

TWO ROADS



Mothers & Others

An honest chronicle of the stories and service of the Incarcerated Women and Men
of the Illinois Department of Corrections

SPECIAL TRIBUTE ISSUE



To All Readers

Our monthly e-zine focuses on three phases: *Rehabilitation*, *Restoration* and *Re-Entry*. These are the necessary phases of a successful incarceration and transition back to society.

Rehabilitation involves the struggle for change one confronts during incarceration.

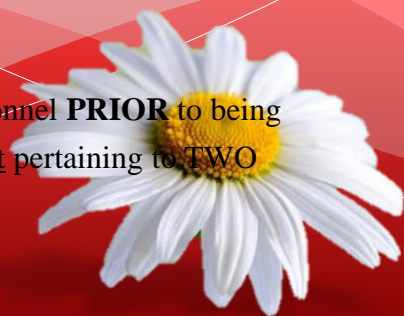
Restoration reflects the refined version of one's self that we've become and our restored self seeks service of self-worth to the world.

Finally, ***Re-Entry*** is the ultimate goal one accomplishes through class study, self-study or modification programs completed during one's incarceration.

We are TWO ROADS, and we want to be a viable resource for our readers. We serve you by sharing the honest chronicle of the stories and service of the incarcerated women and men of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Join our movement.

TWO ROADS Editorial Staff

****Please Note:** All letters, emails and photos will be reviewed by personnel **PRIOR** to being received by the TWO ROADS editorial staff. All information that is not pertaining to TWO ROADS will be discarded. Thank you for respecting the guidelines.





Our Mission Statement

“We are committed to empowering those most impacted by harmful systems to become dynamic leaders and agents of change. Using the connecting, restorative power of these stories, we hope to do our part in bringing us all together to overcome societal ills, such as violence, poverty and mass incarceration.”

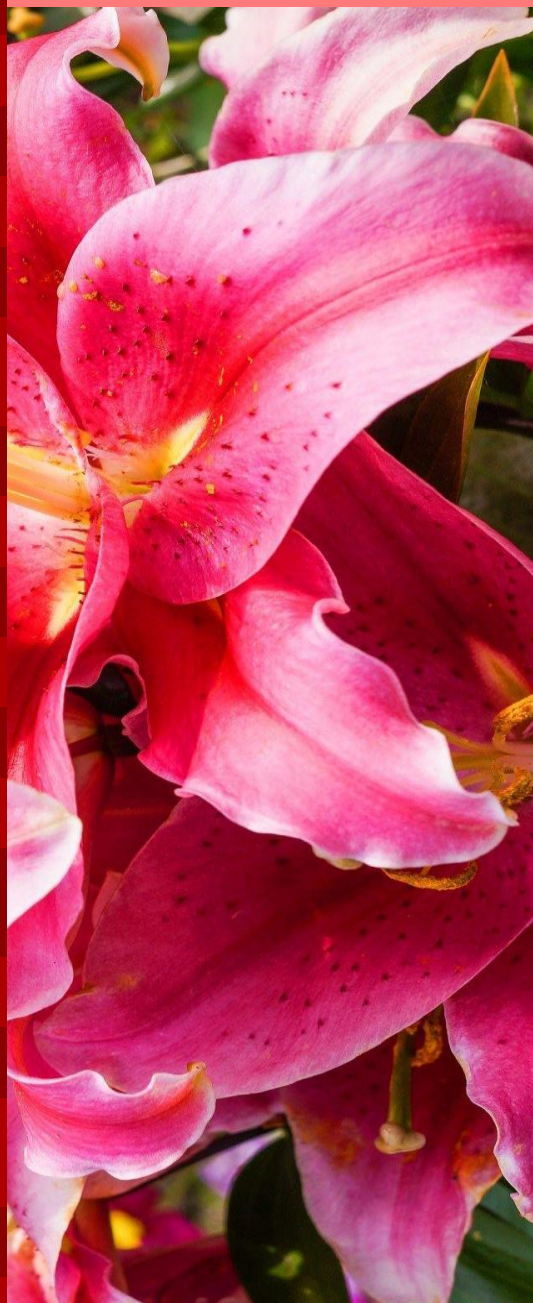
DISCLAIMER

TWO ROADS is built for bringing integrity and honesty about the people who are submitting their stories. There are times where the editors are required to make changes due to spelling errors or grammatical structure. Please know that **we will never take away your voice**; however, understand that we take pride in our work and strive to be the best in our representation of your voice.

Thank you.



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Mother's Day Issue

STATE WIDE CALLOUT FOR VIEWPOINTS PART II

WE HERE AT TWO ROADS ARE AWARE OF THE MANY
CHANGES THAT HAS TRANSPIRED SINCE WE LAST PRINTED
OUR VIEWPOINTS EDITION. WE NOW WOULD LIKE TO

ENCOURAGE AND CHALLENGE OUR MANY READERS TO
LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD. WE ARE NOW TAKING
SUBMISSIONS FOR OUR JULY AND ALSO AUGUST

ADDITION OF **TWO ROADS**. DEPENDING HOW MANY OF
OUR READERS WANT THEIR VIEWPOINT HEARD ALSO
ACKNOWLEDGED. ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE WELCOME

PLEASE BE MINDFUL OF THE CONTENT

Send us your submissions.

Mother's Day Issue





TWO ROADS

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Happy Mother's Day

Happy Mother's day to all of our readers who are blessed to be mothers; to you all, we celebrate you, and in my opinion, that is the ultimate blessing. Now I would like to speak personally about the mothers in my life I choose to honor in this story. First, I honor and celebrate on this day my mother, Mrs. Shirley Marie who alone raised 5 boys to men and 1 little girl to be woman and mother; may you always rest in peace. You also reared, after the passing of your mother, your two younger sisters who also may rest with you in peace. Knowing deep within my heart, it is never too late to say thank you. I honor and celebrate you in everything I do; you will never be forgotten. Your legacy lives in us all.

Many of the lessons you taught us were missed in the moment, however your wisdom carries us all through

those moments of trials and tribulations. It is funny how all that works out – never wanted to listen, yet every word spoken is remembered in those dire minutes of trial and error. Just wanted to say you are missed, and cherished, forever Mrs. Shirley Marie.

The second mother is Mrs. D. Bennett, my wife, who is patient and loving, Yet, in my opinion, she is not appreciated or celebrated enough, because the many things she does are never recognized, nor is she seen for her many sacrifices. She appears invisible to those she sacrifices for, and she surrounds herself with too many selfish, self-centered people, who claim to love her.



She goes through each day giving pieces of herself every day to people who do not appreciate or deserve the things which she gives so freely. Please understand these observations are coming from a man on the outside (here) looking in (there) and cannot take some of the things I see, because I know the heart that is being mistreated in my opinion. My wife is a giving soul living among many takers, and she is often left hurt and disappointed by those she loves. I will forever display to her patience, understanding, loyalty, empathy and compassion because I believe she lacks it in most of her relationships. Mrs. Bennett has continued to grow in her faith, also in our relationship as friends, first, and as husband and wife.

Our marriage will continue to be a learning process, filled with teachable moments for us both and for that, we are excited. Therefore, I honor and celebrate you Mrs. Bennett now and forever.

The third mother I would like to honor and celebrate is my one and only sister (Kat), who at a young age faced and survived great trauma; I have observed and admired the way she has carried herself as a young woman growing up in the hustle in the inner city of Chicago. As a mother of six, along with her five brothers, she raised her children never once complaining about the circumstances, always seeking solutions and pushing forward. I have watched my sister become a proud, hands-on grandmother, also the caregiver to her youngest son. A victim of gun violence, he is paralyzed from the waist down. My sister continues to show resilience as she has altered her life for his sake. Though she faces many challenging situations, being the mother of grown, opinionated, strong black women who feels she does nothing right in their eyes; she continues to progress.

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As we have grown, the roles seem to shift to the younger generation; they feel they have all the answers to this life's problems and issues. Therefore, I celebrate my sister, because I would have washed my hands a long time ago with the grown individuals who have all the answers, and yet she continued to enjoy the life she has forged from all the trials and tribulations she faced and survived.



Kelly 'KB' Bennett
TWO ROADS
Senior Associate Editor

So going forward I salute, celebrate, and honor these strong women, who are also Mothers; these women have shown resilience in the face of adversity. In addition, courage to move forward, when the unknown stands before them like a huge wall or roadblock, impeding their progress, yet never giving up. So please join me in celebrating all the Mothers out there who have faced the same, if not more of the same, in their lives. Happy Mother's Day!!

Mother's Day Issue





A Dedication to Mothers

Melanie M. Grant

Motivated to give her all to those connected to her heart.

Optimistic about the plans that God has for her life.

Triumphant despite the daily challenges, and struggles she faces; she triumphs.

Helpful to those near and far, no matter their creed or race.

Encouraging humans to do their best and never settle for less.

Respectfully she carries herself with dignity and always strives to rise above disgrace.

Spoiler Alert: A mother is not just a woman who gives birth. A mother can be any female who has been supportive, encouraging, inspiring, & dependable. Thank you to all the mothers in my life.





Having a Mother Like You

Torina Emerson

Having a Mother like you, I want to
thank you god above, for letting me
feel your motherly love.

Because having a mother like you is
like a dream come true.

You raised me to be strong, and you
taught me right from wrong.

You always stayed by my side, even
when you knew we were in for a ride.

You used to love braiding my hair,
and I used to follow you everywhere.

I always loved the way you sing; you
are like an angel with a broken wing.

Having a mother like you, was the
best thing God could do.

Thank you, Mama!





Mothers and Others

Katrina Battiste

Having children is a joy that no one can steal from you. When giving birth, you get to see the bundle of joy you carried for nine months. Admiring their cute face, tiny hands, and feet. All you want to do is love and protect them from this harsh world. I was able to experience this twice. My daughter and my son are my miracles. Some of the things they have said or done make me smile and think of myself.

I left my daughter when she was four; being incarcerated put a big dent in our relationship, but I continue to pray for reunification. I gave birth to my son in Cook county. I must say it was great to have my son, but the hardest thing was when I had to leave him. There is no manual to being a parent, but I have done my best to make sure he grows into a good man. In addition, he has!

He is 19 and goes to college, with this being his first year and

Architecture is his major; his grades are straight A's plus he made the Dean's list. I feel amazing that even though I am not there, he still is doing his best. I am loved, unconditionally, and he is proud to say I am his mom.

I used to be afraid and have insecurities that he would resent me, be disrespectful, or ignore me, but he treats me as if I have been there all along. It is awesome being his mom; soon I will be there me to continue this journey as a mother to both of them! Hey world; meet one of my miracles!





Mothers Day

Chad “Cartoon” Combs

I was glad when I saw the title to this volume “Mothers and Others,” because I know as I grew up, I had a few influential women in my life. This picture is four generations; unfortunately, through the years those mothers and others have passed away, and sometimes as I lay back and think, “Did I learn as much as I could from them?” I have to think, with the path I chose, the answer would be a quick no! Now as I look back the answer is always yes. Just because I did not follow the teaching does not mean I did not learn it. It merely means I just have not put it into play as of yet. My Mom, who was by no means perfect, taught me even when you are down, if you stay the course, you will always get back up.

My maternal grandmother taught me that love is unconditional, and

family should always come first, my paternal grandmother (not pictured) taught me my work ethic, my grit, and to be able to do anything yourself, though you may be fortunate enough to have someone to do it for you. However, you can always have the option of doing it yourself. All three taught me they would not be around forever, so pick up new mentors along the way.





that those who are not here and are looking down up on us will be proud of the one they taught.

Cartoon

“Nothing is more Dangerous than an idea, when it’s the only one you have.”

Emile- Auguste Chartier

Which brings me to my other photo.. My wife, mother to Dustin and Ava. Now if they wrote a piece for this volume, it would be longer than the average 70 page Two Roads! **(TR response “HAHA, funny, funny”)** She has been their strength, mother and father to them. She has done it alone. She has taught me as well, courage, compassion, also the ability to pivot and overcome.

She is a great mother and a wonderful wife; I am glad I still have her to turn to. These mothers and others deserve, more than just a day, they deserve a lifetime. I hope

Mother's Day Issue



Herstory: Lizzie Rodgers Henderson

Linrod “Nardo” Thames

Lizzie Rodgers' story began, in 1890, 35 years after the civil war, in Starkville Mississippi; she was the daughter of Alex and Susie Coconut Rodgers, and both were descendants of slaves in the antebellum south. Lizzie Rodgers suffered the effects of the breaking down of reconstruction, and with little or no education, she contributed her fair share of labor in the cotton fields, sunup to sundown as a youth, in order to survive. The ungente grim look on her face, tells the story of a woman who never got her forty acres and a mule. Instead, they introduced her to the harsh reality of Jim Crow politics and behaviors.

In 1906 at the age of 16, Lizzie Rodgers got married, becoming Mrs. Lizzie Rodgers Henderson; her story would start a new chapter in Money, Mississippi, where she dedicated her



life to Christ serving in the Church of God in Christ, all while being committed to her marriage... committed to her husband, and their union, enough to bless, him with 11 children, 6 boys, and 5 girls.

Mother's Day Issue



On April 12, 1930, during the Great Depression, Mrs. Docie Henderson was born. That is the woman who came to be my grandmother; she is the baby girl, the tenth child born to Mrs. Lizzie Rodgers Henderson. My grandmother was raised as a member of the Church of God in Christ. With only a fifth-grade education, her options were limited, so she spent long days working in the fields picking cotton, just as her mother did before her. Docie Henderson wed at the tender age of 17 in the year 1947 and became Mrs. Docie Crawford. In 1950 she left Money, Mississippi behind, and traveled north to Chicago, Illinois

in search of a better life. In Chicago, Illinois, she would become the proud mother of eight children. One of them I am proud to say was my mother, Mrs. Diane Crawford who was born in 1954; she followed the long tradition of Christianity passed down from her grandmother and her mother. She was fortunate to pursue her education, and never worked a hot day in the cotton fields. This brief summation of Lizzie Rodgers Henderson story reveals 134 years of generational progress, I am proud to pay tribute to my great grandmother, Lizzie Rodgers Henderson, because her story made my story.



Mother's Day Issue



A Mothers Behind Bars

Carol A. Warren

I grew up where I always loved and celebrated my mother; I was raised as an only child, loved very much, grateful to my mother who made my life great. She always told me that children were a blessing from God, made for our keeping and nurturing. They did not ask to be born; we as mothers brought them into this world.

My mother died many years ago and I have always remembered the advice she told me, and I have never allowed a day to pass or end without telling my children how much I love them and want and appreciate them. I, to this day, still do this as much as I can from in here. I never end a Letter, or email without “I Love You”. I continue to call or sometimes they visit which has become a hardship to many

families.

I was home to raise my kids for the most part; I was an involved parent, in their school events and sports – now a luxury I do not have with my grandchildren, especially after coming to prison.

I have been behind these walls now for twenty-three years; I still call my love and call my children, and now grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The little ones only know me by voice alone; I do send cards and gifts whenever I can, and we talk often-discussing meals, outings, sports and school. Some of the time we discuss TV shows just like if I were home with them. We are still very close even from in here I do my very best.



I do pray when I am able to go home, we will be able to work on our relationship and forget all the things prison took and just enjoy our lives and ourselves and be able to have real moments with hugs and kisses, sharing those I Love you's.

Remembering always not to let prison separate you from your life and family ever again, I enjoy being a mother it is the greatest job in the world.

EDITORS TAKE

What can one person say about the most perfect person in a man's life? I am not sure if I have the words, nor do I believe that I am giving her the justice. My mother, whom I dearly adore, has been one of the most caring and supporting individuals in my life. She has raised me right, aside from my wrongs, and has given me purpose.

She was raised and reared in East Saint Louis, Illinois, and many of you

who have either lived there or have heard of it, know that it is not fine living. Being the second of 8 children, and the oldest female, her responsibilities were more than getting her own life together. She had to make sure that her younger siblings had the things they needed before they ran off to school and to make sure that the cooking and the cleaning were spot on.

Mother's Day Issue



One thing about my mother is that she was “on-point.” Although she didn’t attend college, she had the skills that resonated with the best of them.

She had worked in the banking industry for over 25 years and has taught her three children (me, my sister and her husband) how to navigate this world. She is always there with good information, never once held a grudge, and is very responsible.

I was treated to a visit from my mother this past Mother’s Day. She doesn’t live close, and the drive is hard on her (Thanx Mario), but she loves her son and I love my mother (and father too!). I hope that all the men who have women in their lives understand the importance of what a woman is and how they add value to your life. A lot of men don’t have men in the house and their mother was their father. A lot of men have girlfriend(s) in their live(s) that are there at the ready to care for and nurture them.



Kenji Haley
TWO ROADS
Editor-In-Chief

The one thing that I have got right in the time that I have been incarcerated is that I was able to have a wife who has all the qualities that my mother has. She is supportive, loving, caring, there for words of encouragement and is there “at the ready!”

Mother’s Day Issue



I hope that all the men in the Department of Corrections have made sure that they let the women who are in their lives know that they love them and that they matter. There is no way that we would be where we are without these women.

Lastly, I would like to tell this special person something. Ms. Rowan (our Publisher and teacher), you have been one of the most amazing women in the lives of EVERY MAN in Kewanee. Your presence and ability

to get things done, your unwavering spirit to assist when you can, and your full support is boundless. To say that you are only a teacher is an understatement. You have been a mother to countless men in this facility and in other places where you have taught, and I just want to thank you for all that you have done and all the things that you will do in the near future.

You are remarkable and I want to tell you **HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!**

REMINDER: WE ARE TAKING SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RE-IMAGINING INCARCERATION AS WELL AS *FATHER'S DAY*



Mother's Day Issue





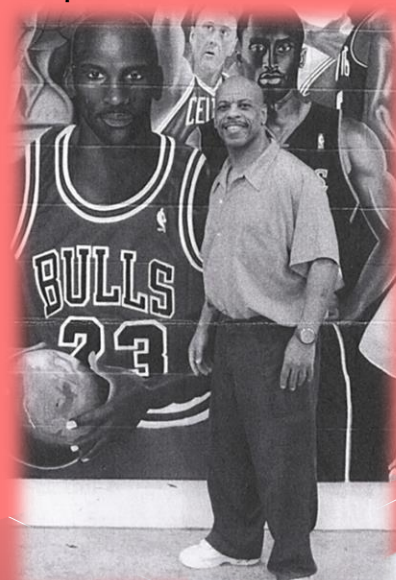
Handle with Care

Timothy Youngblood

We do not have to wait for another HERstory edition or another Mother's Day edition to talk about a woman, a wife, and to make her the center of attention. 1 Peter 3:7 advises "husbands live with your wives in an understanding way." I love this verse because Peter does not say that I have to understand a woman. Like every other male, I know that I cannot totally understand any woman, even the one I love with all my heart. The key is for me to come across as wanting to live with her in an understanding way, and even more, I want her to know that I trust her heart.

I realize that 1 Peter 3:7 is a controversial verse for some because the complete passage says that husbands should live with their wives in an understanding way "as unto the

weaker vessel" (KJV). Feminists bristle at that one, and claim, "the man is not the stronger sex; we are equal!" What we must remember is that Peter makes a comparative statement, not a qualitative one. He is not saying that women are weak; he is saying that a wife is a weaker vessel "because of her vulnerability to her husband within the marriage relationship".



Men, your wife is vulnerable to you in at least two areas: (1) when you say such things as “I just do not understand you... I wonder if it’s worth it to try.” (2) When you dishonor her by treating her as less than an equal “fellow heir of the grace of life” (see 1 Peter 3:7). Feminists try to use this verse to say the Bible declares women are the weaker sex.

What Peter is saying is that a wife is vulnerable to her husband (not that all women are weaker than all men are); and when you, her husband, do not seek to understand her, she is very vulnerable indeed and needs to be handled with care. One way to look at the phrase weaker vessel is to think of two bowls: one made of porcelain; the other made of copper. The husband is copper; the wife is porcelain.

It is not that she is of less value –in fact, a porcelain bowl can sometimes have greater value than a copper bowl.

different functions in different settings. Nevertheless, your wife –the porcelain bowl is delicate; she can be cracked, even broken, if you are not careful. In the heat of frustration, a husband (I am talking from experience being married for ten years) might say, “nobody can understand women – particularly you.” At this point he might turn around and go off somewhere to stonewall for a while and go into his well-worn Rodney Dangerfield mantra: “I just don’t get any respect!”, vowing to himself not to kowtow to her controlling manner until she starts respecting him.

If you have been in a situation like this and then uttered unfortunate words along these lines, you might want to look down and notice the holes in your shoes. You just shot yourself in both feet-again. God has not made your wife to function around that kind of attitude.

The bowls are different and have

Mother's Day Issue



God is calling husbands to realize that their wives are porcelain bowls on which he has placed a clearly legible sign 'Handle with Care ". In

addition, if you are married to an undefeated professional scrapper like my wife, eventually, she is going to tell you, "You better watch how you handle me!"

Mother's Day

Toyrianna Smith

I grew up like so many other children, born to teenagers, my grandma was my mother she raised me. My mom was young and still wanted to run the streets, so I stayed with my grandma from the time I was born until she died, when I was 7 years old. I was devastated even at that age, because I knew even then my life would never be the same.

She was all I knew; my grandma was my everything. She was warm, welcoming, energetic, nurturing and caring. She helped any one in need; she even opened her doors to needy people and everybody who knew her loved her.



Mother's Day Issue

My mom on the other hand went on to have four more kids, one on the same day I was born, however we never really got to establish a relationship, she went to jail two months after my grandma had passed away.

She remained there for the next eight and a half years; while there we had a relationship built on love, trust, and different life lessons, but I longed for her physically. The year she was released, I got pregnant with my now 15-year-old daughter, Marianna. She is the brightest star and space in my life, she gives my life meaning. When I was pregnant, I remember being excited about a doctor visit, and when she moved around in my stomach, I read to her, sang to her, talked to her, all while she was in my stomach. She was my best friend back then and still to this day is my bestie, two years one month after her, I had my son Ken Jr., he was one of the happiest babies. He would coo all day long. He abruptly died three months after from suffocation, my children are my world, even with Ken

Jr. being deceased, he still lives in my heart. He and his sister are my motivation in me doing what it is I have to in order to prosper.

Those are Gems: Priceless Inspiration, being a Mother is one of the most important jobs any woman who have kids can have. I remain teachable through, teaching also learning from my daughter, and she and my communication is great. I feel like our lives are so similar, she ask me for advice on life daily.

I have been locked up since she was two years old, I have been a great mom even from behind these walls, and she often tells me how grateful she is in her mom. It gets rough as well, because she has those days where she is around other kids and their moms and hers is not present. I allow her to vent her frustrations. She is a straight A student; she is highly talented. She is my world, and I would give my life repeatedly for her. I love you my dear daughter.

Mother's Day Issue





Mother's Day

Megan Cooperider

Mother's Day is important to me. It's the day we get to celebrate the one person that gave birth to us. Growing up, my mom always told me and my brother that she loved us unconditionally. At the time, I didn't understand what she was truly meant, right up until I had my daughter, Renneigh.

The first time holding her was the best day of my life. It was right there in that moment. I knew exactly what my mother had meant. I couldn't be more thankful to be here and to know the same blessing that my mother has known with having my brother and me. My mother, Terri Sexton, and I have had our ups and downs, but what mother and daughter don't?

My mother has always been on my side, never giving up on me, always

believing in me, helping me grow into the woman I am today. My life has not been perfect by no means. I've been through some very hard things, but I've learned what doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger. That no matter how far down and broken you think you are, there is truly only one way left to go and that is up!

Being a mother is a very important role in life and I thank my mother for being there for me and helping me grow; for loving me and caring for me. I love you mom and Happy Mother's Day!



Mother's Day

We did not have much when I was growing up. I always compared myself and my life to other kids I knew. My sisters and I wore secondhand clothes from thrift shops, Salvation Army, yard sales, and local church clothing closets. When we got things like chips, cookies, or candy bars, it was special, because these were not things we had in our house every day. When my Mother shopped, she bought meals and she had them planned out for the entire month. If you were hungry in my house, then you had better eat whatever Mom prepared.

During my teenage years, we had our ups and downs; things would get better for a short time then we would be right back on the bottom. I always wished my life could be different. I started to have resentments, and I acted in rebellion to the instruction my mother gave me. I was selfish, self-centered, and self-seeking.

At the age of 18, I became a father and aimed to give my daughter a

better life than I had. I was still selfish though. After dating me for almost ten years, her mother had enough of my selfish ways and decided to remove herself from me.

At the age of 30 I came to prison for the first time. Shortly after I was released I re-offended, and ten years later here I am still serving out my sentence. What am I getting at here? I grew up with all this judgment about life and thoughts about how I could have done, but I never thought of what my Mother must have been going through.

It must have been hard for her not being able to give us all that we wanted, and the struggles she had trying to figure out how to pay the bills, put clothes on us, and feed us. I've been raised better. Then I left my daughter and left her Mother to figure it out on her own.

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Over the past several years, I often wonder how hard it was for her. She has two other children now, and my daughter is 22. I am sure that things are still hard for her. My daughter is now a mother. My grandson is two.

The Mothers I know, such as my Mother, my Grandmother, my Aunts, my Cousins, my Daughter, and my Daughters Mother, are strong, resilient, patient, loving, caring women. They put up with attitudes, impatience, defiance. They provide at times where no one else could or would. I often wonder how my mother did what she did. How did she keep meals on the table? How did she pay the bills? How did she keep her sanity with all the struggles and a son that that was intolerant and rebellious? Today I love all these women. I would do anything for my Mother to alleviate her burdens. I owe my daughter's mother my life because my little girl is a beautiful force in this world. And I did not contribute to any of it. She took care of all the responsibility, and I gave zero. Thanks

to Allah (praise his name) he brought me light. Allah (praise his name) holds respect for parents at a high station. It is so important in Islam that In the Quran he mentions respect for parents with (Tawheed) worshipping Allah alone and not associating partners with him. And (Hadiths) traditions from the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) show that the Mother holds a higher station of the parents because she carries the child and experiences the pains of labor, and her emotional attachment is stronger.



Abdul Khabir

TWO ROADS
Associate Editor

Mother's Day Issue



In the Chapter of Maryam (Mary) in the Quran, Isa (Jesus) (peace be upon him) describes himself by saying, “and Allah made me a person of Birr with my Mother” Birr means respectful, humble, not arrogant. The opposite of that to a mother is a wretched oppressor.

I leave you with this: Abdul Razzaq narrated that Talha said, “A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) and said O Messenger of Allah, I wanted to go to battle, and I have come here to seek your advice.” He said, “Do you have a

Mother?” The man said, “Yes” The Messenger said, “Stick with her, for Paradise lies at her feet.” A commentary on this explains that “Being humble and pleasing to the Mother is cause to get into Paradise.”

I only wish I had got it sooner;
mostly I am just thankful that I finally
see all your love. I love you all,
Mothers of mine, especially you
Momma.

Happy Mothers Day.

Love So Real

Jamie “Ja’Von” Boyd

A love so real, you can see, a love so real, you can feel, no words need to be said for actions is all you need to show, Love does not change that is for sure.

Love so real

Shared between us is like a tree being fed water, sun, light.

The kind words you speak, the hugs you give

Mother's Day Issue





Reimagining Corrections Abstract

It's time to reimagine corrections. Punishment, in the form of prison, has proven to be ineffective correcting undesirable behaviors in the long-term. Imagine a justice system that truly rehabilitates, restores, and facilitates a successful re-entry for justice-impacted citizens instead of punishment & revenge. What do rehabilitation, restoration, and re-entry look like to you? What will you reimagine corrections to look like? Please submit.

Without staff support:

Mail submission, photo to:
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2021 Kentville Road
Kewanee, IL 61443

Outsiders, Staff and Individuals-In-Custody (WITH Staff Support)

Please send your submission and scanned photo to
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"ATTN: Imagine"



A Child, A Mother, A Father

Jamie “Ja’Von” Boyd



As I sit here, I contemplate on all the above, I am all three, someone's child without parents. I am a mother that gave birth, I am a father that understands and loves beyond any walls or conditions. Safe and at

peace, humble and very thankful, full of grace, yet strong and honest and loyal to those I love to the end. I am she; I am also Him, and I am the child that once was lost, but now I am found.

Full grown no longer all alone, a child, a mother, a father, I am he, I am all the above. The past forgiven, the future planned. Light shines bright for all the see. To a child, from a child, to a mother, from a mother, to a father from a father, To all that Parents light love and Blessings up on you all.

Happy Mother's Day





My Vision

A'shanti Roberts

I had a vision that I was no longer surrounded by people who were no good for me.

I had a vision that I would no longer live in a world filled with hate, deviate, and toxic love, but one of joy, and peace.

I had a vision that I was blessed to have everything I need and more, that my dreams became a reality.

I had a vision that no longer will me, or my family have to be cursed to deal with the iniquities of our ancestors, but we break the cycle.

Everything is new and the old has passed away.

I had a vision that my children will be better than me,
And make better choices than the ones I have made.

I had a vision that I no longer let my past control my present or future, but I have overcome my fear like, David battling Goliath.

I have victory; see some of my visions are no longer just the things I see, but they have already come to pass, and others will be manifested through the power I have received from the higher power. This is my dream, my vision, my reality.



The Mothers We Love

Latonya Dextra

To look into someone's eyes and see the love they have for you, whether it is your grandmother, mother, or your own kids. *The love you look! The safe look! The secure look! The I done did something look; I am in trouble look.*

As I close my eyes and reminisce on the women I loved look, I can remember my mom's look. Dark wavy hair, light skinned dark brown eyes, 5 ft 7 inches tall, and a petite frame, Yeah! That was my mom. Soft, gentle, and beautiful to me. I remember early morning, she would be so sweet, fixing breakfast, combing my hair and walking me to school. Yeah, that is what I remember of my mom.

Now my grandma, boy was she my everything, and she was the one who raised me. She had black/grey curly hair; her complexion was caramel, with moles all over her face and she always had a comforting,

loving, warm embrace. All that anyone could imagine a grandmother to be. She would cook some "Jiburito" for the other kids and me. We would dance the *bachata* and sing one of her favorite songs; we would be listening to her sing as she cooked. If we would hurt ourselves, guess what? "No hospital" Grandma would go into the cabinet and pull out the first aid kit, pour some peroxide, a little antibiotic ointment, and a bandage, give a big hug, kiss us on the forehead and say "Okay! All better, now go back outside and play. So many sweet memories of that little ole lady; it was not until I begin to have my own kids, I understand that look in someone's eyes and see that some looks I used to give to my favorite two women that now my children give to me.

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Things I Learned From Mom

Baha Eddin Al-Momani

- ❖ Respect goes hand and hand with love.
- ❖ Devotion, respect, loyalty, and love are the cornerstone of happiness.
- ❖ Love is the greatest joy in life.
- ❖ Love is not a one-way street.
- ❖ Love can move mountains.
- ❖ Love heals wounds.
- ❖ True love will bring happiness and it springs eternal.
- ❖ Silence is golden unless one is in love.
- ❖ Security and friendship are the two most precious gifts you can give others.
- ❖ Love not just for the outward looks but also for the inner beauty as well.
- ❖ Proclaim your love only when you mean it.
- ❖ Do not ever hurt the one who gives you the love you deserve.
- ❖ True love means commitment.
- ❖ Gentleness and warmth are qualities people cherish.
- ❖ People admire you for your high principles and honest nature.
- ❖ People admire a man who is strong yet capable of compassion.
- ❖ People admire an honorable man.
- ❖ Your smile warms others' hearts.
- ❖ A sweet melodic voice is music for ears.
- ❖ Tender words, poems of the heart and tempting words are music to the ears.
- ❖ Such gorgeous eyelashes are weapons of love.
- ❖ Charm attracts and disarms.
- ❖ With God, all things are possible.
- ❖ Jealousy is an undesirable quality, which turns others off.
- ❖ Envy destroys friendships.
- ❖ A suspicious person will never know true happiness.

My Best Wishes for All.



LLDB

Yohni A. Brown

LLDB (Long Live Dah'Vie Brown)

How I yearn to feel your back one more time. Like the day you were born, and I held you for the first time. The touch of your soft, wrinkly skin up against mine. The pillow soft curls that were on the top of your head.

I can still feel you in my arms that May 11th day. That's the day I became your mother; it is one of the best days of my life. That touch ... I will never forget. The smell of you, so sweet and innocent. How you smiled and cooed at me with that big smile.

It's like you knew I was your mother. You laid safe in my arms as I held you. It brings me so much happiness to my life to know that I created this wonderful human being. I asked myself was I going to be a good enough mother for him and his brothers? Something I still ask myself today as an incarcerated mother. How I long to see you like that again and

touch you, smell you and hold you in my arms, for you to talk to me, smile and tell me "I love you mom."



I don't have that anymore, Dah'Vie. I don't have you. I no longer have that sweet smell of you. I miss that from you so much, and I love the love that we had with each other. It's because of you and your brothers that I breathe the air I do.

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I can't say it enough, my love, how much love I have for y'all. It goes way beyond this world, and like time, you will not be forgotten son.

Although I can no longer touch, smell, or see that wonderful smile of yours, it will never leave my heart. My heart will forever beat for you, broken and all... there will be a day when I will be able to touch, smell and wrap my arms around you again, so that I can feel your warm embrace. It will be just the day you were born all over again. It will be the best Mother's Day ever, in the Heavens above.

Dah'Vie, I'm sorry that I couldn't

keep you safe in my arms but know how much I love you and miss you. I would do May 11th, 2006, all over again!!!

Happy Birthday Dah!

Love Mom

I love you to the moon and back!!!

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Perseverance

Persevere: persist, be steady, be steadfast, be consistent, go on, keep on, hold on, keeps one's course, maintain one's ground, stick to it, not give it up, stand firm, steadfast, move heaven and earth, go through fire and water, go to all lengths.

Al-hamdu li' llah (All praise due to Allah) for giving me this voice and courage to share my deepest feelings, fears and regrets. In sharing all of these emotions, it made me want to stop; yet... keep going, never realizing at first that through my perseverance, I became a source of motivation to a multitude of our community.

To be more transparent, my

mother, Debbie Boyd (may she rest in peace) encouraged me to submit my first article to *Kewanee Horizons*. I know she's smiling down on me today. I'm finally becoming the woman she asked me to be. The selfishness in me pushes others to find their outlet for those emotions, just as Debbie pushed me, as a mother of a murdered child, with no other children.

I battled with whether I am still a mother or not. I've come in contact with the other women that experienced the same battle. The moment you became impregnated and soon after you felt your baby doing cartwheels in your stomach,



you became that child's female parent. A mother teaches, guides and nurtures. As we all know, you don't necessarily have to give birth to become a mother. My son and I had several moments in mothering.

We as mothers feel a sense of guilt or even relief to have someone else mother our children. It was guilt, shame and jealousy for me. I felt like a horrible mother for leaving my son at 11 months old. My mother left me under different circumstances, yet the feeling of abandonment is still the same.

I felt like crap for giving him the same feelings that I experienced. I was jealous because all of these great women in our lives got to experience all the moments I wish I could've been present for. Other women feel relief due to them not being in the position to care for their child, in which I respect simply because they had enough courage to say, "I'm not capable of this huge responsibility. So why ruin this child's life when I could

offer him/her a better life with blessing a family with a great child." And water them flowers, no matter the emotion behind the action, if someone else is mothering your children. One act of perseverance will motivate others to be better women, parents and mothers. With that motivation, we



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Can, in a sense, motivate others that we have not given both to.

My intention, through the guidance of Allah, is to plant the seed in everyone that has been affected by my actions of motivation and nurture that seed with positivity and watch our community grow together.

I wasn't the best mother I could've been. I thought I knew it all. Honestly, I knew absolutely NOTHING about being a mother, when I had the best examples. It wasn't until I watched the greatest woman in my life mother my child that I got direction; then I became the best mother that I could be, without physically being present.

Today, I don't dwell on how I lost my son. I focus on how he lived while on this earth. I remember the great times we spent together. The bond that we had. To him, I was the best

mom ever. To any mother that has lost a child: the death of that child is not equivalent to the death as a mother/parent. You will forever hold that title!

Al-hamdu li'llahi l-ladhi adhaba 'anna' l-hazana inna rabbana la-ghaturin shakur.

"All praise be to Allah, who has forever rid us of sorrows; verily our Lord is all-forgiving, supreme."

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Mama Matters

Earl Milton, Jr.

A mother is a very special gift provided by the very heavens themselves. A mother is there to shield and nurture her children, when they are at their weakest, most helpless state. All the love that comes from a mother is crucial to her child's development; a mom can teach her children many things. When things go wrong her children can hide under her wings, a mama can help her children stay grounded when things go well. Mama loves you if you fail or succeed; mama is rooting for you to make it in life at your worst or at your best.

A mother is a treasure trove of love and sacrifice, a mom is very important in the lives of her children. Mama is a power piece in the lives of her children; a mom can make or

break them. Mama can hurt you or mama can help you too, moms make the world of her children more bearable. Moms also make the terror of this world less terrible, if you are a mom your children are looking to you for all things first.

If you have a mom, love her as best as you can, because your mama is the reason that you are here on this earth. Therefore, call, hug, and or visit your mothers; you only get one mama. Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers in the world today.

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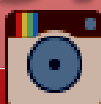
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