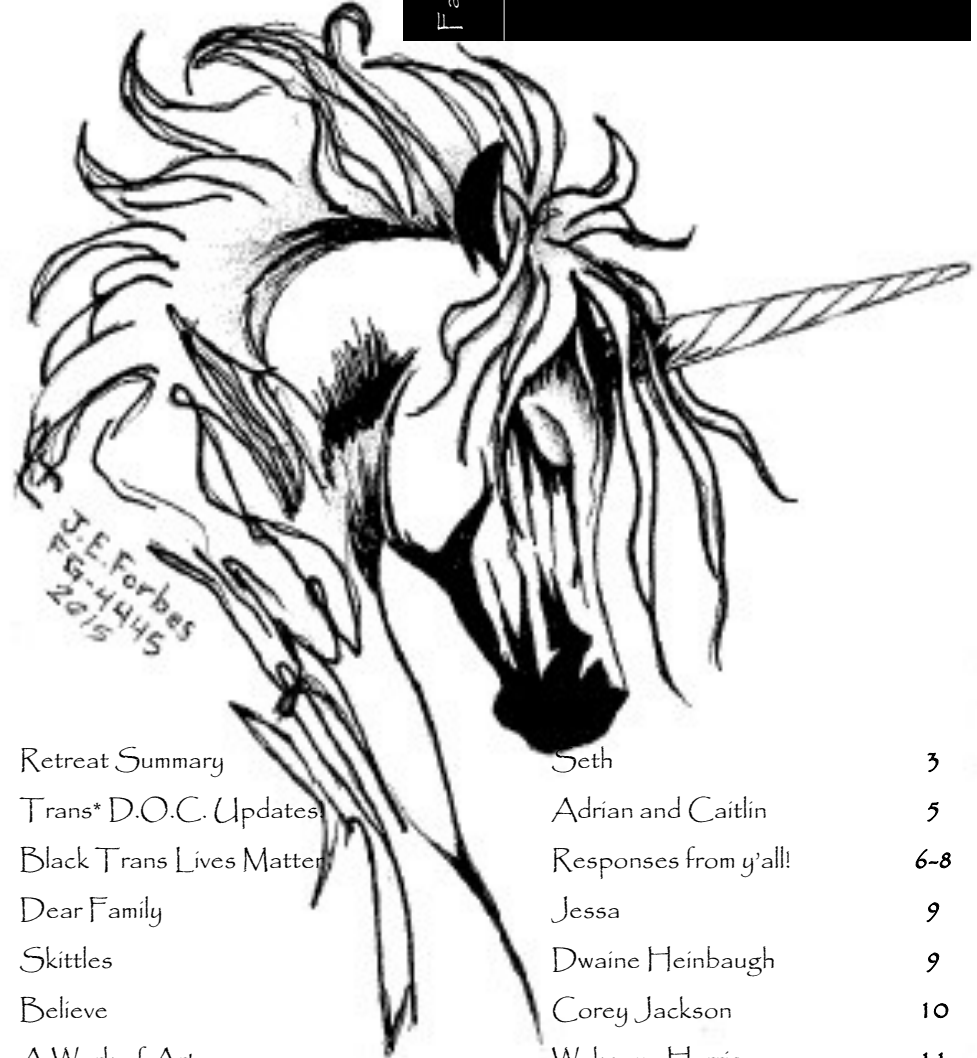
IN THIS ISSUE:

Letter from H.o.a.W	2
Homecoming Grant	4
Our next newsletter	4
Mail from you!	14&15
Subscribe with us!	16

Fall 2015—issue 16

Hearts on a Wire

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



Retreat Summary	Seth	3
Trans* D.O.C. Updates	Adrian and Caitlin	5
Black Trans Lives Matter	Responses from y'all!	6-8
Dear Family	Jessa	9
Skittles	Dwaine Heinbaugh	9
Believe	Corey Jackson	10
A Work of Art	Wakenya Harris	11
I Don't Care What You Say	Shaylanna Luvme	12
Untitled	J.E. Forbes	12
Smile UR Beautiful	Corey Jackson	13
My Lil' Sis	Miley	13

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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Check in

The Outside Collective

Dear Hearts on a Wire Community:

It hasn't been long since our last newsletter, but a lot has happened. First we want to share that the Department of Corrections has responded to pressure from our communities, and has adopted a new commissary policy. It deserves its own section in the newsletter. Check it out on page 5! We put together a day-long "retreat" for Outside Collective members. We had some in-depth conversations about how meetings work, what our values are, got energized about our movement, and planned for the future. We're going to work on getting more input from inside, and plan to have similar meetings in the future. Let us know what you think the outside collective should be working on. We also participated in a few events put on by other organizations. One of these was the Philadelphia Zine Fest. We sold copies of the newsletter as a fundraiser for postage. People are excited to have copies of your writings. A couple members also attended a gathering for the 10 year anniversary of Black and Pink in Boston. Black and Pink is a national organization of LGBTQ incarcerated people, and their allies, working for prison abolition. Every meeting we enjoy and are moved by your letters. Please keep them coming!

In loving solidarity,
The Outside Collective

...more mail from you ♥

Hello and what's good my family!

My name is DeeDee I'm 21 years old and am here at SCI Forrest. I'm new to the hearts on a wire family and just received my first issue (the summer issue). I'm ecstatic to finally get it!! I have a couple things to say. First lets all united and stand together for common causes and for each other there is power in numbers!! Second to Nu-Nu at Fayette, girl I agree with you. I made the mistake of opening my legs first to a guy without finding out if he was truly worthy. Ladies please don't make that mistake. Good things come with and in time. but don't be stupid. Lastly I wanna give a couple shout outs to some ladies who are very close to my heart. S.J. Since meeting you and forging a relationship with you I'm proud to call you my sister!! I hope that our friendship/sisterhood can grow nothing but stronger and deeper. I love you girl. And my mother dearest Lady Mariah. Honey we are more that sisters, we have more than a mother/daughter relationship. What we have and share goes beyond words. I can't put into words how powerful and strong our relationship is...the things we went through the whole nine. Just know that I love you no matter what. No matter where you just know I'm there with you in your heart and spirit.

In loving solidarity,
Your sister/daughter/
DeeDeexoxo

I've been in quite a few state prisons over the past years, and i have to say I agree with "No No" at Fayette about respecting yourself and loving yourself before anyone else can respect you or love you. I wrote the same thing to a beautiful "queen" I've known since '09. I am currently at Houtzdale I'm sitting in the hole waiting to go to the next jail (wherever that is). But point in hand is I sat back and had hundreds of advances because I look good and I got money, but I shot EVERYONE down.... (Real Talk) I want "my queen" or a real relationship, so I can love and spoil one....respect yourself, and someone special might just bump into you. It starts with you.

That's real,
Angel Serrano "Fly"

P.S. Angel Dejesus all love ma :)

J.E. Forbes
FG - 4445
2016
S.C.I. Mahanoy

note

We sometimes edit submissions for length and spelling. We always edit for disclosures about others and content.

♥ mail from you...

What's up Brothers and Sisters?

It's Lady Mariah Lee Smith @ SCI Forest. I wanted to drop a few lines on y'all out there and to my incarcerated sisters, STAY UP and continue to love your Sisters and Brothers. Be Careful who you allow to be friends... I also got to say that I got the most sweetest man in the world and I love my Boo-Butt so much. To all the shady girls in the world listen to Nivea

♫ Don't mess with my man because Ima be the one to bring it to you ♫

I'm out!!
Love
Mariah Smith @ SCI Forest

Mrs. Miley S. McCauley,

We've been together since Sept. 29, 2012 now it's our third year that we've shared our love. Miley you've been there you're so very beautiful I'm very glad that I've met someone very special and god himself put us together now it's sept. again and the 29 is coming up babygirl. Miley have a beautiful anniversary babygirl you're really have been the best I could ever ask for there's no one could make my life very happy as you have Miley. I mean this from my heart to your heart babygirl. I love and really miss you.

Have a wonderful anniversary on Sept. 29, 2015 Miley

Love your husband, babyboy
Thomas McCauley

Dear Hearts on a Wire,

I received a letter from you asking if I could tell you more about why I am interested in Hearts on a Wire? I certainly can share! :D I do identify with a lot of the writing and issues discussed in the newsletter. By society, I bear the "welted brand of "weirdo" --- an outcast sexually and racially and socially. Several members of my immediate family trudge beneath this yolk as well. Whether all of the writings or issues in Hearts on a Wire apply directly or specifically to me or not, I feel all of it deeply; empathy; being able to relate to it all to some degree? Maybe contributing to something Beautiful as Hearts on a Wire will help wash away some layers of muck and help me discover a pearl at my center, something of beauty in me; maybe something of all of you will rub off on me! H.o.a.W. is Sunlight, it warms and illuminates!

:D Gratefully,
J.E.Forbes

Dear hearts on a wire,

I am writing this letter just to "thank you" all there at your organization...I hope that just one of my letters will be...printed and shared to all that reads "HEARTS ON A WIRE". Until next letter, "Someone looking for someone" :)

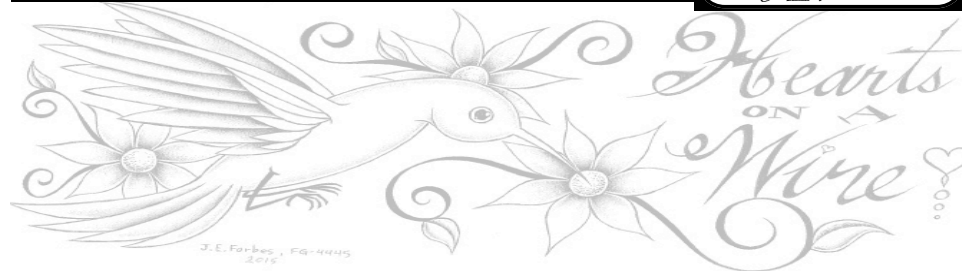
Hawk

J.E. Forbes
FG-4445
2015
S.C.I. Mahanoy

Retreat Summary

By Seth

artwork by
J.E. Forbes



Recently, the Hearts on a Wire outside collective realized that there were important issues we wanted to discuss and "big picture" planning we wanted to do, but didn't have time to talk about during our regular weekly meetings. So, on September 20th, 8 of the outside collective members held a 6 hour strategy meeting. We built relationships with each other, revisited and revised our group policies and agreements, and began to discuss our future goals for Hearts on a Wire. Overall, the retreat was very productive and re-energizing.

At the meeting, we first discussed the history of Hearts on a Wire. We remembered how the group started and how it has changed over the last 8 years. We then spent much of the meeting reviewing guidelines that the outside collective follows at the weekly meetings. We brainstormed ways to make it easier for people to participate in meetings and get involved. We then began to have a conversation about our long term goals and where we want to focus our efforts in the months and years to come.

Most importantly, we revisited our core values. Core values are the beliefs we share that inspire us to devote time and energy to this work. Our core values include supporting trans/gender variant incarcerated people and to centering the needs and desires of trans/gender variant incarcerated people. Revisiting our core values led us to discuss how we can do a better job of including inside collective members in our day-to-day decision making processes and creating long-term goals for the group.

We realized that we could not plan for the future without asking for advice and direction from the inside collective. Specifically, we are interested in creating leadership positions or committees so that incarcerated members can participate more directly in the outside collective's organizing efforts. So, we are looking for your feedback! We have written some questions for you to answer so that your voices guide our work. Feel free to respond to these questions or just send any other thoughts you have about Hearts on a Wire.

- ◆ What does being a Hearts on a Wire member mean to you?
- ◆ What does community mean to you?
- ◆ What are ways that you like to or want to contribute to Hearts on a Wire?
- ◆ What are some ways you are a leader in your community?
- ◆ If there is an opportunity, would you want to have a formal leadership position in Hearts on a Wire?

Homecoming Grant

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

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

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.

We had mailroom problems with SCI Smithfield and Fayette and we're sorry to the people who got issue 15 late or not at all. :(

Our next newsletter theme!

Science Fiction Writing

artwork by
J.E. Forbes

We love this quote from author and organizer Walidah Imarisha: "Any time we try to envision a different world—without poverty, prisons, capitalism, war—we are engaging in science fiction. When we can dream those realities together, that's when we can begin to build them right here and now." How have science fiction, fantasy, superhero stories or other writing or films about imaginary worlds impacted your life? If you could envision a new world in the future that made room for all of our complex identities, what would it look like?



welcome home



Natasha
Angel DJ
Love Always
Iceson
Scott
Coco

Smile
I Love You
Beautiful

My Lil' Sis

Miley @ SCI Benner Township

Golden Blonde hair, Blue eyes.
My Lil' Sis. We argue, we scream at one another but you're still my Lil' Sis.
Men after men, one that you find that you don't mind. ☹️ what's the problem?
I love my Lil' Sis and she knows that but we still argue and feel each others pain. But you're still my Lil' Sis.
Maybe one day again, we can.
My love stretches a million miles for my Lil' Sis. Golden Blonde hair, blue eyes my Beautiful Lil' Sis. I love you with all my heart, M.Y.B. but it still remains that you're my Lil' Sis.
I love you Baby Girl. At the end of each day. I'm still there for you... Lil' Sis K.L.R.
(10-1-15) Love Always, Miley

artwork by
Corey Jackson

I Don't Care What You Say

Shaylanna Luvme A.K.A. Queen City Shay

You Say I'm not a woman, but a fake
You bad-mouthed me for playing patty-cake
You said me and my boyfriend made your stomach ache
Your words won't make me break

I heard you Say I was a misfit
You said men aren't Supposed to knit
You threw away my sewing kit
You say all people like me should have their throat slit

You Scream words of pure hate
You think your words don't penetrate?
You Said I won't make it to God's gate
No matter What you Say I'm Still doing great

For you I will pray
My ways will always stay
For the things you said you should pay
But, I don't care what you say.

the heart of this, from within
does throb to an end that
which is manifest (from here to
beyond) carries on as a truth
realized from times confined in
this space which contains a
suite of retreat; encephaloplace;
that creativity central.

J.E. Forbes FG4445
301 Morea Rd.
Frackville, PA 17932

artwork by
J.E. Forbes



Trans* D.O.C. updates happened!

Adrian & Caitlin

The PA DOC has revised its commissary and housing policies for incarcerated people who identify as transgender.

⇒ Commissary

As of June 30, 2015, new commissary lists are available to transgender people that offer gender-specific items that were previously viewed as contraband, including undergarments and cosmetics:

- DC-138B - Transgender Female within a Male Facility
- DC-138C - Transgender Male within a Female Facility

The prohibition on gender-specific items has been an issue of serious concern to Hearts on a Wire members. The outside collective gathered hundreds of signatures in support of a revised policy over the past several years, while our members on the inside have fought back against this policy through your own advocacy. In the words of our member Najee Gibson, "If they were worried about our safety, they would help us stay healthy, not worry about how we express ourselves." We are glad to know that these voices have been heard!

⇒ Housing

DC-ADM 800 was updated June 25, effective date August 7, 2015 to comply further with PREA. On a case-by-case basis, the new rules allow people to be placed in housing that is more appropriate for their gender identity and instructs prison staff to give "serious consideration" to the person's own views as to their housing preferences. The rules also state that housing should be re-assessed every 6 months, that all transgender and intersex people should be allowed to shower privately, and requires facilities to train their staff in respectful interaction with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender variant and intersex persons.

We are hopeful that as these changes are put into practice, it will lessen the day-to-day struggle of our members on the inside. We are counting on our inside members to share information about difficulties and successes with the implementation of the new policies at prisons across the state.

artwork by
J.E. Forbes



BLM . . . Black Lives Matter

"Shade Schuler. Papi Edwards. Lamia Beard. Ty Underwood. Yasmine Payne. Taja Gabrielle de Jesus. Penny Proud. Kristina Gomez Reinwald. London Chanel. Mercedes Williamson. India Clarke. K.C. Haggard. Amber Monroe. Kandis Capri.

These are the names of the trans women *reported* murdered since the beginning of the year. So many more go unreported. I call on all of us to say their names. Each one of these women should still be alive—but they are not because the lives of trans women are seen as disposable.

The average life expectancy of a trans woman of color is 35 years old. And yet even still, no state of emergency has been declared. Black communities are in crisis, and we declare that more than 13 murders of trans women, 5 of whom were murdered just this week, 11 of whom are of color and most of whom are Black, is indeed, a state of emergency.

State sanctioned violence is about much more than police violence. State sanctioned violence is the multiple forms of violence enacted against trans women of color, including exclusion from the economy, from services, from democracy. The murders of trans women alongside the multiple other forms of violence that trans women experience must be elevated to the level of conversation that the murders of cis Black men now occupy.

What that means is that it cannot constantly be the job of trans women to constantly remind us that their lives matter too. The liberation of Black people as a whole depends on the liberation of Black trans folks. None of us are free until all of us are free."

- Alicia Garza (one of the founders of the BLM movement)

What does Black Lives Matter mean to you?

What does Trans Lives Matter mean to you?

As an incarcerated person, how can you participate in these movements?

What are you doing to make sure that Trans Lives Matter?

What are you doing to make sure that Black Lives Matter?

What does a future where Black and Trans life is valued by everyone look like?

A Work of Art

Wakenya Harris (written as slam poetry)

For the longest, I've been in deep thought, in other words, **contemplation**, on when I'ma do something about this **constipation**. I can **admit**, I'm full of it, I'm not the preacher or the deacon in the **pulpit**, but is it really meant for me to suffer from a lifetime worth of – **condemnation**? It's unfortunate I were held hostage by the **drug life**, lived a **thugs life**, suffered the consequences while being exposed, like lil moma's on **club nights**. But at what point am I **forgiven**? I know my choices affected my love ones, hell yeah I was **trippin**, but let us disclose the fact that, my life was not **fulfilling**, but thank goodness, I've been **chastised** which **signify** that I'm still one of God's **children**, but the **grudge** haven't **budged**. I'm still wondering, is it that **serious**? But I suppose the answer to that will remain **mysterious**. Mysterious as me I guess, because obviously I'm a **stranger**, nonexistent in some people's minds, like them thirteen inch black and white T.V.s the ones in order to remove the static, you had to use a hanger. Ask me how many visits I got, one in the last 12 years, and before that, it wasn't often, but I'll be a cool million, quite a few folks will come and see me dead in a **coffin**. It'll be nice to just get a letter every now and **then**, just to know somebody thinking about ol'**Ken**, asking me how I'm doing, and how I **been**. I would love to tell somebody that I'm **wiser** and much **sharper**, how I accomplished receiving my G.E.D., plus I'm a license **barber...O.K.**, I got a fetish for women who don't mind being **Seductive**, but I keep it in perspective and find a way to be **productive** [shout out *for you **J.E.!**], but all of my folks remain so **reluctant**. While they striving to **alienate me**. **No** doubt it hurts, but I refuse to allow them to **break me**, they say they love me, but their actions suggest that they **hate** me. I put all my pain to the **side** while keeping it in **stride** as a comedian making people laugh **faithfully**. It's my purpose to tend to see people have a cheerful **heart**, it's all about how you finish the game, **not** how you **start**, and I'm fire these days, not just a **spark**, more like a billboard single that climbed the **charts**. Although you've exercised **neglect**, don't **forget**, I'm still God's piece of **Art...**



artwork by
J.E. Forbes

Believe

Corey Jackson



*In every circumstance
God is working on our behalf
His heart is moved with compassion
His purpose is guided by love
and His ways are paved with grace.*

*You are part of a perfect plan
designed by the God
who loves you completely
You rein His thoughts
every moment and they're filled
with the desire to bless you.*

Responses from Y'all... BLM

Black Lives Matter ... to me this means the innocent lives of black individuals matter just as much as any other nationalities.
Trans Lives Matter ... to me this means no matter what you choose to be or who you choose to be that is nobody else's business and we're not somebody's punching bag, so stop taking jabs at us.
As an incarcerated black trans-woman I can partake in these movements by speaking out through all of the organizations that's willing to publish my insight on these issues.
The actions that I am doing to make sure trans lives matter is protecting any and all LGBTQ members around me. I am a Protector. One of the muscles. The Security, for the LGBTQ members in Marcy, Building #30. I offer my help and assistance to any black individual for nothing. No strings attached.
It looks like the definition of the good life, but dealing with reality it's going to be a long ways away.
I have included an extended list of names of black individuals who were murdered by white cops.

- Shaylanna Luvme aka Queen City Shay

2.9.14 Ernest Satterwhite, 68

4.30.14 Dontre Hamilton, 31

9.4.14 Levar Jones, 35

12.2.14 Rumin Brisbon, 34

3.1.15 Charly "Africa" Leundeu Keunang

3.6.15 Tony Robinson, 19

3.6.15 Naeschylus Vinzant, 37

3.9.15 Anthony Hill, 27

4.4.15 Walter Scott, 50

BLM... Black Lives Matter

Basically a time to come together, Celebrate, and show love especially for the many mother's, father's. etc.... Who have lost love ones to corrupt police brutality and state violence... A time to celebrate the ability to survive in peace, in whatever form we chose to do so... Cheer and share one another's experiences...A time to share resources, study, debate, and create new networks...A time to dance, chant, party, and heal together...

A time to embrace to full essence of who we are as living beings, our culture, our heritage, our ancestors, our culture, our heritage, our ancestors, our history, our roots, and the many forms in which blackness is uniquely packaged, because all Black Lives Matters...Regardless of our religion, sexual preference, age, gender, or political affiliation...we are...Orlando Barlow, Akai Gurley, Oscar Grant, Raymond Allen, Tyree Woodson, Eric Garner, Alberta Spruill, Carlos Alcis, Ausmane Zongo, Jonathan Ferrell, Kadieme Powell, Wendell Allen, Billy Rae Davis, Miriam Carey, Romain Brisbo, Kimani Gray, Jordan Baker, Dante Parker, Aiyana Jones, John Crawford III, Yvette Smith, Larry Eugene, Shareese Francis, Tobias Mackey, Jason Harrison, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Penny Proud, Clinton Allen, Juan May, Christian Taylor, India Clark, and many others.

They are our kin folks, our cousins, our aunts, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, and friends, our Blood! We are one people, one resistance, one struggle to simply survive. So what does Black Lives Matter means to me...Liberation So Black Lives. Let's continue to reflect on histories of struggle, and continue to build a sense of fellowship that will transcends geographical boundaries and begin to heal from the many traumas we face.

Black Lives Matter...

In Solidarity -- Truth, Comrade Reggie...

I'm attracted to Queens, I've always been that way. I used to hide it because my mother is a pastor and I came from a long line of preachers and was always told I would be one. But I remember when I first told her that I loved a Queen she stopped writing and talking at all. But then one day about a year later she said if you do any of that keep it there. I had to tell her mom I am grown and I will live my life whether she accepted it or not I will always love her and she says she will always love me. But my point is I see what the Queens go through while being here, I feel it's my duty to protect them all, like we have a family here and I make sure no one tries to hurt them because they are my sisters. To all stay strong and be a strong voice because we are getting our rights and in the end **WE WILL WIN.**

Love all of you Queens wish I knew you all and love Hearts on a Wire keep all in my prayers.

-Bookie @ SCI Coal Township (Nathaniel Griffin LB4480)

Dear Family

Jessa @ SCI Mahoney

Dear Family (with love) <3

Hello to all my brothers and sisters. I write today because I feel I must write. My heart is a little heavy today. But I won't give up the fight. I am here thinking of all the brothers and sisters I know. And the ones I don't even know at all. And I want to say stay strong don't give up for any reason...

These days I find myself stuck right in the middle of things...I want someone to love me for me. And a person that can tell me and show me that they love me. Someone I can spend the rest of my life with. And I ask myself these two things lately. Is this person (Mr. Right) here in prison with me? Or out on the streets somewhere right now? ...

I look forward to going home in 2017. And I can't wait to leave prison later on. But I want to stay in touch with Hearts on a Wire...And if any of my brothers and sisters want to write me out on the streets, feel free to do so ok! ...

I will be glad to hear from you. And I would write you back also. Because I know being incarcerated how much mail means to a person. Getting even one letter or a card can make a person's day. Looks like rain here again today. We always get rain here...

Well until next time my family. Take it easy and enjoy the weather when you can. Well I will close for now my family. Peace.

Love: Jacob Wileman AKA Jessa at SCI Mahanoy

Skittles

Dwaïne (a.k.a. D) @ SCI Mahoney

I met this beautiful angel and it was love at first sight and wouldn't you know it we are meant for each other and she is my soul-mate! No relationship is perfect so we have our ups and downs but we always pull through because our love for each other is unbreakable! Her name is Skittles! There isn't anything that I wouldn't do for her and we plan on getting married within the next year!.... Before I met her I didn't care about anyone or anything but she got me to change that! I'm now getting ready to see parole so hopefully I can go home and we can live a happy life outside these walls!...Never give up! Never hide the real you because at the end of the day it's your life! Tilt he next time stay strong and keep your heads up everyone!

Love always,
your brother
Dwaïne Heinbaugh "aka D"