

Hearts on a Wire

Issue # 31- Fall 2021



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

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

Due to Covid-19, we are currently meeting virtually. Contact us for the virtual meeting information.

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Abel ♥ Adrian ♥ Ael
Alexis Love ♥ Alexis Mitchell
Alice ♥ Amber Richardson
Anastasia ♥ Anonymous
Ary ♥ Big Foot
Brandon L. Williams
Brianna AKA Starr
Brittany ♥ Brittney ♥ Ceci
Connie ♥ CPS Simpson
CR ♥ Cree ♥ Dawn Guthrie
Dee Dee in Florida
Dee-Dee ♥ Devin
Didi@Forest ♥ Dom
Dylcia Alicia Snow
Egypt Ily Moore
Emma ♥ Eric/ Arissa ♥ Fidelity
Harley Quinn ♥ Iris ♥ Jerry
Jersey Savage ♥ Joey
Jessica Diana Garza
Juicy Queen Bee
Jynx Bloodthorne
Kaitlin Mae Santos ♥ Kas
Kat ♥ Kaylynn J. Alvarado
Keith Weber ♥ Kelly ♥ Kyra Lee
Lefty ♥ Lena ♥ Lexi
Lexi Love ♥ Lunaiya
Marc Freligh ♥ Maz ♥ Megan
Michelle ♥ Miley S. Fletcher
Miss Aubrey Anne ♥ Monica
Mr. Bey ♥ Mrs. Gege
Ms. Christian ♥ Ms. Janel
Ms. Sigi ♥ NB Oowee ♥ Nora
Pryme ♥ Rachel Marie Whitted
Rachel ♥ Roselynn Leighann
Sebastian Melmoth
Siobhan ♥ Skyler Mullins
Spade ♥ Sydney Hart
Tammy ♥ Taz ♥ Teddy
Tee ♥ Twinky Bear
Twisted ♥ Whittany Smith

Layout: Adrian

Copy Editing: Tee, Emma, Lexi

Cover Art: Jessica Diana Garza

LETTER FROM THE OUTSIDE COLLECTIVE

Dearest Inside Collective,

It was so special to put this newsletter together in partnership with you! It is packed with beautiful artwork, meaningful poems, inspirational responses to issue #30's prompt, and important resources on hormones and starting a group on the Inside. We hope it nourishes you in this time full of strain, isolation, and adaptation.

Until recently, the Outside Collective has been meeting remotely. In August we started meeting in a hybrid format with some people online and others in person to open up our mail. Many of you have written to us recently asking how COVID has affected Hearts and if the newsletter will be coming less frequently. Though we have made no official decision to do fewer newsletters, we do want to be honest that the process of putting together the newsletter (receiving submissions, typing them up, putting them in the format, printing them, folding them, sending them...) has been moving at a much slower pace during the pandemic. Therefore, you may want to expect that through this crisis the newsletter may be coming out less frequently. Thank you all in advance for understanding.

On the brighter side, this time has led us into new adventures of connection between our inside and Outside Collective! We have had the opportunity to explore more ways of supporting each other through mutual aid, and we hope to continue with this initiative as we are able going forward. Our Pilot Video Visitation Program has been incredibly popular so far! We have already connected more than 25 of us inside and out. Though there will be a bit of a wait connecting you, we are absolutely still adding new people to our waitlist, just reach out to us if you are eligible and interested. Finally, during the last week of October the Outside Collective will have the opportunity to attend the Institute of Community Justice's Art as Resistance art gala and celebrate some pieces featuring Inside Collective artwork!

With gratitude and love,

~ The Outside Collective

THOUGHTS ON ABOLITION

in Issue 30, we asked for your thoughts and feelings after reading the article on prison abolition. We asked if there was anything you felt excited about, anything that scared you, and what questions came up for you.

Lunaiya: In today's society, especially in the Western parts of the world in which we reside, the Penal System is flawed and entirely dysfunctional. This isn't about Rehabilitation, isolating and controlling the problem, or even instituting better, more practical ways of righting the populace. It's an Us v. Them mentality. Mental Health, sexuality, racial and social backgrounds are used as weapons. Abolition offer POV change: A non-linear way of looking at how to better our situation. I believe in a time of change such as now, it is imperative we all act to push for this. People sometimes do bad things, however, we look at the end result, not the Root. In greek mythology, Hercules fought a Hydra. Each time a head was cut, two more took its place, that's where we are, like his solution, we get to the bottom and burn the stumps to better perceive a more useful and otherwise effective, solution.

Kelly @ Albion: At first I was not really interested in the idea. But I read it anyway. I was shocked at how fast I understood the movement for someone who never heard of or thought of such ideas. Being on the inside, I fully understand how human warehousing for profit and just throwing human lives away is one of mankind's worst inventions. This is money wasted, but the profiteers keep this waste of tax dollars under wraps. The same money should go to schools, senior citizens, social-services and continuing smart criminal justice and rehabilitation. Instead it goes draconian punishment, psychological damage and they say it creates jobs when they build another prison that will treat humans in conditions that would be illegal to do to animals.

Juicy Queen Bee: As a true believer and political prisoner I believe change starts with us. I'm all for starting a movement and I'm all for standing up for what's right, never giving up, never backing down from challenges that will come and test your faith and your strength.

Anonymous: I have to say yes and no about prison abolition. I think that people who have drug problems and people who are mentally ill should not ever be locked up. But people who do real morbid evil things should be locked up. However I am 110% anti death penalty no matter how bad the crime is that someone committed. No one should ever be put to death.

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ABOLITION, CONTINUED

CPS Simpson LM4751 @ Coal Township: During my incarceration I have experienced a mental and psychological coldness that has dehumanized me in many ways. The P.I.C. is so completely detached from reality that the very thought of rehabilitation is ridiculous to the point that it will leave you scratching your head questioning “did they really think that will work?” Can you imagine an individual who commits a serious offense, from the very beginning confessing and taking full responsibility for their actions, the way the system is now. The District Attorney would take them to trial, the prosecutor would request the maximum penalty and the lawyer or public defender would be begging for a deal on a slam dunk case for the state. In short you would spend years in prison, thank you for your honesty. There is no room for empathy when you’re fighting for your life, you will be taken from all you love, condemned to a concrete box and over time forgotten. But worse yet the PIC has created a hole in the family structure that has proven time and time again to end in the demise of more loved ones. We must overhaul the entire system. From the Beginning, What does that look like?

“You’re a victim of a crime you call an emergency # let’s call it 911, someone answers it’s a dispatcher you tell the dispatcher the problem but the dispatcher sends the police then transfers you to a trained psychologist who understands emotional cues they stay on the line with you while the dispatcher sends the police, the police show up but they are in plain clothing identified only by their badge they are also trained in cultural competency, ethics, social work & communication skills, and what they don’t have are guns with live rounds, just a range of immobilizing devices. You recognize the officers because they live in the community, they are involved everyday people. Immediately you’re calm, everything is calm, the families of both the victim and the person committing the crime are called. Intervention starts on the scene.”

I can imagine an arrest like the one above. I can see facilities throughout the whole world built for holistic care, ones that are equipped to care for psychological, spiritual, emotional and physical needs, each live-in a facility with the expertise to care for and repair lives. Truth be told this is not a dream, this could be a reality all it takes is effort and the willingness to see that the better we as a whole make people the better off the entirety of humanity. The world wants so badly for crime to decrease for criminals to be productive, this will only happen if we decrease poverty, increase education, reject systemic classism, racism, sexism and genderphobia, destroy economic disparity and abolish the P.I.C. How? You might ask “you’re all problems and no solutions” you might say, well I can tell you where to start, look in the mirror and begin to see everyone as a part of you.

Continued on Next Page...

ABOLITION, CONTINUED

Lexi Love: The idea of abolition is an exciting one, but sadly... it's just an idea, a "political vision." When will the vision become a reality? I've been an abolitionist before I even knew the word. I've never believed in prison. I don't believe it serves a purpose except to cause more harm. There has to be a better way. If we stop sitting around and talking about it, and put it into action, I believe we can virtually eliminate the prison industrial complex. Recently I've been taking a course on Restorative Justice (shoutout to our friends at Books Through Bars- Philly for providing the course). Restorative Justice is focused on repairing harm rather than punishing wrongdoers. I believe that combining Restorative Justice with PIC Abolition in practice, not just in theory, will better our lives and our nation for future generations.

Taz: I would like to think in 10 years that everyone will be treated the same white, black, asian and spanish. All lives matter.

Michelle: As you ask about abolition, but here and there are real such things? I have been in prison in Texas for going on 30 years.

If things change for us in Texas, we might gain insight into what could be boundless possibilities: a better relationship with staff and parole board and a good sense of understanding with transgenders that are sitting in prison and on the outside. I for one would like to see changes...putting us in prison is not the answer, or just throwing us around either! I have been a

transgender all my life and it's been 62 years hidden until the last 4 years, and I won't trade it all! I would love to hear ideas that may transform better relationships within Texas and the world to restore real people's lives. Because every life can count and we can work to better ourselves for the children of tomorrow's collective minds!

UTOPIAN

Brandon L. Williams

There's always two things to choose
And most days I can't pick which to do?
'Til this vague dreamy drifting
Of a world that was uplifting
Where people opened doors
and welcomed you in
Where people weren't defined
by the tone of their skin
And when they opened those doors
with a smile and welcome
On the opposite end, they didn't think,
"Well how come?"
Just WELCOME
Bridges instead of walls
Security blankets for inevitable falls
A world where there's no need for Gandhi,
Martin Luther King, or Jesus to die
No Crooked Government or a George
Zimmerman to pry
No genocide, no invasions
In fact, there'd be no separate nations
No type-cast, type of class
Such as...
Poor or rich
Where the reward was life,
and you could afford to live
Without folks seeing dollar signs
floating around
No handouts off the sweat of your chin
Rather hand-ups every once and again
So I guess it would exactly be utopian
Just a lot more close to it
Family and friends would still pass on
There'd still be unfortunate accidents
Some days would still drag on
Arguments would still be passionate
But at least we'd actually listen
Before giving an opinion
Sexual assault and rape
Would be played out like disco
and VCR tapes
'Cuz men would view women as daughters,
sisters, and mothers and then lovers
Women would view men
as son, fathers, and brothers
If we could learn to accept and love
Lesbians, gays, and trans would be
viewed as all of the above
There would be so much more
to change for the better
And through our darkest hours
we'd pull together
Plus even more we'd do
If only this dream world of mine were true
I think I'd know which of the two I'd choose

ABOLITION, CONTINUED

Twinky Bear AKA The Real Jail House Wife of PA: Before reading it I had no clue what exactly the formal word “abolition” meant. Unbeknownst to me, I am an abolitionist at heart. For many years I have pondered the idea that we as a society need to come up with a completely new way of policing! The one we have now does not ensure justice for all and historically has been the source for not only systemic oppression but the enforcement of a racially rooted arbitration. My feelings are, if we have the ‘support’ of the people, meaning that everyone agrees the “old way” of doing things (our justice system) is in need of change! A re-vamp or “re-working” of the old will not do! Foundationally it has been structured at the time of its conception to be oppressive. Black people were not even considered 2nd class citizens like white women (we were slaves and according to history, slaves had no rights). An entirely new system has to be built.

I feel most excited about the prospect of “Justice for All.” I feel that its ideal but the facts are, right now America has two different justice systems, white privilege and Black (other) and that is not fair! They are quick to throw the term unethical or unjust around when they are trying to prove you guilty but will never admit it when their own behavior is in question. History does not lie, double standards in America’s justice system exist. I’m excited not just for the promise, but for the actual action of “Justice for All!”

STARS - a tribute

Kas

I will **STAND**

for equality and justice for all
I will stand back up after every fall

I will stand **TALL**

for everyone to see
who I am and want to be

AND I will fight

against hate, discrimination, racism, inequality
injustice, and oppression
I will fight it all, even if I have to use aggression

I will **RISE**

like a star, watch me shine bright
watch me, provide light

I will be **STRONG**

through all the trials and tribulations
through all the ups and downs
we are or will be facing

What scares me about the idea of “abolition” is that the “other side” (people who want to continue to reap the benefits of our current biased legal/prison system and straight up racist Americans) will make every effort to shine a negative light on the movement. That being said, I’m ready to strap up my boots and get marching! What I think we should all do is demand the dismantlement of America’s corrupt police and legal system. I think we could replace them with trusted people from the community elected by the community. My idea would need to be further worked out and structured. What’s good about that is that at least the wheels are turning!

ABOLITION, CONTINUED

Didi @ SCI Forest: I don't think that abolition or the abolition movement is a bad thing. I agree 100% that the current system we've been using and under so long is not working!!! I believe America is at a crossroads. I believe the time is now to try something new. I mean look around cops murdering Black people. Statistically, hate crimes are on the rise! Oppression and systemic oppression is more clean and evident than ever before. Especially in the PIC!!

There is a reason the recidivism rate for prison is so high! Nothing productive ever really takes place behind these walls. No meaningful change. In reality, it just creates more criminals. A lot of us are not getting what we need from the current system in play. The way I see it does **NO ONE** justice and I am all for being a part of the solution, instead of the problem. So I agree with abolition and finding other solutions other than this current one that's not working. The movement is happening and I am with it. Let's reform society and prisons all together!! But we've got to get those in power to listen.

Egypt Ily Moore | MP7734 @ SCI Benner: Abolition is the action or act of abolishing a system or institution. An abolitionist is a person who favors the abolition of a practice or institution, esp. capital punishment or slavery.

What I imagine for myself and the rest of the world is what we've imagined for years - to be accepted equally regardless of gender, sexuality, race or any other lifestyle. I would like to see and I imagine this all the time within institutions and especially here on the Residential Treatment Unit (RTU). Guards are not trained to work with transgender people or other inmates on this unit. Discrimination is everywhere, not just here within these walls. I imagine once I get released I can keep fighting for my peers that are still here behind these walls. However I'll keep the fight alive on the streets letting the public know that discrimination is strong behind these walls between the LGBTQA community and guards - and that it needs to change.

What makes me excited is that our voices are finally being heard. What scares me is worrying about the retaliation from guards and higher for grievances I've written for my peers being discriminated against. Will they move me away from my peers? Will they plant something in my cell? However, I am ready for war.

Questions I have are: What can we do to make sure our voices are being heard about what is going on behind these walls? Who is our outside help, such as reliable sources if our families can't help us 'cause they don't approve of our identity? I'm excited to be a voice on the inside for the community. I love all of my brothers and sisters, known and unknown. I will continue to fight the good fight - not just here, but everywhere.

GETTING THINGS STARTED

Mrs. Gege, LIGHT Coalition

Hearts has heard from a number of energetic young trans folks seeking support and advice on starting mutual support organizations in their PA DOC facilities. We asked Mrs. GeGe to explain the steps she took to successfully navigate getting her organization, LIGHT, off the ground

How to start a support organization: This article explains how to start an official "inmate" organization in PA DOC.

The first thing is to get your numbers up. Create a list of members but don't collect signatures in case the administration thinks you're doing a petition. Don't do a petition because this is against policy and you'll go to the RHU for that.

Okay now to also create membership you'll want to reach out to organizations and community members and see if they can help. They will be the backbone of your organization. Find a staff member to be the facilitator of this organization. They will be the liaison between you, the administration and the outside collective of your organization.

Once we have all that we can begin. You start by deciding how your organization will operate and how the leadership will look, (i.e. President, vice President, Treasurer, etc.) Then, you need to create a Yearly Plan of Action. This is a lot of things that I can't really tell you how to create but if there is another organization in the prison you can request a copy from them. This is important. It will include bylaws, meetings schedule and location, fundraising, fund usage and allocation, membership, body of leadership, etc. just use their organization's yearly plan of action as an example and then create your version.

Once you have this typed up you want to make several copies. I would suggest one for each member and one for the warden and one for the PCM. Also give one to the organization's facilitator.

Send the copies to the warden and the PCM with a DC-135A (request slip) asking them to consider this, that way you have a record.

If they deny this don't sweat it just try again or file a grievance. You can propose the organization once a year so don't give up. It might help if you file a grievance claiming discrimination. Good luck...



How to start a support group: This is different than an organization. A support group is a place to talk amongst peers and help each other.

To begin you'll want to talk to your peers and see if they would be interested. You should also talk to staff about this. Try to find staff that are open-minded like psychology staff perhaps. You need to find a staff member who would run the group.

Now you have your numbers. Next, you want to write to as many organizations and community members and ask them for some help. Now you're ready to send requests to the warden, PCM, and psychology department. At the same time, you want all of your supporters to call in and ask that the group be started. Also, get your peers to send requests to the warden, PCM and psychology department asking for the same thing. This is called applying pressure. You want to cover all avenues. just keep on applying pressure.

Now you've done all that and they still deny you? Don't sweat it. I was denied several times but after all the pressure they finally gave us the group.

RIP HEV

Ceci



In my most painful moments in mourning - of losing the man of my life, that I've been with for 23 years, I LOVE YOU HEV, and I'm always going to be your wife, you was the BEST to me, no one, and I mean! (no-one) will ever fill your shoes, my man, (BIG HEV), I'm forever loving you, we'll be together again, your true and real loving wife Ceci. In my time of mourning, I have to say this to all of us, LGBTQ community ♥

◆ | ◆ Regardless of your circumstances, live your moment, by your moment being now, it could also had not ever been, So **FEEL LOVE** - and embrace **LIFE**; some are not here now, and some who never was; believe the world is yours, (be **YOU** in it) - and embrace it, love it, and it **WILL** Reward You... Message of love. Sister C- ♥

In the thoughts of my man {Big Hev}. I'll love you forever, I miss you ♥ ceci

YOU

Juicy

You inspire me
to be all I can be
You inspire me to succeed
You inspire me to fight
Stand for what I believe

You challenge me
to be better
for better

You give me strength
to live by
hope to live
Peace for understanding

You make me strong
like a giant

You make me love again
You protect
From all the harm

You make me complete
You are my rock
My foundation to stand

You show me love
when I don't feel
loved at all

You give me love
to love when
I been broken

You make me
laugh when sad

You're the reason
I love so hard

REMEMBERING MAMA

Juicy Queen Bee

To all those who lost your mother remember all the love devotion she have given you through all the years she live and raise you show you love. To my big real sis who lost her mom a while ago while in prison also to my big sis Maxine. I can relate to you it hurts a whole lot the day I found out my mother died. We've all experience loved ones, friends, relatives, and activists who died, but its worse when you lose your rock heart, your mother which is all the above, and then some. It hurt to see your family hurt and you cannot be there in person, only in spirit.

This COVID 19 messed everything up; My family was going to pay for me to view my mother but my counselor told them it couldn't happen. I don't care because my mother is my life.

Me and my family are close and though my mom beat my behind with anything she could get her hand on i wasn't stupid to talk back, curse, raise my hand, or call the cops. That just made matters worst if you done something stupid like that. And mama said if I feel like beating you when you act up I can, 'cause long as you live in my house you will live by my rules. My mother carried me full term, took care of me, fed me, changed me, then raised me into a young adult. She was there each step. When I wanted to drop out of school I held on 'cause she wanted to see me walk down the line to get my diploma and wear my cap and gown. She never judged me, accepted me, became more than mother-daughter, we became best friends. She allowed me to face trials obstacles never gave up was there when I need her. She will be remembered as a strong Black woman, a good woman and mother who worked hard to support us, keep a roof over our heads, and will always be remembered.

While you still got your mother get to know her better, hold her, take as many pictures as you can and let her know you love her. If you and your mother don't get along, forgive her and love her while you still have the chance; you only get one mother. RIP Ms. Brenda Turner 6-22-61 to 1-21-2021 I love you RIP Mom.

UNTITLED

Brittany

7-9-05

My Baby boy came alive
I'm locked down
in a place full of lives
My Baby Boy be screaming
I can't hear him calling
2 months after Birth
I got a little surprise
at His Beautiful eyes

REALITY...DON'T LET ME, GET ME?

Twinky Bear

Reality...

Even though I knew this day was soon to come
Trying hard to confront my feelings and not play dumb
Scared of the unexpected wishing I could run
Once again, I'll be the new girl on the Block, under the gun
Don't always cultivate the negative, it might be fun
Another new place of imprisonment to look out my cell
window, up at the sun
I'd prefer not to go, but this TC program, I'm required to
get it done
Always trapped in Psychological Anxiety turned Physical,
yep I'm the one

I've been held down by a strong king for some years
Soon to come is our separation and my fears
Daddy's been encouraging me and helping me shift gears
Building me up, while wiping away my tears

Reality Bitch... your days at Frackville are done my dear
Reality is, you are the Q, in LGBTQ, its clear you're Queer
Reality, it's the next step in you getting paroled the fuck up
outta here

Reality, you and your man both getting released making a
life together out there

Reality, I am ready for it, come get at me

Reality... Don't let me get me?

Reality!

NO DIVISIONS

Rachel

Despite Color
Despite Orientation
Despite Economic Class
Despite Age
Despite Faith
Divisions bring weakness
Unity brings Strength
Out Community...
United as One
With Love and Respect
for **ALL**.

Embrace one another
Love one another!
Focus on Commonality
NOT petty differences

TEARS OF RAIN

Lunaiya/Beondre

They told me it'd get better
just a storm I have to weather
The ground will keep me tethered
I was just a broken lever
Unable to be clever
enough to leave a letter
For those who'd find me
as I crossed into the Ether, so whether
Or not I get bolder I saw as I got older
The world grew colder,
leaving me sober,
Carried on like a soldier
weighed by my chip on my shoulder
Could barely roll over
or I'd scream until my soul'd hurt
Look at me
This grim mentality, the Fatality
Of the Optimist's Reality
No cordiality, all just a fallacy
They told me all lies, and called it
Normalcy

They don't see how it could be,
and how the pain remains,
Numbness was a gift to me,
a release from all the strain,
One cut and I history
but somehow I refrained,
Still a mystery, but I still cry,
Tears of Rain

World at war, cold and sore,
Hit the floor
Knocks like bombs at the door
Please no more! This time for sure
I can only endure, so much before
I'm too far gone and no longer pure,
I implore
You to look at my view,
can you see it too?
It's nothing new
but still no hope for a redo
I need you
To hold my hand, help me stand
I do what I can, whether lady or man
This is in the plan, Here we go again
It's over let's go, I swear this boy's slow
He does his own thing,
Disrupts the flow
Ha! As if you care for a fact
I can't go back
Ready for attack, as I stack, get back
and lay flat
What is my desire?
Is it light or is it fire,
Will I go with a cry,
or out like a fighter...

ALL ABOUT ESTROGEN & 'MONING

what is estrogen?

Estrogen is the hormone responsible for the development of female secondary sex characteristics. In trans women's communities, taking estrogen is sometimes called 'moning, Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), or medical transition. Estrogen comes in pill, patch, or injection (shot) forms.

also sometimes part of medical transition:

Anti-androgens (testosterone/T-blockers) lower overall testosterone level. Used with estrogen to speed up effects. Sometimes used alone to delay puberty in trans girls.

estrogen works best if you are drinking lots of water

Progesterone is a pregnancy hormone that may have some effect on breast development. Opinions are mixed on whether progesterone is necessary to transition, it may even work against feminization. Some folks take **Vitamin B** either with their hormone shot or in a pill. While there is no evidence that this is necessary for transition, it does no harm and contributes to feeling energized and happy. **Vitamin E** pills or cream soften skin.

making smart decisions about black/grey market 'mones

Whether its from the internet or an underground provider, go to a source whose reputation is known in your community. Sharing needles or vials puts you at risk for HIV and Hep C transmission/infection. If you go to someone for an injection, if you don't **SEE** the needle come out of the package there is risk.

hormones from a doctor

There are **no regulations** or laws about whether a doctor can prescribe hormones; it's up to the doctor – a free market. You may have heard about doctors requiring patients to have years of psychotherapy before they will provide hormones. **They do not have to do this!** The current standard of care in LGBT health centers and progressive doctors is **informed consent** which means people are prescribed hormones as long as they fully understand what the hormones do.

advantages of going to a doctor

- you know for sure what you are getting
- hormones by prescription are cheaper, even if you have to pay cash.
- sometimes, insurance will pay for prescribed 'mones.
- a doctor overseeing your medical transition will periodically run blood tests for estrogen levels and liver function
- if you take any prescribed medication it may interact with 'mones. You should talk to your doctor about this.
- prisons are more likely to maintain you on hormones if they are prescribed by a doctor.

HIV meds affect estrogen: transition is slowed. However, estrogen does not impact the effectiveness of HIV meds.

what you can expect if you start 'moning

body

- breast buds develop 2-6 months after starting estrogen
- nipples will grow more sensitive over time
- breasts take several years to fully develop, generally to a similar size to cis female relatives
- body fat decreases in stomach, increases in thighs and butt
- overall decrease in muscle mass
- estrogen will give you body even if you've had silicone work done
- breasts are permanent, even if you stop 'moning
- fat and muscle changes are not permanent

everyone with breasts should screen routinely for breast cancer. Learn how to give yourself a monthly self-exam, and get an annual breast exam from your doctor.

softness

- thin layer of fat under the skin fills in the face
- skin will become softer
- facial hair may become lighter and thinner (but it will not go away)
- body hair growth will slow down, and hair may become finer and lighter
- if you stop 'moning these changes will reverse

what estrogen won't do

- estrogen will not raise voice pitch
- adam's apple will not shrink
- lost hair won't regrow
- 'mones will not grow a vagina, uterus or ovaries
- you will not get a cycle (menstruate)

emotion

- many trans women report a range of emotional effects from 'moning, like mood swings and crying easily
- some trans women experience "estrogen serenity" a feeling of well-being, calmness, and peace, while others experience depression
- emotional changes from 'mones are temporary

sex & genitals

- over time, estrogen can change sex drive and the way orgasm feels
- after years on estrogen, testicles, penis and prostate may decrease in size
- if you are over 50 you should still get an annual prostate exam
- eventually, erections may not be hard enough for penetrative sex
- estrogen lowers sperm count, but it may still be possible to make someone pregnant
- these effects may go away if estrogen is stopped

side effects

- for the first few months of estrogen therapy, many experience nausea similar to morning sickness in pregnancy
- risk of blot-clots and high blood pressure may be increased by estrogen
- liver function is affected.

how much is too much?

Everyone's body and genetic makeup is different. The right dose for someone else might not be right for you. Taking more estrogen than your body can process increases the risk of side effects and does not speed up transition.

ALL ABOUT TESTOSTERONE

what is testosterone?

testosterone is the hormone responsible for the development of male secondary sex characteristics. In transmale communities, testosterone is sometimes called T, and taking it is sometimes called Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), or medical transition. Testosterone comes in patch, injection (shot), gel, and cream forms.

oral testosterone is not effective for masculinizing and brings risk of side effects to dangerous levels.

Do not use T pills.

a note about steroids:

Some trans guys take steroids (sometimes called estrogen blockers, pro-hormones, HGH, or winnies) to alter their bodies, with mixed results. These products do not all have masculinizing effects and many come with serious side effects. If you use steroids, do your research carefully. Do not rely solely on information from the seller.

making smart decisions about black/grey market hormones:

- whether its from the internet or an underground provider, go to a source whose reputation is known among your friends
- sharing needles puts you at risk for HIV and Hep C transmission/infection
- if you are sharing a vial and “double dipping,” there is a risk of HIV and Hep C transmission/infection
- if you go to someone for an injection, if you don't SEE the needle come out of the package there is risk
- unlike estrogen, testosterone is a Class C substance, like cocaine: the purchase, possession, and distribution of T carries stiff sentences

advantages of going to a doctor:

- you know for sure what you are getting
- hormones by prescription are cheaper than those available on the black/grey market even if you have to pay cash.
- sometimes, insurance will pay for prescribed hormones. Ask your doctor (or your employer if insurance is through employer).
- if a doctor is overseeing your medical transition, they will periodically run blood tests to check your testosterone levels and liver function.
- if you take any prescribed medication it may interact with T. You should talk to your doctor about this.
- if you get locked up, prisons are more likely to maintain you on hormones if they are prescribed by a doctor.

HIV meds affect testosterone: transition is slowed. However, T does not impact the effectiveness of HIV meds.

what you can expect if you start T

hair

- beard & mustache growth
- male-pattern hair loss
- increased hair growth on arms, legs, back, abdomen, butt
- hair changes may take several years, & genetics are the best indicator of both hair loss & hair growth

voice

- vocal chords thicken, usually with a deepening of vocal range

body

- gradual redistribution of body fat; fat moves from thighs, buttocks & chest to stomach
- loss of layer of fat right under the skin makes muscles more visible
- muscle development (especially in upper body)
- changes in fat & muscle will reverse if T is stopped
- some guys experience changes in metabolism & hunger

skin

- acne (especially in the first few years)
- increased sweat & changes in body odor
- prominence of veins & coarser skin
- some guys go through a “puffy” or “baby fat” phase
- skin changes will reverse if testosterone is stopped

drinking lots of water can help reduce acne

what T won't do

- T will not make you taller
- T will not make your breasts disappear
- T will not grow you a typical penis or testicles

emotion

- some trans men report emotional effects such as increased aggression & inability to cry
- many trans men report a feeling of well-being, & increased energy
- emotional changes will reverse if T is stopped

note: it may still be possible to get pregnant. T is not reliable birth control

sex & genitals

- menstruation ceases for most guys on T. menses will return if T is stopped.
- a permanent enlargement of the clitoris occurs
- most trans men report an increase in sex drive upon starting T & a change in the way orgasm feels
- some trans men experience shifts in their sexual orientation (it is unclear if this is related to hormones or other factors)

side effects

- increased risk of polycystic ovary syndrome from long term T use
- high blood pressure & risk of cardiovascular disease may be increased by testosterone
- liver function is affected
- possible increased risk of bone density loss (osteoporosis)

how much is too much?

Everyone's body and genetic makeup is different. The right dose for someone else might not be right for you. Taking more testosterone than your body can process increases the risk of side effects and does not speed up transition. In fact, excess testosterone may be converted to estrogen & actually slow medical transition.

LETTERS & LOVE

Hey Fam,

Issue #30 was both HOT and HEAVY. It touched me and made me emotional. You don't find the rawness & realness in anything else except when we all come together for Hearts.

So, I got to comment and give my people their flowers: Indy I am both honored and truly flattered that you waste no time and (look) for my articles and entries to be the first thing you want to read. I'm (I feel) the same when it comes to your articles and entries too. It's the first thing I look for. As for the realness, honesty and confidence, I will say you are an inspiration in your own right. I would love to be a part of that circle anyday. I'm here to motivate & elevate!! Gege Girl Hit me up - I miss you and haven't forgot about my sister, We are the L.I.G.H.T. Mariah Lee French I love you and miss you. Don't worry, I'm holding these girls up here down for you. LOL. Of course nothing gets passed you Bitch :) Lol. So you had a feeling, huh? Hope your enjoying Mahanoy. Dawn Girl I love you sweetie and keep your head up sis <3. T @ Albion That proposal was so sweet it made me cry. I hope he says yes. I love rooting for love.

I want to say Love you Shadow, Drew, Miley S. Fletcher, Pretty, Paris, Will, Sydney. ED, John, Fidelity, Big Foot and soooo many more of you that I can think of that are in my heart forever. Remember to Motivate others and Elevate each other with Love to a higher level of consciousness.

With all love,

~ Your Sis Didi @ Forest

Shoutout to Jacob Mitchell. I miss and love you. I tried to keep writing you, but obviously he didn't send mine. I will always love you baby! Also to Caitlyn Mae Santos I love you girl! To all my girls know that you're not alone in this perpetual darkness! I love y'all! Stay strong!

~ Alexis Mitchell | Dustin Gray Lee | FG2797

I'M TIRED

Egypt Ily Moore MP7734

I'm tired, tired of being hated for my lifestyle
I'm tired of being asked--why, why this way?
I'm tired, tired of all this racism and discrimination.
I'm tired, tired of us running and hiding when it gets tough
So enough is enough
Today I'm done being tired
Today my brothers and sisters we are no longer tired
Today we will rise!!!

To you beautiful LGBTQIA in all jails I show Love. Mocciah McRay, I truly Love You. Shout out to Mariah, Diamond/Katrina, Fidelity Speech to all my SCI Forest Queens & Sydney.

Love to everyone,

~ Jersey Savage

Dimitric Ceasar | MY4640 | Forest

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Hoaw family,

I have been doing really well. I got my GD Diagnoses so I hope I can start my hormones but it's complicated because this doctor breaks my HIPAA rights & I don't feel comfortable with my eval. I have been with fiance Chewy for 9 months now. We have had our struggle but he makes me so happy + feel so loved. I'm so glad we finally got the vaccine. We should be going to the whole pod having day room at once. I can't wait. Has anyone got recent issues of *Black & Pink*? I have written them several letters in the past 2 years but never heard back. I also plan to file a lawsuit against the PADOC because after filing PREA I was put in the hole for 30 days because they said I made it all up. I'm at least the fifth person to

be put in the RHU here after filing a legitimate PREA. I plan to go through Lewisburg Law Project. If others have had the same issue we could get a class action lawsuit against the PADOC. Shout out to all the family at SCI Coal Shadow, Mama Penny, Drew, and everyone else I know around the state. Let's all stick together through this hard time. There's an end in sight.

Love your friend

~ Taz the Trewitz | NM4043 | SCI Mahanoy

Hello All of HOAW,

Thank you all for your encouraging coming out stories. I was greatly inspired by them. I am indebted to Monica for helping me come out to the DOC. I was amazed with the response I received. I was taken seriously, and I received Gender appropriate clothing for a Transgender female that I am. I await the opportunity for Hormones. I had taken hormones on the street. I remember feeling whole, and happy to be me. I want to feel that way again. I want to get gender affirming surgery. The clothing and the makeup does help a little, but I anxiously await to go to the next level.

Yours Truly,

~ Nora | SCI Rockview

I AM

Didi @ SCI Forest

I AM Pride.

I AM Love

I AM so much more than words.

I AM others in the struggle

A convict who is oppressed

A Black man or woman in America

waiting to pass 'THE Test'

with law enforcement

To Live another day

I AM my sisters who are extorted,

raped and beaten in cells.

I AM my brothers who can't get a break

From the glares, mean mugs and stares

From being with a Transwoman.

I AM those afraid to step into the light
withheld from being their true selves.

Fear no more for we are with you

and will be to the end.

You'll struggle no more

We remember you and see you.

I AM you and you are me

Together we are all we'll ever need.

LETTERS & LOVE

Hey all you sexy mamas, hope y'all are doing good and keeping your heads up! I hope all my LGBTQ community are watching Pose on FX at 10:00 pm on Sundays and Pride on FX at 10:00 pm on Friday. I also want to pay tribute to some of our passed away trans sisters and one trans guy R.I.P. Zoey Spears, R.I.P. Tony McDade, R.I.P. Malaysha Booker, and R.I.P. all of our lost trans sisters and brothers but most of my heart goes out to our lost trans sisters. Us trans females need to fight and fight back hard. We can not run away to be scared. We need to fight and fight hard. I'm so sick and tired of seeing my sisters in the news.

~ Brittney

Dear HOAW,

I've been reading your newsletters discreetly through my friend Heather. I'm in SCI Benner and as far as I'm aware, people here know me as a bisexual man. Only a few select people know that I'm bigender. The reasons for the secrecy is, for one, I'm a very quiet person, and I can't stand people running their mouth, it eats me up until I snap, no matter what gender identity I'm currently in.

It's definitely hard for me right now. I currently have a beard and when I "shift" to female I feel absolutely disgusting. Then there's other times when I "shift" to male and I like having the beard. However, during the times when I'm both I am so unsure of what I want. There are times where I just build it up inside of me until my cellmate falls asleep then I feel like it's safe to sob quietly because I'm hurting, confused, stressed, all at the same time.

I have my own support group here at Benner. I'd like to give shoutouts to Heather (see you at rec time!), Stefanie (miss our law library chats!), Egypt (see you at yard girl!), Jerry (CELLY!!! I'm hungry again OwO), and all my lifelong friends back home. I want to thank all of you for helping me out in so many ways. I appreciate that I can tell y'all how I feel and what's going on with me, and then y'all take the time out of y'all's day to help guide me and keep me on the good path. I don't think I'll ever be able to express to all of you how much y'all mean to me. So to all of you out there who don't know who I am or for those of you that do, this is me coming out as bigender. Also I want to say that I will love all the haters out there, because no matter what you say or do, I will get back up and I WILL keep on swinging. You are not keeping me down. Plus, I don't bite my tongue, so I hope y'all can take whatever you dish out. Mad love to all of you, friends, LGBTQ+ community members and allies, the haters, and the downtrodden.

Eternally Yours,

~ The Vampire Knight, Jynx Bloodthorne aka Redz @ SCI Benner

LETTERS & LOVE

I'm going through living hell... I don't understand myself sexually. My religion (Islam) conflicts with what/who I am, and I've spent my whole life denying my identity to myself and others.

I've come out as Transgender and 8 days later, the CCPM (who runs PREA) and the Security Lt. come to my cell and scream to me that I'm transgender and to "suck a dick." For protection, I refuse to go to population and have to endure solitary confinement where staff torture me in various ways and the inmates say the craziest things to me. Not to mention that they tried sending me to a block during a massive outbreak of COVID 19 where the cells are "old school open bar" design and impossible to contain the virus.

So I'm stuck in a cell (no TV, radio, tablet, kiosk, phone, commissary...Nothing but a couple of law books) and I have no one to talk to. The people here that are supposed to help me are the ones violating me and empowering my rapists to rape me again!

I need a friend to talk to. Or a lawyer. Or someone to advocate for me since no one wants to listen to me.

Sincerely,

~ Twisted

I wonder if many of us have thought of our institutional libraries as strong allies. At SCI Mahanoy, our librarian - Ms. Stewart has added a considerable collection of LGBT books and has added both Out and The Advocate to the periodical collection. I urge subscribers from Mahanoy to check out these resources. For those in other facilities, reach out to your librarian and request they add LGBT resources for you.

~ Marc Freligh | NL5346 | SCI Mahanoy

DRIED UP TEARS

Alexis Mitchell

When I was younger people ignored my pain while they laughed and they turned away,
The tears seem to choke every word, but who can hear my cries when there was nothing I could say.

Other people laughed whenever I tried to tell my story,

But who can help when all they were looking for was their own glory.

My eyes were constantly filled with the sorrow tears that seem to drown me every night,

Hoping that all the darkness around me would find some sort of light,

Now that I am a grown woman I will go through this perilous fight.

The scars seem to scream my name even when I try to sleep,

Just remember you're not alone, because there's goodness around us, and that's what I'll keep!

HOME SWEET HOME

Lisa Jackson

This used to be
a vibrant community,
Now it's a place of death
Fueled by violence,
opioids, meth.

If the cops don't shoot us
The gangsters just might,
No-name bullets
flying in the night.

Two small kids
hungry and cold
Mama with a needle
in her arm's fold
Daddy only made them,
didn't stay to be a man
Poor welfare mom
doing the best she can.
Grandma had to raise her
Mama always behind bars
Now she's sixteen
jumping in stranger's cars
Do anything to make a buck
Forget about god,
depend on lady luck

Living life
by the roll of the dice
But I tell you these streets
ain't nothing nice
Pimps, players, hustlers,
dealers, and hos
Living the highs,
feeling the lows

This was a good place to live
back in the day
When we met each other
with a kind word to say
Our kids were free
to play in the park
Now they're all afraid
of the dark

Oh, home sweet home,
where can you be?
Do I still live
in the land of the free?

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Hearts on a Wire,

I would like to send some special shoutouts to Big Foot AKA King Yetti (thanks for the love) Sydney Hart @ FCI Allenwood I feel a whole lot better knowing that there is someone else out there that understands loneliness. It makes me feel not so alone, thank you. I wanna say "whatzup" to my homie, Indy at SCI Greene. Sometimes I allow myself to open up on the serious side. I try to shield it though because I don't want to be hurt. Thank you. To Ms. Linda May, congratulations! You are an inspiration for me to seek the justice I deserve as a victim... I'm contacting P.I.L.P.

Hello how is Everyone? I hope all is well collective and kings and queens within. I am so proud to be part of the LGBTQ+ this pride month. On FX (channel) they showed a 6 episode documentary about us (LGBTQ+) and our history starting back in the 50s and up to today. It was so informative and well done. It had me laughing, crying, upset, angry, joyous and proud all at the same time. Did anyone else see the series finale of "POSE"? I thought it was well done, it was like a fantasy (even though it was). I found myself wanting one of those wedding dresses for myself (plus-size would be necessary! :) LOL.) Representation in the media is a great thing. We did not have this when I was a little girl which made me feel invisible. So to see this and how "professional and classy" these productions are is truly inspiring. Also for the young people coming up I feel that it is invaluable, because they have a chance to see the possibilities of their future, something we did not.

~ Twinky Bear AKA The Real Jail House Wife of PA

HOAW Fam: Just wanted to let everyone know you are loved!

~ CPS Simpson

LM4751 | SCI Coal Township

LETTERS & LOVE

To Ms. Linda May, I have a question: do make up bras and panties make you who you are? To Ary, is changing your gender the most important issue right now? Please don't comment. I was just asking you to think. If you believe make up, panties, name change, gender change is the main issue you have to rethink all that's going on in the world. I believe the movement should be ending prisons, tearing down prisons, better education for people of color, fighting

corruption, prison rape and abuse by correctional staff, programs eliminating life without parole, ending parole, better health and mental health care. Some things we should start with are getting PA to allow us to speak during PREA training and education that affects us, ending Z Codes, the DOC lie saying you have an assault history that's why you got a Z code, using it as an excuse to control us.

These last 18 months have been a living hell. COVID-19, the lies and the abuse, neglect, death toll, greed, hate, corruption at its worst and I ain't sugar coating. At least Donald Trump isn't no longer in office. Shout out to all the individuals who continue to accept me and hear my voice and vision for our community.

To all my Albion family, even if we had our differences I have no ill feelings and if I see you hurting I will give a helping hand. To Miley one love. To Fidelity sis almost at the end, remember what I told you. Indy what's up family. Smook we had differences you still my brother we knew each other too long. Chaos what's up. LI you always made me smile. Gi Gi we met a little at Rockview and I could tell you had courage and strength. Mariah, Maxine one love. And Maxine though we had misunderstandings we became strong and have each other's back. Shout out to Twinky, Alexis, Black, Tyree, Ms. Caitlin Mae Santos, Maya, Mrs. Gigi, Rosie, Love, Tiffany, Twin, Tone, Coco, Aaron, Rallo, Knowledge. Ms. Outlaw one love. Sasha keep your heads up be all you can be. BR2Star for the months we were together my love was real yet I'm glad we got past each other's mistakes and became best friends. Natiley, Ms. Linda May, Ary continue to stand no matter what and be all you can be. And all those I forgot, We must never stop believing who we are and never allow haters corruption to defeat us.

~ Juicy Queen Bee

P.S. You are beautiful, you are a queen, a diva, a king, you are love, make up don't make you, you make you even if you don't know it I am here to tell you.

I CRIED

Fidelity @ Forest

2 A.M sitting on my bunk I just
Burst out in tears. I cried for all my
Friends that I lost through the years. I
Cried because I finally conquered my fears. I
Cried, thinking about all my amazing friends who
Always stood by me. I cried because I have a family
Who loves and accept me. I cried for all the people
Who fought for us that are not here. I cried
For all the pain at times we put each other
Through. I cried because I want each
of my sisters and brothers to find love too. I cried
Thinking about all the stupid mistakes that
I made. I cried and smile because I know
Tomorrow would be a better day.

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear HOAW Family,

There's about to be a movement that's gonna change lives for the next generation of gays to come. So stop fighting over random pieces, stop arguing, bickering and trying to be better than the next person. Try loving yourself. I'm seeing people saying somebody in the community said something to somebody else in the community that was harsh or inappropriate. This makes a community weak. Let's stand tall and be there for one another and love one another. 'Cause who else gonna love us but us? Let's start doing things for one another like remembering each other's birthdays. Shoutout to my wife at Green Ms Ary, Ms. JP, Ms. Tyler, Ms. Angel, Ms. Rosey, Ms. DeeDee, Ms. Heather, Ms. Daneil, Ms. Stephany, Monster, Joshua, Brandon, Bones, Blue, Mr. Pattsey. Shout to BR2STAR, Mariah Lee Smith, SJ, Ty, JB, Savage, Sydney, Diamond, Ms. Vine Dzze, Jessica, Ira, Miley S Fletcher, Anistasia - Shewolf, Ms. Tah, CR, Twin, Ms. Tatta, Smithbay, Ms. Brittney Marie Featherstone, Shaggy. Take care of yours. Hugs & Kisses, Always.

~ Your big Brother Big Foot With Love

Hey Hearts fam,

I am in backwards Oklahoma, this is my 3rd incarceration and the most fucked up. A Bigoted Boi physically assaulted me and when my man came to the unit to handle they kicked him off the unit. This one guy used derogatory remarks, then another kicked me off the unit, the transphobic people then took everything of mine, smashed my TV, broke my headphones, took my panties. Though I wanna seek Hate Speech charges against the people here that's not wise. We have some allies who let me spend time w/ my soon-to-be husband. I've only got to wait 9 months to get out, wait another 2 years until he gets out. He's paying for my transition then we will get married bad thing is Arkansas won't allow me to change my Gender marker on birth certificate and Oklahoma won't allow me a name change it all sucks. Even worse is banning Trans girls from playing in sports they say that the cisgender girls would be at a "disadvantage" from the "male bodied" females or males. It's all a way to punish us for being trans. There are no equal protections here in Oklahoma. Oklahoma hasn't had a case yet where they provided Gender Affirmation surgeries yet, the chaplain called me a demon in Human form. Hope all you gals and guys stay safe,

~ Roselynn Leighann Darkfyre-Harrison | JLCC Oklahoma, OK

To HOAW: Shoutout out to everybody at Forest. Fidelity what's up lady girl. Tah, Run, JB, Diamond, Sydney, Ed, Miley, and SJ and Mariah at SCI Mahanoy.

~ CR at SCI Forest

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello HOAW,

I've been transitioning for about a year now, and I want to give a shoutout to all the brothers and sisters at Coal Township. Due to Covid I won't be able to meet any of you until the prison opens up, but I am looking forward to meeting you all. I am currently being housed on FA. Until then stay well and safe.

~ Kaylynn J. Alvarado

Hello HOAW family: I would like to thank all of my supports for having my back in the struggle within this institution as far as discrimination from these guards. A special thanks and a shoutout to my loving husband Maron "Maz" Moore, you are my everything and I'll always love you. To my sister Drea: congrats on parole - do the right thing when you get out sis and start the movement. Shoutout to Megan and Detroit - remember, united we stand, divided we fall. Shoutout to my girls Heather, Reggie, and Redhead. See y'all at yard. And all my other brothers and sisters in the community here @ Benner.

Steph, can't wait to see you and to you Mad Max I love you all. We can beat the struggle if we continue to stand together.

~ Egypt Ily Moore | James Alston | MP7734 | SCI Benner

Dear H.O.A.W.

A lot of things have been going on lately, receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, loving my boyfriend who's dear to my heart. He's my soulmate and there's no one like him. Precious, my condolences on your Grammy. I miss you girl. Houtzdale has changed since you left for the feds. Shout out to Bree, Nikki T. Black Widow and all of my sisters at SCI Houtzdale. Shout out to Brittney Marie Featherstone. Girl I'm on FA I have others in the community here as well but not much. The reason they are homophobic and transphobic because they are not true to themselves, the ones who are in the closet are the haters because we're free and they're stuck inside. To all of my other Latinas, how are you and keep your head up. Love to all my sisters and brothers, keep your head held high and smile.

With care,

~ Ms. Kaitlin Mae Santos | SCI Houtzdale (LJ0183)

LOVE IS LIKE A ROSE

Dee Dee in Florida

Love is like a rose
With gentle tender parts
Slowly it unfolds
And develops in our hearts

It's beauty can't be tamed
It's as wild as the wind
You shouldn't feel ashamed
Of the feelings held within

You may be cut by a thorn
And you will tend to bleed
But please don't be torn
because inside is always
a new seed

There will always be pain
and yet it grows and grows
so although it may seem strange
Love is like a rose.

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Family,

I hope everyone is doing well and getting vaccinated! This past year plus has been so hard on us all. I've never felt so alone. Everyone is so close but so far away. I'm the only girl on my unit and I long for my friends. Sage and Mariah live right next door from my unit but because of this Covid shit I never see them. Miss you two so much! Hopefully the quarantine will be over soon. Harley Quinn I wish you were over here on my side, if this place opens back up we can actually meet in person.

Kyra Lee please be strong and know you have sisters and brothers who care about you. Love that pretty girl in your mirror and she will always have your back! I learned this by doing it so I know its true. I want to thank our beloved Outside collective for making this zine possible. We are stronger together. The D.O.C. would love to keep us separated and unaware to better defeat us. I love the fact that with Hearts we are united in our fight!

Love & Sunshine,

~ Dawn Guthrie | MQ7942 | SCI Mahanoy

Shoutout to my cute and sexy wifey Ms. DiDi. My sweet love it's been over 6 years with you and I appreciate everything you did and do for us. I love you deeply and will always be by your side.

Kiss Kiss,

~ Mr. Bey | SCI Forest

TEARS

Arissa

Never a tear need to be shed
About the life you have led
For the choices you made
Nor for the prices you paid
Looking back it's always easy to say
If only I had done it another way
Never a tear need to be cried
About a life where you tried
As we reflect on what has past us by
From it's lowest lows to its highest high
Always doing what's best here and now
Without always know the why or how
Never a tear need be lost
About a life where you've paid the cost

Hearts on a Wire Family,

Because I am a federal inmate, I get moved around a lot and missed some issues. Thank you to the Outside Collective for sending me what I missed. I have been at my prison for three months so far. It's definitely been hard. A guy I decided to get involved with assaulted me. We both went to the SHU because of it. I'm seen as a snitch even though someone else reported it. I'm the only transgender woman in my unit though there are a few more around the facility. All people can do is talk about me or my body. It's very frustrating. I finally got injections instead of pills for my hormones which is exciting! I am also waiting on a response to my request for SRS and to be transferred to a female prison. Til next time stay blessed lovelies!

~ Aubrey Anne

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello HOAW family!

I am Transgender with some struggles within SCI Benner fighting for hormones and trying to get my razor restriction lifted. Shoutout to my big sister Egypt who's helping me in my fight. She's how I heard about HOAW, also I'd like to shout-out Ael for your assistance and resources you shared.

I had a situation where I was dehydrated and had to be taken to an outside hospital and they said I had overdosed off my medication so now they are using that to extend my razor restriction, can they do that? / should I submit another grievance?

~ Ms. Christian

How is my HOAW family? I'm good. I loved all the stories in my latest issue (30). Shout out to Harley Quinn, thanks for letting me know I'm not abandoned. Yes I wish we could've got to know each other better, you're right, the lies kept us apart. Now I kick myself believing them, I'm so sorry.

Update on my HRT, I'm still fighting to get them. I seen the psych doctor a few weeks ago, my next session is soon. I can't wait to start them. Could someone please tell me about how long it will take for me to start my HRT? I'm hearing all different times.

Shout out to Monica. I miss you like crazy. With this whole lock down, it's hard to see others. Twinky Bear I wanna say I really loved *Hand-in-hand*. It was great. Stephon Newmones at SCI Albion, I really loved your poem *Bi*. Speaks a lot of words. I also want to thank my HOAW family for helping me to remain strong against all those who dislikes us. Without y'all's support, I'd still keep my mouth shut from all the haters. So, thanks to each one of you. Take care everyone and I send my love.

Your sister,

~ Cree

Dear Hearts on a Wire,

Shout out to all the LGBTQIA+ in all of the DOC. Shout out 2 the love of my life. Baby Boy, I love you with all my heart and soul. Baby it's me + you against everyone that hates on us for being happy. Blue, you're my everything and will always be. I love you + can't wait to expand our family. Shout out to our sisters and brothers in SCI Benner. Keep Y'all heads up + stand up, stand proud, + stand tall + love your life.

~ Amber (JP) Richardson



LETTERS & LOVE

Hello Family at H.O.A.W: I hope everyone is well out there, I'm maintaining as well as I can. My cancer is causing a lot of pain but all's well. Love you all, I send my love to all and Scott, Steve, Collis, miss you all, Rich write to me.

~ Jerry | SCI Smithfield

Twinky Bear's Spicy Bean & Cheese Burritos

- 1 package velveta Spicy refried beans
- ½ package of jalapeno peppers
- 1 quarter of a sharp cheese bar
- 1 jack Links Original Beef Steak (beef jerky) (2oz)
- 1/2 onion
- ½ green pepper
- 1 package of tortilla wraps
- ½ package of rice

Assembly:

- Prepare rice, beans according to package instructions
- Dice all veggies
- Slice jack link Beef into slivers, place in container (a plastic glove will work) and put in stinger
- Shred the cheese into the smallest possible pieces

After everything is cooked:

- Lay wraps out
- Spread beans on wraps
- Place beef on beans
- Place green peppers, onions and cheese
- Spread rice
- Top it off with jalapenos
- Roll the wraps up, warm by placing in water-proof bag in hot water for 10 minutes.
- Enjoy.

I've been in prison 4 months and jail 1 year and 8 months and I haven't been called my female name. Which by the way is Whittany. I've known I wanted to be a female since the age of 13 years old. I came out at 21 but my daughter's mother says (and still says) I need to take male hormones because I absorbed my female twin before I was born. I've finally got my step mom who I call mom who supports me. Plus her boyfriend who supports me. I can't believe the stuff I read in old issues of HOAW of how prisoners who are transgender have to fight for what they're allowed to have. I wanna give a shout out to Ms. Linda May I hope your case goes good and helps all of us transgender men and women. Also to JD who showed me life.

~ Whittany Smith | SCI Forest

Dear HOAW,

Throughout life, I met people who helped me, by giving me knowledge and guidance. I love and appreciate each and every one of ya and it's because of ya I'm the woman I am today. Nir and Mariah, I miss both of ya and hope ya are doing good. CR, Papi, Savage, Knowledge and Armani, ya are my big brothers and each of ya helped me throughout my time at Forest. Miley, Zoe, Teacup, Keke, Dede, Danny and Will you are my girls who also been there for me. Mocha, I couldn't ask for a better bestie. You been there for me when others wasn't along with my daughter Sidney who I am grateful for. Juicy and Dawn ya are my beloved sisters too. Diamond things between us been crazy but you will always be my sister and Jaavan at Benner I can write a whole essay about how much you mean to me but for now I'm a just say I love you.

~ Fidelity @ SCI Forest

LETTERS & LOVE

HOAW Family,

My life in prison has finally changed for the better. On May 6th my Gender Dysphoria diagnosis paperwork finally came through! I am no longer in rooms with people who hate me simply for who I am. I can finally be who I am without holding my head down in shame! It is a day I have been waiting for since August when I found out about it from my friend Jojo. It has made the pain of being away from David who is the love of my life a little more bearable. I love you babe! To all of the family I want to say thank you. Your stories inspire me daily. I deal with severe depression but rereading all your letters gives my day a true brightness. BTW Cupcake I will be praying that you get your parole good luck! Harley Quinn, you are always inspiring and I hope your appeal goes through. Drew I will keep your health in my prayers so stay strong! To the rest stay strong! Forever with love.

~ Skyler Mullins #966594 Bellemy Creek CF, MI

To my new HOAW Family,

I just received my first issue, now it's time to share my story. I am a 40 year old transfeminine aceflux gynomantic demigirl! For those unfamiliar with those labels, I'm just me, happy and proud to be living my life as I want. I always felt that I was different from the other boys, as far back as I can remember. But growing up in the 1980s, I didn't know what it meant to be transgender. I don't think many people did. It wasn't until, as cliché as it sounds, I Am Jazz began airing, that I began to see the truth behind why I felt the way I did. I started reading more, and suddenly everything made sense. On January 1st, 2020 I resolved I would live openly and authentically. On March 11th I finally got the opportunity to come out to the DOC as transgender. The next week, welcome to the plague! COVID has delayed my attempts to get on HRT. But on June 12th I got approved to begin being evaluated for GD. I'm sure that it was the universe sending me a message, getting approved during Pride Month. Everything is taking longer 'cause of COVID, but at least I have a foot in the door. It's so hard to believe it's been over a year! I guess time flies when you're no longer living a lie.

~ Siobhan

Hello Hearts! We identify as Non Binary (NB). We gotta lot 2 say about race & inequality, but we've been beat upside da head w/ dat all our lives we kno dat struggle so it'll b better 2 talk about peace, being kind & puttin smiles on ppl faces. I enjoy dat more than ne thing. it cost u nothin 2 b kind listen 2 sum1 w/out being judgmental most importantly b urself, everybody else is already taken. We leave u w/ this we r our ancestors wildest dreams!

Luv yall

~ NB Oowee

LOVELY FEATHERS

Monica

A lovely bird with her colors ablaze.
She needs to fly free,
Not locked in that cage.
Inside there her sweet colors will be dulled,
For no one can see them,
They've no reason to unfold.
Don't wilt those feathers of her colors so true,
Her hidden truths of Pink, Gold, Green, & Blue.
See, we are the same as the lovely bird,
So please don't you despair,
Like her we deserve to breathe free,
And fly free in fresh air.
So please don't let your dreams fail you,
And don't let them die,
It'll hurt me deep down,
And I know that I'd cry.
To be your whole dream fulfilled
you'll need to fly free,
YOU CAN DO IT GIRLFRIEND,
You'll be who you dream you'll be.
This is the truth, you are worthy,
And deserve to be you,
Don't throw your dreams away,
'Cause they WILL come true.

Dedicated to Miss Jaina

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Family,

1st n 4most shout out to HOAW (thanks 4 everything) in no particular order Rebecca, Indy (sorry), Lexi Love, Dylcia (stay up), Tiffany, LI, Dawn, Jessica Garza (love the writing), Bobby.

Kyra Lee don't do it! I think about suicide a lot too, you're not alone! Take it one minute at a time. Love You girl.

If you are trying to change your gender markers on a birth certificate or photo ID cards or been denied hormones, reach out to me and I'll help you.

I love all of you and keep your head up!

Beauty pride and Love,

~ Ary

Zachary Graham | Greene | NP2097

Hi HOAW Fam,

Shout out my girls Didi and Diamond. Love y'all. Pretty, you make my day gorgeous. Paris, nice to meet you and the "Hellkat Nation." To my boys Knowledge and O, stay out of trouble loves. Matt and Ant I miss you both. Ed, Syd, Miley, I miss you guys. CR and Savage, keep your heads up. Bigfoot AKA King yeti at Greene, stay strong. Dilly I wish you good health and a speedy recovery. Armani, let's see what the future holds. Ty, Danny, Mariah, SJ I wish the best for you girls. Smokie AKA Speedie take care hun and condragulations. To the rest of the LGBTQI2S+ community that I haven't met in the PADO and around the world, I love you all, stay strong, and I hope we meet soon. Special shoutout to my baby Sasquatch AKA Mr Smooth, Willkat loves you forever baby! As the world opens its arms again, remember to be kind and spread love to one another. We have to stick together because no one else is rooting for us. Congrats to Symone from The House of Avalon for your win on RuPaul's Drag Race Season 13 (sorry for the spoiler). And Condragulations to Gotmilk for being the first FTM contestant on RDR. Stay strong my family!

Love always,

~ Alexis Love @ Forest

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear HOAW

It is so hard to see your loved one even when you're on the other side of the block we can see one other from time to time but it not the same I want to let my soon-to-be husband know that I love and miss him. Drew you're my world. My brother Shadow, baby boy keep your head up, To my sister J-Lo I miss you, keep your head up. Indy at Greene: what up Brother and last time I wrote you HOAW you had my DOC number wrong. To to my sister Niara keep you head up and Be strong in yourself.

~ Dee-Dee | GD4986 | Coal Township

Dear Hearts on the Wire

I've been really hurt today since the one person I love more than anything went to the RHU. I feel lost and I just want to let him know I love him with all my heart. Reginald T aka Knowledge: I hope they let you out of there soon cause I really need you, I need to talk with you, I think about you when I'm locked in my cell I want you to stop all the dumb stuff and to cut out all the fighting and be more like the Knowledge I know and love miss you boo.

~ Your girl Tammy aka Timothy Scheib | MP5176

Hello to all of my fans and friends here at SCI Forest and to the rest of the PA DOC facilities. I send you my shout outs and my love to the all of you. Love all,

~ AKA Lefty

Dear Hearts On a Wire,

I am in the Texas prison system, I will start next week on the female hormones and the medication to lessen testosterone. I am so glad to be a trans woman at age 66. I just want to thank you for your little magazine that you send me. It's very hard for me to get any kind of information whilst being transgender or bisexual. This kind of stuff is highly frowned on in this place.

Love,

~ Connie

UNTITLED

Miss Aubrey Anne

I can't escape the thoughts
that grip my mind
When did I become so numb inside
Lost in the motions of each day
All these nightmares and I still
just sleep
I can't find my way home
My broken heart scattered
on the street
Is anybody out there
Do you hear my cry
The loneliness is so painful
I'd rather hide
Things they put inside my mind I can't
quite forget
I think too much, I could be insane
But I'll lie to you and say I'm fine

LETTERS & LOVE

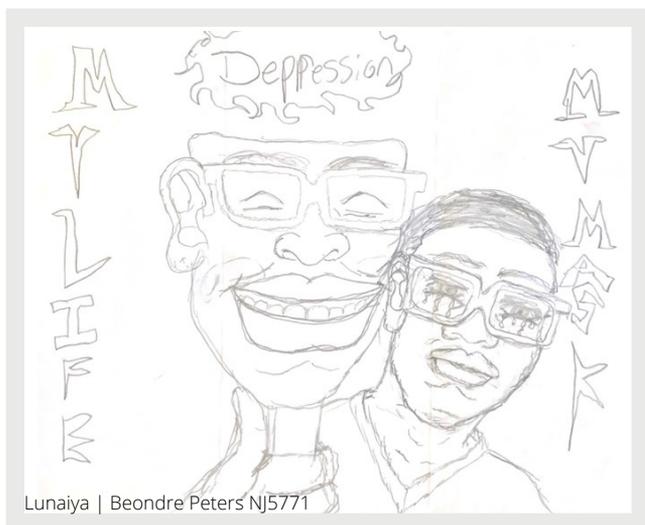
To H.O.A.W, & All of my Brothers & Sisters Out There,

I send a HUGE shout out, love & care to & for you ALL! Especially my husband Demmin "5 cent" McKinney, Ms. Tye at Forest, Ms. Dede at Forest, T-Cup, SJ, Jersey Savage, Mia, Reginald Thomas, Shadow etc. at SCI Forest. Miley Fletcher, thank you for your love and mentorship etc. All these years we have been close with & united with each other since Houtzdale, & I never forgot about you & our history & memories together! Michelle Treadway, wherever you're at. I always remember and have love and care for you girl. Armani at SCI Forest: Thank you so much for the shoutout and love and care. I always think of you. And yes, I remain strong as the woman, queen and person I am and always will be. Big Foot Collis Henderson at Greene, thank you for your shoutouts & love in Winter/Spring 2021 H.O.A.W. Newsletter. Be & stay good/right/strong. You know what I'm talking about. To the many other sisters & brothers I personally know, as well as those that I do not know personally: I love & care about/stay united with & for you all - united we stand divided we fall, especially in the LBGTQI + FAMILY!

Keep your heads, hearts & minds held up high, strong & WITH Pride & clarity & Peace!

~ Mrs. Anastasia "Lady She Wolf" McKinney | SCI Forest

Hello Outside and Inside Collective family, how is everyone doing? Me, I am in a questionable state. I am neither happy nor sad, what I am is focused. I will be transferred from SCI Frackville to some unknown SCI in PA. I have to do the T.C. Program for my Parole, and Frackville doesn't do it. I'm praying and hoping wherever I am transferred to, it's Bearable.....



Lunaiya | Beondre Peters NJ5771

I wanted to let all of the family know that Lexi and I had our very 1st video visit. We both had an excellent time. For me, as an inmate inside "Prison," our days can be Bleak. The visit not only made me feel special, but also human. Thanks HOAW+ the Outside Collective AND my New Girlfriend Lexi.

~ Twinky Bear

PS "Let's write some Hits." LOL.

LETTERS & LOVE

To Angelica Michelle (FL), I accept you as you see yourself. Keep your spirit shining sister, you are beautiful. I'd be proud to write to you! Suicide is a very hard monkey to get off ones back. I have struggled w/ it myself since I was 13 + daily.

To Ms. Rachel Marie Whitted, I was / am / still shot down for parole 3 years ago. Since then I have lost all resources to getting out. I'm married and she can't seem to find any resources for me to assist in my release. My Case Manager says I should look "Out-of-State." Keep your head up.

To Kasey Renee (GA), Right on! Keep up the fight. By the way, I love your art!

To Brittney Marie Featherstone (Somerset), I see a lot of in-fighting among the "queens" (they literally call themselves such) here as well. We do truly need to love one another + support each other in our individual struggles.

And finally, to Amani Renee Love (JTVCC), my heart breaks for you. Don't let them break you.

Also, thank you for your stories on "Can you respectfully date a trans woman?" + "Being Non-binary." They were both highly informative + helped me avoid the hate I was starting to believe, that I wasn't trans because I wasn't woman enough to "qualify."

~ Alice AKA Jason Matthew Hartline #2143653 (MT)

To the H.O.A.W. family, another newbie here. Shout out to all my sisters here in Albion and hello to all my sisters on the inside and outside collective. This is your sis Kelly joining the vocal community. I am a transfeminist devoted to fighting oppression and hate. #FreeThemAll #SchoolsNotPrisons

~ Kelly @ Albion

Hey girls I send my love to all of you.

I was sexually assaulted by a Northern Nevada Correctional CO at NNCC. I reported it but they still have him working in the unit where I am housed. I have a federal court case on him & the prison does not care about us transgender girls in this prison. I have went several steps to be heard out there in the world I called the Rape Crisis Center, I've filed charges on the policy makers of the prison, I filed charges on the Inspector General's office. The Bad Ass Irish Bitch now has eleven lawsuits against them. I recommend those that are victim of rape & sexual assault & sexual abuse against COs in your prison do as I have, make a stand for civil rights.

The prisons system needs to know that we won't stop fighting them until we win.

~ Rachel Marie Whitted | NNCC NV 1212277

LETTERS & LOVE

First of all, I want to give a HUGE thank you to the outside collective, especially Adrian and Devin. I truly appreciate all you've done for me. I also want to express my love and gratitude to my family here at SCI Mahanoy. At the end of July, my prayers were answered and I was moved to a block that houses a large number of my brothers and sisters. Words cannot express what you all mean to me. I feel so blessed to share a block with you all. You all know who you are. Also to my family on the other side of the block, Jo-Jo and Bon Bon. I miss you and hope to see you soon. To Safee: your letter was confiscated by the mailroom. In the future, disguise reference to prison. I will write soon. To Jaine at Somerset: I miss you girl and hope you're doing good. To Indy at Greene: I miss you bro. To all that shouted out in the last HOAW- thanks for the support and the recognition. Glad to see I have an impact on those who I don't know!

Update: the 3rd circuit dismissed my lawsuit. I'm going to the US supreme court. While my chances are slim I must try. I'll keep you posted. Let's continue to stick together and express unity. It's the only way to make progress in a system bent on destroying us.

Love to all the community. What doesn't kill us make us stronger. Unity is the key to our survival. Peace out.

~ Harley Phoenix Quinn
AKA Tamara Angelique
SCI Mahanoy

How's all my beautiful people. People hate us, despise us, don't understand us; don't want to understand us because most of them are exactly who we are but are afraid to be their true selves in the light. Hiding who they truly are & then taking it out on others. This causes mental health, emotional & spiritual issues. Believe me I know. I'm starting a blog called VOICES IN THE DARK focusing on mental health from an LGBTQ perspective & it's not just for us in prison it's for everyone. To connect and share stories, poems, songs, art, essays, pictures, etc. However people feel comfortable expressing themselves. Well all of my hearts, I hope y'all are doing good cuz I am & I love y'all..

~ Pryme

DIFFERENT BECAUSE

Ms. Janel @ Mahanoy

The so called normal, and the so called straight ones whom I call "THEY" say I'm different because I'm me...
Me is a white woman with a penis, which I choose to keep,
They say I'm different BECAUSE I have breasts and curves.
They say I'm different because I'm me
a trans woman... who isn't a dude.
They say I'm different cause I'm not like "THEY"... regardless of their hate I am "ME" a trans woman who is at peace.
I proclaim that being me is no different than "THEY":
"THEY" also have penises, breasts, and other body parts just like "ME," I see no difference except that I'm "ME." I wish to proclaim screaming at the top of a mountain that I am "ME" a trans woman who's out and about; amazing isn't it because I'm me ! Different because????!!

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear HOAW,

I can't tell you how much I look forward to reading each issue. The love, wisdom, support, & stories are truly inspiring! To Egypt Ily Moore, most people would say that the most meaningful words are *I love you*. 3 equally meaningful words are *Just be you*. At the end of the day people will have their opinion but whose opinion matters most? Yours does! Not the opinion from friends, associates, or even family. Just yours! Telling loved ones that you're gay will never be easy. Whether someone accepts it or not you have to be you because nobody else will. I wish you the best!...

To my Fiancé Octévien, I love you so much! I can't begin to tell you how proud I am of you for all you've accomplished. Every day you continue to amaze me.

Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary my love! To the rest of HOAW fam I got love for you all!

~ Spade | SCI Benner

Hello HOAW

Shout out Ms. Cher, Chanel, Kyle and Love, Ms. Shy and Step; a community of strong-minded and strong-willed Girls. I am proud to call these ladies my friends

~ Teddy | SCI Somerset

A LIFE IS A LIFE

Jynx Bloodthorne

This goes for everyone...

Universal love will never be real,
At least it's not something I can feel,
Never seen nor had it so I can't understand,
However the life we live is nothing but a scam
We're promised freedom and equality,
Freedom from judgement and of clothing quality,
We're promised freedom of speech without repercussion,
But we're judged on what we say,
And can get locked up with the key thrown away.
What happened to the so called "Land of the Free"
All I see is me and the others in the dark red sea,
We're judged for the way we dress
Our speech, our choices, our lifestyles
But all I see are people in denial
The reasons for hate are fear and jealousy,
I don't care for those who hate,
But all the deaths from this cruel judgmental world,
Cause me to want to die for real, seriously!
How long is it going to take,
For people to realize that hate,
Can't afford no more gambling stakes.
Hate, don't like what you see or hear, let it be,
Because it's not hurting you,
But more and more die each day,
How many more mothers and fathers,
Have to put their babies in a cold dark grave?
I'm not doing this for fame or stardom
I'm not trying to achieve some kind of martyrdom,
I'm doing this for others like me,
The ones who are drowning in the blood red sea.
These problems need to be fixed,
Because you'll never know who'll be the next,
Your son or daughter? Your mother or father?
Your husband or wife?
It shouldn't matter, because A Life Is A Life

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear H.O.A.W Family,

Life itself is your teacher and you are in a state of constant learning. It's important to examine the choices you make and the freedom you feel to choose.

Shout outs to all the Queens and Kings. To my lovely Nikki T you know I miss you and love you bunches lil' sista. To Precious at FCI, Girllll, you know I love you. I never held anything against you. To Indy you're really a nice man. Keep your head up. Linda May Lee, you're at a good spot now, love ya girl. Jasmine T.B. in Maryland love you a whole lot. I am so happy your out. Tea Cup, LOL you know me I am always next door in that vent. Love you sista. All the Forest Girls Katrina, Zoey, Fidelity, Ms. S.J, Tyel, Anastasia, Faith, Princess, Sydney, Ms. DiDi, Ms. Keke, Love ya all! Gio. Armani, of course I know who you are. L.O.C. Custodial maintenance class (smile). To the king of my heart Chilly Willy William. I love you hun! Miss you lots. Kitty can't forget you!!! Keep your head up... Mariah you're missed here. Lots of love for ya. C.Y.C. Girl! Gloria Love you! I know right can't wait till we open this place back up. Allen (sigh) L.O.L. Ms. Slim misses you, Alexis at Albion, Miss you too. Lol If I missed anyone you know you're in my heart and thoughts. Keep safe, wear your masks. Collis H. Keep your head up!

~ Miley S. Fletcher @ SCI Forest

Dear HOAW Community,

I hope everyone is getting along given our current circumstances. I signed up for the vaccine so here's hoping that it's not the zombie vaccine or something diabolical like that. It gives me peace of mind knowing I won't take something home to my family. It is a choice and not mandatory despite how it's being made out to be. I hope everyone out in the community is doing good, keeping your heads together and holding out as well as we can under these most extenuating circumstances. For those in rougher places just remember it is all what you make it. I am lucky to be where I am and while the community here is spread thin and oddly competitive it's still a good place to be. I don't mind the competition 'cause my mind and vision are focused on the outside. I have no desire to let this place consume me. So keep your heads up and eyes on the future, dream the biggest dreams and may only the best of those become your reality.

Be good, be careful, be safe. Love,

~ Eric/Arissa

Hey HOAW: I'm in the hole awaiting transfer and hope my next spot will be alright. Shoutout to Dylcia Alicia Snow, ppl gonna hate don't let them bring you down. Stay safe. Prettyboi Jay I like your poem another's love. Keep y'all's heads up high, much love.

~ Abel

LETTERS & LOVE

Dear Hearts on a Wire,

Well I got transferred to SCI-Phoenix April 2021 and I should be going to GP soon. But I wanted to say to those at SCI-Fayette that I had to leave behind. I'm truly going to miss you all and I will never forget any of you guys. You have touched my heart and opened up my eyes to tell everyone who I am. So thank you to Jay-Tee, Pearl, Special, Grif, L, Topcat, Black, Jessica, Rab, Radio. Jay-Tee I love you and miss you so bad. I have written you a really long letter but not sure how to get to you. I don't know if you still want me, I hope to hear from you soon. I am so sorry my Love! I got transferred because of some lies. Because of this I have lost so much. Special tell Tone that I say goodbye and write me. The CO's in BHU-SCI Fayette threw away all my hair things, makeup, art supplies, books.

Now hello to all my sisters here at SCI Phoenix. I hope we all can meet up and get together as we should. I am on A-Block right now, I am not sure where they're going to put me yet. By the time this gets printed in the book I should be out in GP. So see you all out there.

Love Always,

~ Brianna AKA Starr

Brothers & Sisters of H.O.A.W.,

I love hearing from my girls even when you're struggling. To see that you have somewhere to vent means you made it one more night. There will always be someone trying to push you down to claw to their top. My advice, smile, even angels get their wings ripped off when karma comes. The fakes, frauds, those who don't belong, they know who they are as they read, it boils within. For those of us who have grit, swallowed, bled, sweat and earned it all, we are beautiful and we have earned where we are at in life... shout out to Rita, I know you still read, I know you hurt. I'm gonna take that on the chin and apologize like a man. I honestly didn't expect life to come the way it did. Hope to show you someday the man I've become. Miss my rida... Shoutout to any T-Males in the world, you are not alone brother! I was the first in PA to be on T in the DOC. Now I'm fighting to get to a male facility. Been in the RHU for 15 months!

~ Dom (Barber. A | OU8963 | SCI Muncy)

Sebastian Melmoth's Hot Orange Chocolate

I miss the "chocolate orange" in the candy aisle at the grocery store!

- During midday lock-in, squeeze pieces of **1 orange's** peel into a mug, and put pieces in.
- Cover pieces with boiled **water**, but not too much.
- Put lid on mug and let infuse.
- Squeeze all juice from orange into a separate cup.
- Eat orange.
- After evening meal, remove peel from mug, add juice to water in mug, fill remaining space with water, to fill-in.
- Heat liquid
- add **hot chocolate mix** to your taste,
- stir/shake well.

The natural, earthy orange flavor beats synthetic "flavor" any day!

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello to my family. I have a trans child and it's hard for me to see trans people hurt. I am open to learn all that I can to do to help all LGBTQ since my child is transitioning to be a man. Dylicia Alicia Snow I am so sorry to hear that they have you in solitary. Eric/Arissa Hasbell if you want support you can write me. To Shadow get in contact. Stay positive.

Merry meet, merry part and merry meet again. Blessed be.

~ Keith Weber | QD7237 | SCI Benner

In the name of Allah, Hello! I am a trans lady, fearless I stand before God, all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds. God already knows everything about me because Allah is my maker. For all the ladies, and men, who feel powerless or have fear to be who God already has made us, be the light of hope, find your faith in yourself, please be strong, be you. As long as we believe in who we are, our path is not our past, keep on moving forward. Love to the family/ To my man be smart. To my little sis Keke & T-Cup we will be ok.

~ Ms. Siggie | Ms. Darnell Diggs

Another issue = another source of love and strength. All of you are so amazing! Precious: I'm sorry to hear that FCI Cumberland does not sell makeup. Every fed spot is different. They sell makeup here. To all with legal cases pending, my prayers for success. I did hear that I have a couple of sisters on the compound but all units are still separated/isolated so I haven't been able to meet them. Soon, I hope! Thanks to everyone for your love, support and advice- I love all of you so much!

~ Sydney Hart @ FCI Allenwood

Shout out to all the STARS!!! I max on Oct 5th! Taz, I got you girl. You too Dawn! Tattoo, I am happy as long as you are. Twin, I still love you bro! Charlie Slocum I ain't forget you

baby girl. You either Ms. Linda. Tameeka Ellen, I will always love you! I NEVER did what they said I did!!! Star AKA Rose, stay strong. And to Ms. Mullion get at me! Unique, stay strong. Kylie, you already know! Gi-Gi. , L.J. I LOVE YOU ALL.

~ Joey, Big Star

THE BATTLEFIELD

Dylicia Alicia Snow

Life seems like a Battlefield, No Place to Rest our heads,
Technically corrupted, And words so full of Lead,
The Chambers Never Empty, Our heads they fill with Dread,
Just Because we don't fit in, They think we should be Dead,
Pain & Misery is Plenty, That's all that we get fed,
Psychologically unstable, so they flush us full of Meds,
Emotionally Abandoned, Got us crying on our Beds,
Overcoming so much oppression, When we're hanging by a Thread,
Just sitting here so lonely, Consequently wishing we were dead...

LETTERS & LOVE

Hello HOAW family! Thanks to my lovely wife Egypt Ily Moore for showing me that our community can come together in our time of need and for introducing me to Hearts on a Wire. It's very inspiring from the stories and poems and letters everyone writes to reach out. I thought I was alone however when I found Egypt she brought life back into my life, the way she helps others and keeps the community together I will love her always and forever. Shoutout to all my sisters and brothers @ SCI-Benner and around the globe.

~ Maz @ SCI-Benner

Shoutout to Deanna, Lindsey, Contessa, Pink, Nikki who are all "Diva MP's." When a person gets mad, they say things they don't really mean. Please forgive me for the things I have said and don't abandon me, don't kick me out and don't make me feel like I'm not wanted around. I can't change the past, but I can make sure the future is better/different.

Y'all take care of each other.

I am a transsexual trying to get sex reassignment surgery...if anybody has information on how I can go about this while incarcerated please help me.

I love you all...keep your heads up and smile!

Peace & Love,

~ Dee Dee

(Ms. D. Bowen #330705 | Wakulla CI, Florida)

Dear HOAW

To all my trans sisters and brothers, stay strong. You're loved and deserve respect. To my man Detroit, I love you, you're the man of my dreams. Egypt, you are strong and deserve nothing but respect and you're gorgeous. To my SCI Benner trans family you're loved also to all trans in the DOC fight for your rights also don't be afraid of paperwork. I've been on hormones for 9 mos it great if you're going for them keep fighting for them.

~ XOXO Megan XOXO | SCI Benner

ONLY ONE TIME

Kyra Lee

It only took one kite
And now I'm in da cell with you
Now you're stuck with me.
Because I'm yo wife.
Baby if you only knew how much
I truly feel about you
You would know you have a
Ride or die bitch.
Because I'm your Bonnie
And you're my Clyde
One one time
You sent that kite to play it off
The same nite we hooked up.
Damn it baby only one time
And you got me hooked to you
When you got done f*ing me
I was like O-My-God
Only one time
Baby you're the realest nigga
I have found
In 7 years of being in dis place
Called DOC
You're the best thing to me
Only one time, only one time
I'm like O-My-God
I got your c* and it got me
sprung
For all my sisters in this hell
Called DOC
I hope you all can find
A real nigga like mines
And to all my brothers
I hope you can find
A good and real bitch like me

BOOKS & PENPAL RESOURCES

Books Through Bars provides small packages of free books to individuals incarcerated in PA, NJ, DE, NY, MD, and VA. Due to the pandemic they are currently prioritizing requests from PA. **Ithaca College Books Thru Bars** and **Providence Books Thru Bars** send free books nationwide. **Book 'Em** sends free educational books and quality reading material to prisoners and prison libraries in PA. **Books For Prisoners at UCSD** and **East Bay Prisoner Support** send socially conscious reading materials nationwide. **Tranzmission Prison Project** sends books to incarcerated LGBTQ folks nationwide. **Prisoners Literature Project** ships free books to every state except TX. **Prison Library Project** ships free books to all states except HI, ME, and MI.

Send a letter that includes your name, ID number, full address, any restrictions on incoming books, and types of books wanted. Make your request by subject rather than specific title or author, and provide several areas of interest if possible. For example, African-American history, basic math, carpentry, how to draw.

Please be patient. These programs get many requests, it may take a while.

Black & Pink, **Montreal Prisoner Correspondence Project**, and **Midwest Trans Prisoner Pen Pal Project** are pen pal organizations that match incarcerated members of the LGBT community anywhere in the country (and in Canada).

Additionally, there are several state organizations. The **Sylvia Rivera Law Project** corresponds with transgender people incarcerated in New York state, and the **Transgender, Gender Variant & Intersex Justice Project** supports trans and intersex people incarcerated in CA - their resource guide *A Transgender/Gender Nonconforming Guide to Parole Preparation* may be available beyond California.

Hearts on a Wire appears on several resource lists as a pen pal organization. While we are aware how valuable it can be to have contact with people, this has never been a service we have provided, nor is it something we have the capacity to take on. Hearts has worked to correct these wishful-thinking resource guides as we become aware of them, but we continue to get frequent requests for pen pal matching.

Books Through Bars

4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Ithaca College Books Thru Bars

PO Box 113
Brooktondale NY 14817

Providence Books thru Bars

42 Lenox Ave
Providence RI 02907

Book'Em - Pittsburgh

PO Box 71357
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Books For Prisoners at UCSD

w/Groundwork Bookstore
0323 Student Center
La Jolla, CA 92037

East Bay Prisoner Support

PO Box 22449
Oakland CA 94609

Tranzmission Prison Project

P.O. Box 1874
Asheville NC 28806

Prisoners Literature Project

% Bound Together Books
1369 Haight St.
SFCA 94117

Prison Library Project

915C W. Foothill Blvd PMB128
Claremont CA 91711

Black and Pink

2406 Fowler Ave Suite 316,
Omaha, NE 68111

Prisoner Correspondence Project

QPIRG Concordia
c/o Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest
Montreal QC H3G 1M8
CANADA

Midwest Trans Prisoner Pen Pal Project

c/o Boneshaker Books
2002 23rd Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Sylvia Rivera Law Project

147 W. 24th St., 5th floor
New York, NY 10001

Transgender, Gender Variant & Intersex Justice Project

370 Turk St #370
San Francisco, CA 94102

LEGAL RESOURCES

PA Institutional Law Project Philadelphia

718 Arch St., Suite 304 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106

PA Institutional Law Project Lewisburg

P.O. Box 128
Lewisburg, PA 17837

PA Institutional Law Project Pittsburgh

247 Fort Pitt Blvd, 4th Floor,
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Mazzoni Center Legal Services

1348 Bainbridge Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

PA Innocence Project

1515 Market Street, Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ACLU Pittsburgh Office

313 Atwood St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

ACLU Philadelphia

PO Box 40008
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Transgender Law Center

PO Box 70976
Oakland, CA 94612-0976

Lambda Legal

120 Wall Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10005-3904

NCLR National Office

870 Market Street Suite 370
San Francisco CA 94102

GLAD

18 Tremont, Suite 950
Boston, MA 02108

TLDEF

520 8th Avenue, Suite 2204
New York, New York 10018

Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project provides assistance to incarcerated or institutionalized people whose constitutional rights have been violated within the institution.

Mazzoni Center has legal services for LGBT people in Pennsylvania, including discrimination cases.

Pennsylvania Innocence Project only takes on direct appeal and PCRA cases from factually innocent individuals incarcerated in PA who have been wrongfully convicted.

The **ACLU** sometimes takes prison conditions cases, but they are selective in which cases they take because they do “impact litigation.”

Impact litigation is strategic legal cases that have the potential to change the situation for other people in similar situations to the plaintiff.

Transgender Law Center is a national organization that takes on impact litigation related to trans rights.

Lambda Legal is a national organization that takes on impact litigation related to LGBT/HIV rights.

The **National Center for Lesbian Rights** is another national impact litigation firm that takes on impact litigation related to LGBT.

GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is a national organization that takes on impact litigation related to LGBT/HIV rights.

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) is a national impact litigation firm that takes cases related to trans discrimination.

Miss Juicy alerted us that the **Incarcerated Writers Initiative** at **Columbia** is currently accepting submission for Journal publication.

- Fiction (5,000 words)
- Poetry (5 pages)
- Nonfiction (5,000 words)
- Visual Art (5 pages)

more information at <http://columbiajournal.org/iwi/>

Heather Gluck
Incarcerated Writers Initiative
Columbia Artists/Teachers
415 Dodge Hall
Mail Code 1804
2960 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

SUBSCRIBE

Subscriptions are **FREE** for Trans people & allies who are locked up.

If you want our newsletters, please **ask to be added to our mailing list** and **let us know how you are connected to the Trans community.**

We will **not** add people to our mailing list who have not reached out to us directly.

Back issues of the newsletter are available to view or download at heartsonawire.org

GETTING OUT?

Get in touch!

We do our best to support our inside members in reentry. Let us know when you expect to get out, where you are going, and what you need.

PILOT PROGRAM

Our experiment with virtual visits between inside and outside Hearts on a Wire community members is going well. We currently have more requests than we have capacity for!

If you are **Transgender** in the **PA DOC** and you want to try out a visit with an outside member, please write to us and let us know so we can add you to the waitlist.

Hearts on a Wire
1315 Spruce St
Philadelphia, PA 19107

WRITE TO US! SUBMISSIONS

Rules & Guidelines

You can send us...

Letters | Original Artwork | Recipes | Interviews | How-to articles | Ideas Articles responding to current events, prison policies, and this newsletter | Original Poetry | Book Reviews | Contribuciones en español son muy bienvenidos!

Next Issue:

Lots of folks responded to the article in the Newsletter #29 on abolition (#29, pages 36-37) with their thoughts on what a world without prisons can look like, and what their own vision of the future is.

In the next issue, we would like to continue this important conversation. We are inviting you to read other people's thoughts on abolition in this issue pages 3-7, and respond.

You can respond directly to someone else's writing, or several people's, or respond more generally. How do you feel about what you read? Are there themes you see? Are there points of agreement, or of tension? What questions does it bring up for you?

Guidelines:

- If you contribute make sure you tell us **exactly** how you want to be credited [Anonymous? ID number? Chosen name? Facility?]. **We will only use your location and/or government name if you explicitly tell us to do so.**
- We no longer publish full addresses as this leads to the newsletter being barred in some institutions. Shoutout to the mail censors in Florida, Indiana, & Wisconsin.
- Please respect other people's privacy; only make disclosures about yourself.
- **No shade.**
- Your original work only. **We will not publish work that has previously been published elsewhere.**
- We get more submissions than we can possibly print.
- **We prioritize writing by trans and non-binary authors**
- **We reserve the right to publish excerpts and to make light edits for length and clarity.**