

TWO ROADS



Viewpoints

Volume 25



IDOC's Social Justice Program
Part 1

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

To All Readers

Our monthly newsletter 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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TWO ROADS
THE VIEWPOINTS ISSUE

Part 1 of 3

TWO ROADS

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Editors Take

Before I get into this, I would like to thank senior editor Keith ‘Aquil’ Talley, who guided me to talk about people’s point of view. A lot of times we are good with coming up with topics for TWO ROADS so that the people know what to speak on; however, we understand that everyone doesn’t have the words to speak about when it comes to a main topic.

So, by having this, it allows YOU to be YOU; the ability to speak your mind on the things that have puzzled you, made you comfortable (or uncomfortable), or you just needed to voice your opinion. As Ms. Penny Rowan stated, this is a “hodgepodge” of topics all at once. One thing that you will see is that many of you that had missed the deadlines to our past few issues, your piece is here! TWO ROADS tries not to keep a piece out, if we can help it.

With that said, we would like to thank ALL of the contributors to this issue. There was an enormous turnout, one that will make this OUR BIGGEST ISSUE EVER! So big, there were **over 60 submissions**, so this will be 3 issues, one a week for the next three weeks, so that you can enjoy everyone’s submissions. No, we are not becoming the next Kewanee Horizons (shout out to the goose!!), but please know that we love our writers and all the hard work and truth that they put into their craft; it is only right that we show their talent, so that it encourages others to do the same. Hopefully next year, we will have to have a 5-part series on *Viewpoints*.



I would like to also speak on the bigger issues that are the focus of October. This month is Domestic Violence Awareness and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is a time to share the stories of survival, may it be from violence or cancer. I would like to thank the editors from Logan for taking on the task of getting submissions from Logan and Decatur, under short notice mind you, to get the women to share their Views.

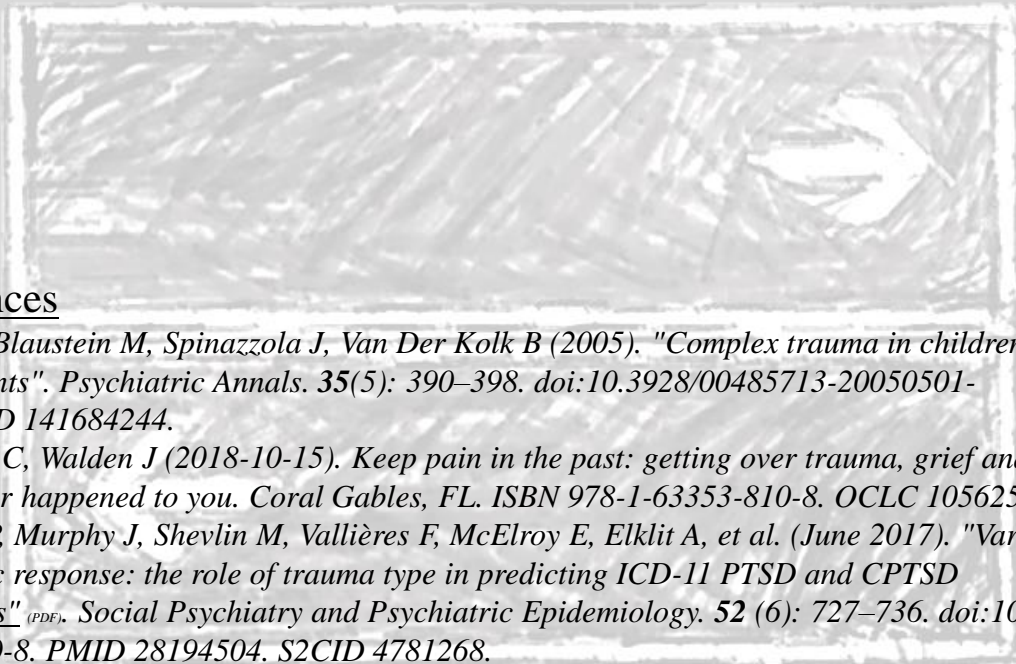
According to Wikipedia®, **Complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD; also known as complex trauma disorder)** ^[1] is a psychological disorder that can develop in response to prolonged, repeated experience of interpersonal trauma in a context in which the individual feels they have little or no chance of escape. ^[2] C-PTSD relates to the trauma model of mental disorders and is associated with chronic sexual, psychological, and physical abuse or neglect, chronic intimate partner violence, prolonged workplace or school bullying, victims of kidnapping and hostage situations, victims of slavery and human trafficking or prisoners of war. ^{[3][4]}

Many men and women are put in these predicaments, and this leads to a myriad of problems. What you will learn is that not all domestic violence cases happen from intimate relationships and that it can become a much, much more slippery slope. Please read “Untitled” by Tameka Newson as well as “Domestic Violence” by Lakeshia Baker as they focus on the depths of C-PTSD, not to mention how they will inspire you to overcome! Many are not fully aware of the things they need to do nor what to look for. My thought is: if the goal is reduced recidivism, what are we doing to get you the best help? What steps are we taking to be put in the best position for change?



Our goal is to have a *special “Re-Entry Fears” issue* to be out in Mid-December. The goal is to have the assistance of the people who help with the transition: field service, clinical service, and the ones who hold forums, to provide information that will be viable for those who are falling into this category. If someone would like to submit their fears, please send it to us or have it scanned and email to doc.tworoads@illinois.gov. **Submission is not required**, but we hope that you are able to get vital information to take with you.

I hope that you enjoy our Viewpoints.



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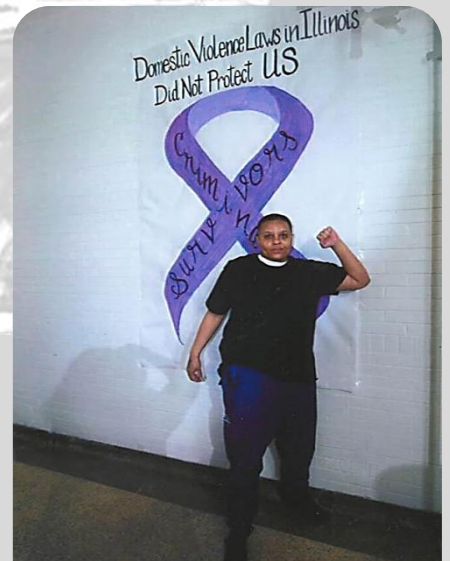


WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Hi, my name is Lakisha Woodard. For the time being, I live at Logan Correctional Center. I want to thank everyone that made it possible to select me to become an editorial board member for TWO ROADS. I am very honored. I have been reading TWO ROADS for a while now and I wanted to become an active member by submitting my stories.

To me, TWO ROADS has a big heart; because they let their writers express their truths. The many stories I read in these issues have driven me to submit my own, in hopes of reaching others. I cry, laugh, smile and heal through TWO ROADS stories. Here at Logan, I attend horticulture through Lake Land College. I received my counselor certificate. I have completed so many groups and I am a member of the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)* Committee for the Illinois Department of Corrections.

I am on a rise, daily rebuilding myself. I see very differently now, all because I want to better myself. I pray that my leadership role will help others overcome challenging experiences, as well as use their voice in a much need way. I wish nothing more than to help build others up. May this letter sow on good soil and harvest and flourish others as well as myself.



LaKisha Woodard
TWO ROADS Newest Associate
Editor

Guest Contributor

Rachel Tucker

Disclaimer: Some of you will know this story. Many of you may not. I can only express my view of it. This is as raw as it gets for me. Please read to the end.

Despite my mom being married to my dad, I was raised by a single mother. I had a wonderful childhood because of my mother, my siblings, my cousins, my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, and those others that made a choice to be a part of my life. My dad was not one of those people. He made a choice of not being a part of my life. Hell, this was probably why I had a good childhood. The person I call “Dad” was not my dad by definition. Any male can be father, but it takes a special, actively involved, male to be a dad. Despite the clear incorrect use of dad, I STILL have always called Vencon E. Davis my dad. When I was younger, people would tell me what a great guy dad was. That conversation pissed me off so much because how dare people tell me what a great person dad he was when he was nothing but a “sh***y dad”. As I got older, I came to realize that the person I knew was a drug addict. The person was different from the person that his childhood/young adult family and friends knew.



Rachel has worked in the business legal profession for nearly 20 years. She is a Rotary International member and staunch advocate of justice-impacted hiring. She is married and a mother of two teenage boys.

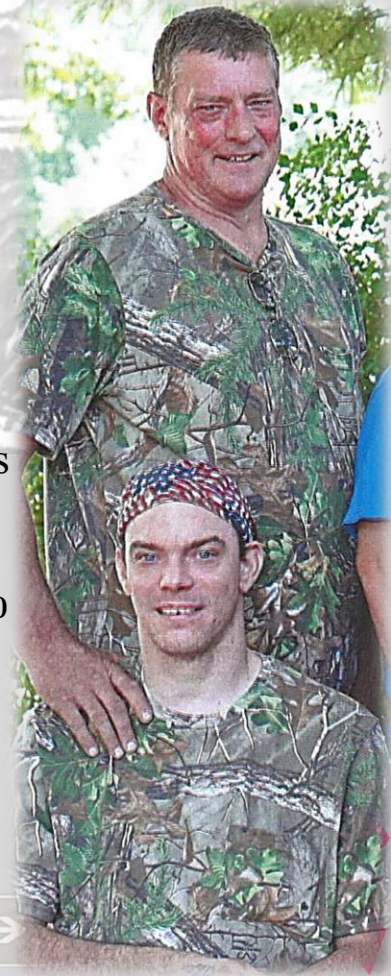


After grandma Arlean's death in 2005, family dinners and holiday get togethers went away, so the little interaction I had with dad became less. I was polite; I said hello and had acquaintance conversations with him whenever I saw him. My brother Chris' relationship with dad was completely opposite. They were each other's family. They were each other's person. They were each other's "safe place", even in their toxic drug-infested world.

September 30th, 2013, my dad was arrested and federally charged for his involvement in a meth manufacturing and distribution ring. My dad said his goodbyes to Chris knowing that he was going away for a while this time. Chris knew this was serious this time, and subsequently he died November 20, 2013 (less than 2 months). My dad wasn't allowed to attend the services or have his goodbyes with Chris due to his incarceration.

I stopped in and helped dad. I did this and continued this in honor of and for my brother. I was there for the federal sentencing of 10 years. I was there for the communication and his goodbyes to his drug family. I was there to pick up his belonging each time he moved facilities. I was there for the phone calls and e-mails and his raw emotions.

I was there for his body retaliation (medically) for the 40 years of drug and alcohol abuse. I was there for the death talks. I was there to help him in whatever way he needed. Most importantly, *I was there to witness his return to the Vencon E. Davis that everyone told me about.*



January 19th, 2022, dad was immediately released early due to the First Step Act, implemented by President Donald Trump. I wasn't prepared and he wasn't prepared. Excuse my language, but "cluster f**k s#!tshow" doesn't even begin to describe those 96 hours. I stayed out of a mental hospital and was able to get dad situated only because of my cousin Chelsey (love you Chels). Dad was at *Marigold Nursing Home* and was adjusting and settling in nicely. One week later, dad signed on with *Compassus Hospice*. This might be one of the best decisions he has ever made in his life!

He signed on with the hope that they would help him with some resources and items and give him some extra care and companionship and hopefully he wouldn't get kicked out the program in 6 months because it wasn't his time yet. Instead, what he received was amazing care, incredible companionship, forgiveness, nonjudgmental love, and beyond this world, comfort! The words thank you to *Compassus Hospice* of Galesburg is not enough to express my gratitude and appreciation. On Tuesday, dad became very upset and distraught about some things including his pain and increased breathing problems.

By nightfall, he sounded good and told me he was okay. I assured him that we would get some things addressed. The next day, (Wednesday) he took a turn for the worse, and just like that, he went from looking like he had 6 months to live, to being in the active stages of death.



By Thursday afternoon, we knew he was in terminal agitation. I spent that evening with him and was able to have some good conversation and get some things aired out for myself, as well as for others. Friday morning, I knew we were within a week, but after seeing Chris later that day, I learned it would be a matter of days. I went to sleep in my own bed Friday night knowing dad was comfortable and resting. The nurse woke me up just a few hours later telling me that his breathing had changed. I was by his side by 2:15 am.

My dad, Vencon E. Davis, died at 12:05 pm on Saturday, February 26, 2022, as a free man with dignity and forgiveness. I am blessed and thankful that I was able to experience a small slice of heaven with him and experience these last few days and be present for his transitioning from this world to the next. I am confident that Chris rang the doorbell and met dad with open arms. I am confident that Chris and dad were up to no good. I am confident that Grandma Arlean has her hands full again, and I am also confident, that Grandma Arlean has already had to scold them.

Per dad's wishes, there was not to be any visitation or services of any kind, and he wanted his body donated to science. We will have a memorial service at a later date after I receive his ashes back. Dad's last verbal words were said in response to him being told to be good. He said, "I am always good, even when I am bad, because I am good at it."





Presents

Parenting From Prison is tough, and those in-person visits, phone calls and video visits only go so far. We are now accepting submissions from the men and women in custody on the struggles as well as the tips and tricks of PARENTING FROM PRISON, Volume 26.

Submissions are also accepted from the outside, due to the impact of having (or not having) that extra parent around. In addition, we'd like to educate our readers about the parenting battles Correctional Officers face daily due to spending 8 to 16 hours away from their kid(s). Let's come together as a community and figure this out!

Without staff support:

Mail submission, photo to:

TWO ROADS EDITOR

2021 Kentville Road

Kewanee IL 61443

Outsiders and Individuals-In-Custody

(WITH Staff Support)

**Please send your submission and
scanned photo to**

doc.tworoads@illinois.gov

ATTN: TWO ROADS PARENTING™



Deadline: November 10, 2023

idoc.illinois.gov/news/tworoadse-zine.html

Better Youth Programs for the Urban Communities

Dmarlo Bryant - Stateville

“There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth, not going all the way and not starting.”(Buddha)

Youth programs today aren't that different from the many youth programs that I had the opportunity to frequent during my elementary and adolescent years. Most of the youth within the urban poor community rely on places such as the Girls and Boys Club, Y.M.C.A. also The Christian Fellowship groups – all searching for a place to be, other than a home divided by domestic violence, or gang ruled and drug infested streets.

Which is still a positive route compared to the negatives. What I am getting at is most of the youth programs in urban poor communities have yet to apply with in the programs any teaching nor learning that can assist them through their struggles in general. Most of the time it's all video games, basketball, lounging around, eating snacks or computer access. (Just check the social media accounts).

Think about it, when those programs have become boring or some outgrow them , or at worst the doors close for good, where do our youth end up? For the most part they will end up right back in that broken house or gang ruled



drug infested street – the very place they tried to escape. I have been impacted by this time and time again.

When school failed to give me the nourishment academically, and my home failed me as well. I turned to youth programs; they were a safe place for some time until I lost interest.

The positive energy was drained out of me due to the very same routine day in day out , nothing more nothing better came, no more nourishment of any kind. I began to feeling safer in the streets, I got comfortable living life on the edge. That way of life became an addiction.

I was about 24 years of age , that was when I began to open my eyes, I had purchased a DVD collection of 4 volumes titled *Hidden Colors* . I was immediately intrigued, I began to seek more knowledge on my own , knowledge of self- past and present. This was and still is my outlet, my escape, my joy, my pleasure it has brought me my yellow brick road , and I am on a continuous journey, healing as I go along.

Better youth programs within the poor urban community that provides services such as Mental health, Life skills, and self- directed tutorials for its youth can be a game changer. This method will promote moral conscience helping communities to raise our youth as a family. My idea is to use the youth center as a reading lounge for the youth and their families, starting with self- help literature and seeking solutions to make it fun for our youth...



“Endless our struggle must seem to those whose vision reaches only to the end of today. The present is where we get lost if we forget our past and have no vision of the future. A healer needs to see beyond the present and tomorrow. He needs to see years and decades ahead, because healers work for results so firm, they may not be wholly visible till centuries have flowed into millennia.”

Those willing to do the necessary work they are the healers of our people .

(Ayi Kwe Armah)
Dmarlo Q. Bryant



'To' Versus 'For'

Be The For

Who wants to be on either side of an injustice? Many of us who have gone through the appeals process and argued the errors which occurred in the lower courts are familiar with the term 'harmless error'. This so-called *harmless* error could range from a judge falling asleep during trial, a witness' testimony contradicting the evidence or another witness' statement, to your own attorney failing to show the jury relevant evidence proving your innocence. For those who were/are affected by years and possibly decades of incarceration (and honestly a lifetime), the 'error' is far from harmless. But the courts and our cases are not the focal point of this writing. Being the conductor or receiver of an injustice, is. We have all been both at some point during our lifetime.

After recalling a time or times you were either, ask yourself, are you at peace on either end of the injustice? If you are, this article is not for you. If not, I offer you a concept to protect yourself and evolve into a better version of yourself. Growing up, one of the weapons other kids used to use against me was my thick glasses. I was easily the butt of this & that joke in front of our peers or total strangers. I used to HATE when they'd do that to me. Sometimes I'd laugh it off, other times, I'd swing.



Hafis Haqq

New Senior Editor
TWO ROADS



Then, something happened inside me when I was around thirteen or fourteen years old; that was about the age we started dating. That was around the time other guys really started using my thick glasses as a weapon against me. That was also around the time I stopped allowing them to do that to me.

I didn't demand they stop; I didn't fight them, either. I *decided* my glasses were no longer weapons. It was a decision people immediately recognized through my responses. If the joke was good, it was good! But I didn't fake laugh, I didn't shout don't, nor did I become negative. I simply kept it moving. I eventually matured enough to realize that, through my thick ass glasses, I gained confidence, fortitude, and compassion towards others, especially those who have super abilities (so-called disabilities).

How many of us have experienced seemingly negative things happen in our lives, and by the Grace of Him, the times we've perceived the positives in them, we've received an innumerable number of positives in return. As for those who have done things to us, leave those issues between them and the True Authority.

Let's embrace this idea... that the only true evidence of manhood (and womanhood) are the actions we display to further & enhance our well-being as a whole, that it is our duty as men & women, to strive each and every day to leave that day far better than we left the one before it, to do as much as we can for others, and, when among a group, actively strive to set the best example for the whole, speak out for what is right, and say what's best or remain silent. Let's intentionally keep company with those whose natures seem to be geared towards doing things for others, i.e., being Servants in the



correct sense of the word. Let us, when finding ourselves in negative company, be the example for what is better.

Notice how this began with me pointing out things done to(2) me and ends with me giving examples we can practice to serve and be guides for(4) others. That's the 2 vs. 4. Let's be the greater number!

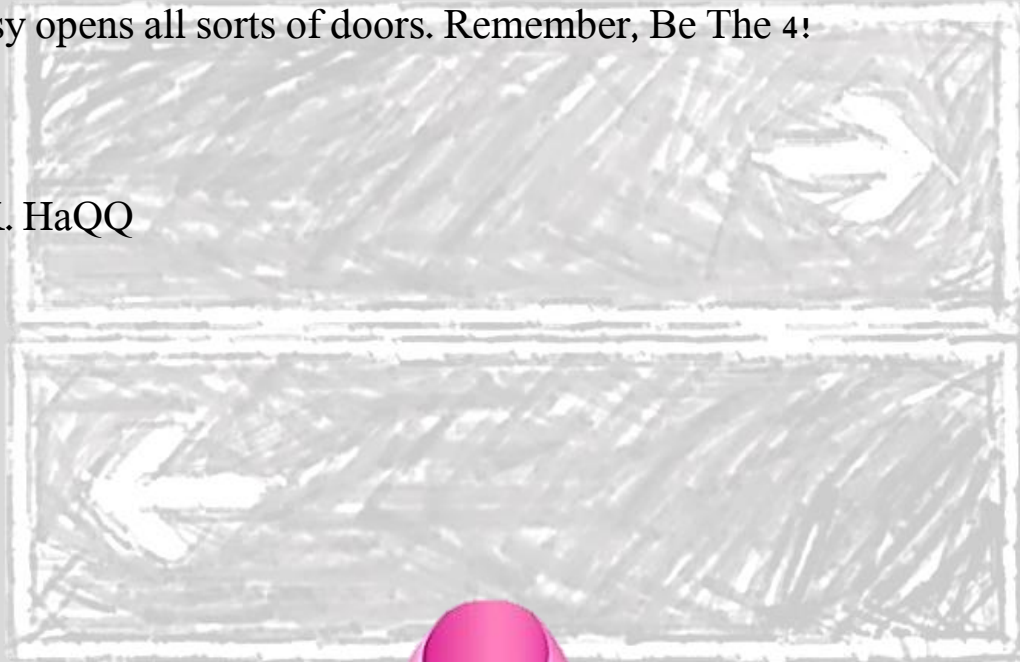
*Curbing Your Ego & Pride

Here's one of the best tools to curb your ego & pride...

Find someone you don't get along with or who may annoy you (even if they don't know it), and do something for them, even if it's simply saying hello.

Courtesy opens all sorts of doors. Remember, Be The 4!

Hafis K. HaQQ



OCT  **BER**
BREAST CANCER **AWARENESS MONTH**



Testing Positive For Success

Arnold Joyner - Dixon

I keep testing positive for success, before this I was one big mess. For some strange reason, I just couldn't stay at my best. Although, these past 16 years I've passed all my test. The 1st thing I did was beg god for forgiveness. God's voice spoke to me while I lied dormant in that Cook County jail's nest. I acknowledge god's voice and vowed to remain at my best.

The second thing I did was separate myself from any and all negativity. How else could we focus on our best? I had a heart and soul of emptiness. I told you I was a mess. I rebuilt my morals, redefine my character, and started studying for my test. I learned the basic instructions before leaving earth wasn't a guess. (The bible) moreover, I became one of god's guests. Now I'm very much obligated to fulfill god's request.

I'm wishing some of y'all help me transition my testing positive for success as a permanent concept. We all know it's on hell of a process to steady the mind and heart away from negativity, all that violent anger can digress. If one wholeheartedly wants to improve to be a success. If one understood reality, they would also know what it takes reinvest time, money, and effort within our communities for success.



Constantly shooting guns at one another and wetting their heads and chest, will only keep us in a violent generational poverty mess. Constantly selling drugs for a hustle and using drugs daily won't bring us success. You will go to jail and prison eventually or die before your time at best.

This experiment has also been through their test, in the north, south, east, and the west. I have personally seen generations destroyed from this same mess. Plus, from a lack of using their intelligence. In jails and prisons, we are worth 40,000 dollars plus out there at your best. However, a lot of us have never tried testing positive for success. Mainly because we haven't given ourselves a legit legal chance at progress. We listen to those life threatening freedom taking concepts some damn idiot express.

Well now, the penitentiaries and graveyards are full of those kind who constantly fail at their test. Try testing positive for success and see if you too can remain at your best. We live in a country the whole world calls the best plus it's been a trillion dollars success for testing positive.

TR Note: *Mr Joyner, we know we skipped a paragraph, but your message was too good to let one issue pull the whole work. We hope you understand!*



Let's Talk

Children

- Children who are exposed to domestic violence, typically against their mothers are more than likely to be perpetrators or victims themselves....for a child, domestic violence lasts a LIFETIME.

Relationships

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men experience intimate partner violence.

Domestic Violence is not simply human nature, it is a learned behavior. People who choose to abuse have learned that violence is an appropriate way to control others from:

- Family Experiences
- Media and
- Societal Acceptance



Brought to you by:

and the



Taking A Vow

Being blessed with this opportunity to speak my truth is humbling. Domestic abuse is viewed as normal to many. Some of us become the victim and others become the abuser.

I became the abuser, believe it or not. Please don't be misled by the innocent face and quiet demeanor. My father was abusive towards my mother and stepmother. I vowed to never become that woman, not realizing I'd become my dad.

Having brothers and two stepbrothers is a blessing and a curse. They set the bar for the type of partner I wanted, rather it be man or woman. The blessing is neither one of my brothers were physically abusive, however, we were all verbally abusive. We could say some gut-wrenching things. These were things that we learned from our father.

Nobody was born an abuser or a victim. These are *learned behaviors*, which makes us a product of our environment. Although I was not a victim of abuse, I was victimizing others. I had a control issue. I felt if I was in control, nothing could go wrong. I had no tolerance for disrespect or



Evelyn Jackson

TWO ROADS Newest
Associate Editor



dialogic people, I could disrespect others. My temper was out of control when I was angry. I was like a tornado—destroying anything in my path. I had no remorse for my actions.

When I became serious in Islam, all these evil ways were revealed to me. I began to learn who I am as a woman. I faced all my demons. I'm now attuned with my compassionate heart. I have *empathy* for all those that have been victims and are now survivors. I'm grateful that my father, brothers are no longer abusers of any kind.

Due to all these actions being learned behavior, it takes a very strong-willed person to notice it and make a lifestyle change. I stand firm, 10 toes to the ground as a changed woman. A positive example for others to learn from through my pain and struggles. Like T.I. said “the old me is dead and gone.”

Blessings to my Muslim brother for blessing me with the name “Qiyamah” that means “resurrection”. I have risen through all that I have endured. I pray I reach those that have endured some hard situations. I encourage anyone that is still involved in unhealthy relationships. Learn to love yourself and say **enough is enough!** Nobody deserves to be abused physically, sexually, mentally or emotionally. I've met all too many women suffering the consequences due to a domestic situation. My heart hurts for them. Please ask for help.

“Loosen the knot of my tongue, so that they may understand my speech...”

(Ta-Ha, 20:27-28) *Quran*



You're Not Alone

Leo Cardez - Dixon

I read an article in *Men's Health* that really struck me. It wasn't specifically written for the inmate community, but it should have been. In the article, Dr. Gregory Scott Brown, a psychiatrist, is discussing called *Adjustment Disorder (AD)*.

In layman terms, AD is a disproportionate reaction to something stressful in one's life. AD makes one feel worried, hopeless, or a general sense of unease. Sounds familiar? Post COVID individuals in custody issues are pretty similar across the United States; anger over job/program/assignment loss, despair about the difficulty in staying in touch with loved ones, sensitivity over race relations and in general malaise over extended lockdowns brought about by anything from quarantine protocols to staff shortages. In time, all these tiny attacks to your routine and well-being add up.

In prison, aggressions are a part of life. The mini hostile attacks can come from anywhere—from the c/o's, nurses, counselors, teachers and fellow individuals—based on everything from general dislike to race (mostly race). For the most part, you learn how to let them slide off your back, but combine these micro aggressions with COVID-19 related stressors and now we could be looking at mental, emotional be looking at mental,



emotional and physical stress. Research shows that those who feel they are being treated differently because of their race often feel stress (duh) and that can lead to problems in the future, both seen and unseen, like feeling isolated and angry.

In prison, we are told to be tough and that if we are disrespected, the correct response is anger, if necessary, violence. The rules of the facility, though, tell us that such a response can get us in serious trouble. or even more time. So, we push down our feelings and let the indignities build up on the inside of us. What's worse is we are not getting or seeking help. A 2018 study estimates that 56%-74% of Black men in America who have experienced trauma (prison life) “may have an unmet need for mental health services.” (Motley and Banks, 2018) I would argue that those percentages are much higher today and for the individual community. (I mean, it's just common sense.)

Take Mayor (not his real name, but something we call him because he has politician's charm and everyone knows him in the camp), a respected ex-gang chief with long braids and the body of someone who has recently lost a lot of weight. He is well liked on both sides of the fence. He knows all the right people and can make things happen. We'd worked together in the prison library, where we'd become something as close to friends as you can have in prison, but over the past few years something changed in him.

He became short with people—and a cell slug in rare moments we were allowed some social connectivity. I tried to talk to him about it. “I can't sleep at night. I'm scared sh**less over this bug because of my asthma. And



something is off in my brain. I had to read a page in a book three times before I finally understood. That's not like me, and I'm nervous", Mayor explained.

He told me he felt like he was finally losing it and, worse, taking it out on innocent bystanders. He told me a story about how he blew up on his celly for finding hair in the sink—turned out to be his own. Per Dr. Brown's article, it seemed he had all the symptoms of AD, but he didn't have the tools necessary to work through them.

According to the article, AD can come on strong and fast, but it doesn't typically last that long, and we can usually pinpoint how it started, like divorce, death, or job loss. (Other mental health issues can keep you "keyed up" for months with no idea why.) It was clear that COVID-19 related social side effects had messed with Mayor's ability to be his best.

Now that we know that Adjustment Disorder is possible, maybe even common, when our life is temporarily upended (like going to prison or being stuck in prison during a pandemic), we can start to recognize the effects in our lives. Listen, in prison or not, life will throw us some curveballs or even hit us with a couple of pitches (to complete the cliché); therefore, it would benefit all of us to know how to deal with them.

Based on Dr. Brown's suggestions in the article, I would recommend:

1. Reconnect with the world, in any way possible. Call friends and family (video visit, in-person visit, letter, text messages, whatever), get a workout



buddy or chess nemesis—the point is to spend time with others in a space where you are focused on something other than your problems. Find something to get excited about, and then share it with others in your life.

2. Re-engage in life by creating new goals and hopes to aspire toward, then create a plan to achieve them—even in this strained and constrained new environment. Sure, everything you have planned may have been blown to bits by COVID (and the additional two years of nothing). Focus on what you can do now. Get creative! We individuals are nothing if not inventive. (Mayor recently started to paint and take a correspondence paralegal course.) The goal is to do something that can help fight against feelings of unhappiness, loneliness, and stagnation.
3. Get help. Talk to a counselor, nurse—someone. They may recommend yoga or meditation, or maybe even temporarily need medication (to help you sleep, for example). The point is, to do something before you fall into a death spiral you can't pull yourself out of.

The reality is we are constantly being asked to make hard life adjustments while serving any lengthy prison sentence and, whether we know it or not, we are in a constant state of flux, dealing with a litany of unknowns that are out of our control. **That's just prison.** The Mayor knows that now, and he has started to make some changes to work on his feelings. I don't know if we'll ever get back our jobs, I don't know if one or both of us will be transferred soon, but I do know that whatever happens, we'll know how to recognize AD and take steps towards addressing it. and that's a good start.

This article was originally published in the Prison Health News, Issue 53 (Summer 2023)



Spreading Love

Yusef Kareem Brown – Pinckneyville

Dear friends on the outside, how are y'all? Praises be to God for another great writing journey. To the readers. God bless you all. I may not have much to offer you all, so I promise to do my part in writing y'all monthly. The State gives you \$13 a month (for no job) and three envelopes.

We all have a testimony to tell, so please be strong because we all face challenging circumstances. Mine has been grief, pain, depression and suffering from being away from home—16 years and counting. I made many selfish choices when I was young.

Coming to prison at 17 caused me so much unknown trauma and pain over the years. As a youth, I had no care or so I thought. The few arrests were a cakewalk. No excuses. I have no one to blame. I became a product of my poor environment.

Looking for too many negative opportunities, led me to prison today. One bad position after another, you know. Today, I see much more clearly I'm a work in progress. Be on the lookout for my mail always (*TR Note: We'll hold you to this! lol*). **Thank you for giving us the opportunity and platform to share to the world.** I sincerely thank you all. You helped make a better me person.

P.S. Brothers and Sisters, be strong and continue to work with love!



The Voice Within

Tammy Englerth - Logan

I have been incarcerated almost 18 years. The first part of my incarceration was the roughest, dealing with everything. I felt like I had no purpose. That wasn't true. We all have a purpose; it's just finding out what it is and how to utilize it.

Our prison system is so full of negativity, and I realized that it's our choice to make our time positive. Therefore, I decided to make the best of every single situation. I have been a peer educator for over 7 years as well as teaching the civics re-entry class. I've gotten my GED, taken college classes and now I'm proudly glad to say that I'm very close to getting my Associates degree.

Again, it is our choice on how we utilized our time. We shouldn't have to have "incentives" to better ourselves. I'm determined to help others and become a domestic violence advocate. I wake up every day thinking *what I can do to help others?* I write poetry and have published poems. I advocate for victims through the mail. I can't change what happened, but I can use my time to help others, so the same thing won't happen again.

Our mistakes don't define us. They are our "stepping stones" to our brighter future, I hear others say IDOC doesn't offer enough, but it is up to us to make the best of what we do have and help bring more!



We have to want to change in order to be our better self.

We all need to encourage others and make others smile. After all, it takes way more muscles to frown than it does to smile. No matter if someone is 75%-85% or 100%, there is always hope. I'm at 100% and now I'm excited to say that I'm leaving for work release any day. I can only say that you should use your time to better yourself and help others do the same. Just because you're locked up, your voice matters.



Truth So Raw: My Point of View

Timothy Youngblood - Lawrence

I'm gonna take this opportunity to use this Two Roads platform to advocate for myself and for those individuals in custody who do not have a voice or point of view, or who chose to remain silent. Because they are for whatever reason too afraid to speak out against the unjust, mandatory lifetime sex offender, murder, crimes against juveniles and whatever kind of registration requirements forced on them upon their release from prison.

Everyone has a belief system, a perception of reality, that is influenced by past experiences – a point of view that has developed over time. Our current experience is filtered through our past experience; this means that two people may react in totally different ways to the same stimulus. It depends on their perception; their point of view is expressed in attitudes. Many in society and in the Government have the point of view and the attitude that, any individual in custody who has committed a certain kind of crime needs to be branded as irredeemable and placed on a mandatory lifetime registry. Here is my point of view and attitude on the subject of, mandatory lifetime registries and the individuals in custody in Illinois and around the world for that matter.

The mandatory registration stands in direct opposition to the goals of the adult prison system, which is supposed to be primarily designed to provide guided rehabilitation and restoration for adults who make mistakes and



stumble. Nobody knows as much as they would like to make you think they do about crime and punishment; we are all stumbling – we go through many phases of understanding who we are. Thus, mandatory lifetime sex offender, murder, crimes against juvenile’s registration from my point of view constitutes cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the eighth amendment. The Legislature cannot under the eighth amendment, mandate a lifetime sex offender, murder, crimes against juvenile’s registration without providing a mechanism for individualized assessment or any opportunity to de-register upon showing of rehabilitation.

I have depth; a stereotype does not work for me. Decades of individuals in custody that I personally met also have depth and a stereotype does not work for them either. No one is very evil or perfectly good; the bad guy loves his cat (and may even save the cat), while the good guy kicks his dog once in a while.

In the end, we are not here to fit in, to be well adjusted acceptable to all or to make society or the government proud of us; we are here to be ourselves with all the flaws and shortcomings mistakes and stumbles of which we are all so aware.

We do not need a lifetime registry to remind us of our pain and failure especially after we have done our time in prison and paid our debt to society. We need to be free from our past mistakes we need a clean slate; a clean slate will help us function properly in the free society.

Thank you for allowing me to express my point of view!!!!!!!!!!

Timothy Youngblood



TWO ROADS

Presents

The TIME Issue

We will look into the inner workings of the women and men in custody, as they explore the mental and physical anguish of doing time in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

We are asking those who have served more than 25 years for the men and more than 15 years for the women to write and share their stories of hope, change, ambition and progress. We feel it merits understanding, because this idea of a moment in one's life changing one's direction and purpose in life is integral to the rehabilitation process. Who knows, you might change someone's life.

Without staff support:

Mail submission, photo to:

TWO ROADS EDITOR

2021 Kentville Road

Kewanee IL 61443

Outsiders and Individuals-In-Custody

(WITH Staff Support)

Please send your submission and

scanned photo to

doc.tworoads@illinois.gov

"ATTN: TIME 2024"

Deadline: January 19, 2024

← TWO ROADS **Part I** VOLUME 25 →



Q and A With Kira Kyle

Why is it important that men and women (in custody or released) seek out the information that DEFY Venture has to provide?

Coming home can make you realize that you might not get the job that you want; you may be facing barriers that prevent you from getting the job you wanna get. So, an opportunity to start your own business may be a great opportunity you discover coming home.

We do have a lot of people that come home that say, “I doing this job, I’m doing something but I’m not making the money I want to make. The work that I really want to do, I have barriers to doing that, so, how can I maybe start my own business. The urgency can be serious, because you want to come home and make money quick, and not be tempted to make that money illegally, so DEFY shows you what skills you need to become successful.

What else?

Success and business is not just rooted in business concepts, it is rooted in personal development and not giving up when you face challenges. Everything in DEFY is not just based on entrepreneurship, but helping you pivot when you need to succeed whether that’s personally, professionally (in your own company, working for yourself). We’re teaching you to think outside the box.



What led you to become DEFY's Prison Program Manager?

I had an epiphany. Before DEFY, I didn't go on about my day thinking about people who were incarcerated. Back in 2017, I would wake up in the morning and think of the people incarcerated and the challenges that they faced. I worked at a radio station where they cared (about individuals) and they held a concert there – we played music there to show that we see you and you matter. I sat in the room during this meeting, thinking, and “Is this safe to do? Have you really thought this through?” I was disconnected from them.

Do you think that level of discomfort came from movies, media, etc.?

Yeah, it came from two, maybe three things. Media whatever that is, because prisons are not accurately depicted, because it doesn't make for a good movie, I guess. My vision of what prison was based on *Shawshank Redemption*, so it didn't seem like a safe ideal of going to a prison. Although it was a powerful story, it didn't teach me what people are like...people are people.



When you were there at the prison, how was it?

It changed me. I looked into their eyes, and I saw myself. The decisions we had made, the battles we had faced in our lives, felt so similar in that moment. I no longer wondered if we were welcome there. I wondered why we hadn't come sooner. I could recall the places in my life to where I could have ended up there. Some of the people who know me would think that is a stretch, but I knew it wasn't a stretch.



The question I heard all day was “will you send this photo to my mom?” I couldn’t fathom the depth of the need that their want was to share this moment with their mom. Not a copy for themselves, but just someone else.

What are some of the questions or remarks you receive from others you know that are not as sensitive with the prison system? The “naysayers?”

What I do hear that it is a very similar experience as I had. Not everyone, but those that do go back to their communities and spread the word. Part of this journey for me is not just teaching the class and just help empower the people, but to educate the community, and that is an important part of this work. We need everyone to work on this together and we need them to understand why it matters.

What is the future for Kira?

(Laughs) Um, first off, I hope to keep getting better at what I do. Teaching is really an amazing opportunity, and you can only teach what you know. So, as I continue to learn, not only from the people in my class, who can help me better understand the challenges that they face and the needs that they have, but I also learn from the community, who could help me better understand what would help motivate them to get involved. Learn from other people across the country, to learn from the Illinois Department of Corrections, what they need. All of this matters. We have to all work together. I want to connect with the right people who care. Caring is a big thing. Caring...deeply! My vision is to take DEFY to places where it doesn’t currently exist. I want to build opportunities for people.

Kira currently teaches DEFY at Kewanee and assists with Dave Lingle at DEFY Pontiac and hear the full Q & A in our soon to be issue “TWO ROADS: Inside/Outside Podcast” Volume 1, on the GTL Tablets



Relationships

Let's talk about **relationships**. We think that all people think the same in relationships but that can't be further from the truth. We all have our own viewpoint on how a successful relationship should be and those beliefs are anchored on the things we saw and experienced as kid. these moments shaped our views on life, which includes how we choose our friends, the people we decide to share our bed with, and ultimately the person, we fall in love with.

I am not the expert on this matter, but I do have some experience, though I have been unsuccessful in my attempts at love, I have found that we're all just trying to navigate a very complex entity that is call a relationship. The key in any relationship I think is **trust**, now I know some of you may not agree but think about it for just a second (go ahead I'll wait) how can you truly say you love someone, or should I say how can you say you're in love with someone, if you haven't given yourself over to them completely?

Trust is one of the pillars that holds the foundation in place, furthermore without trust there is no love. I want you to think back on any relationship you think you gave yourself over completely to someone can you honestly say that you have been in that type of relationship. My goal is not to discourage you from having a meaningful relationship; my goal is to get you to understand



Carlos McDougal
TWO ROADS
House Poet



that as individuals, we are prone to do what we are taught. If you have never seen a successful relationship wait, we cannot say what a successful relationship is because everyone's opinion on the matter will always be different. The fact is what you see as successful is not what I see, and what I see as successful will not be what the next person sees.

The life in which we choose to live we will ultimately have to live with our choice, what we cannot do is base our decision on how the world defines what a relationship is. Which brings me to this next question, what are you willing to deal with in a relationship? Now that question will spark many answers but before you jump out there with the first thing that comes to mind, think about what you are willing to accept? If your partner cheats, is it a one and done? What if you find out that she is stealing? What is your deal breaker? How will you react to your spouse confessing to you his or her transgressions, whatever that may be? Are you willing to overlook this and continue on in the relationship? I cannot tell you how to define what you have but when it comes to me, there are things that I will not tolerate one being; if you cheat, we are done.

Two: If you do not have any ambition, how can I grow if you are not willing to grow with me? The thing is we are trusting you with something so sacred that if even remotely bruised things can be fatal. The thought of giving someone your heart has to be the scariest thing in the world and anyone who does not agree is a complete liar.



Why do we allow our self to feel anything if we don't believe in love? How can someone hurt you if you feel nothing? The fact that we're hurt by someone's actions shows that you do feel but as men, we try not to show that side of us out of fear that if we allow ourselves to be vulnerable we can or would get hurt, which is why as boys we are taught to detach ourselves from our emotions which in turn causes us to be insensitive lovers and create a scorned woman who now thinks that all men are like the last one even if he hasn't shown or done anything to make her belief true.

Her thought is that it's only a matter of time before he proves her right, furthermore the slightest infraction and you've proven to her what she wholeheartedly believes: that all men are womanizers and there's no good men out there. What we need to understand as people, is that despite the hesitance, we must first learn ourselves before we allow someone else into our lives. It would be a great disservice to you and the one you're trying to have a relationship with. I know that if we don't try, we will be alone and miserable but don't just get into a relationship just for companionship. That right there will almost always end in disaster, and we don't want that.

I also want to touch on trying to change someone that you know doesn't want to change. If you are in or have been in a relationship that you tried to change your partner and it ended badly, I ask you why? Why would you try to change them when who they are is what attracted you to them in the first place. I know we as humans have to grow but growth does not mean they change because someone made you feel uncomfortable about something you already accepted about your mate. What that means is that person either gets over whatever it is or you dismiss them immediately because if they're



trying to tell you how your relationship should be then they don't trust that you are happy and that you don't know what you need to be happy. We can not go around telling someone else how to be in a healthy relationship if we haven't had a healthy relationship, now if you want to tell me what not to do in a relationship I may listen.

Let's talk about **communication**. Something we don't do well if we're being honest with ourselves, how can we even begin to know what's on our partner's mind if they don't communicate? This is something both men and women do repeatedly and act as if the other is somehow supposed to know what they're thinking. What is the best way to communicate that you feel lonely? Or that you feel like you're not being appreciated? How do you tell the one you love that the love has somehow diminished in your heart for them? Which brings me to our next pillar which is honesty.

Honesty is a scary one, we all know that sometimes we can't be completely honest with our partner and to be frank we as men say we want honesty but if your girl truly tells you that truth about how she feels can you really take what she says and digest it and accept it as constructive criticism or will her honesty be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back? And ladies don't think you're off the hook because if you be honest with yourselves you know there are certain things you do not want the truth on, for example when you ask if the jeans you have on makes your ass look fat and we tell you the truth and say yes than you'll think we think you're fat even though you are not, or when you put on that makeup and it's not flattering and we disclose this you think we're saying you're ugly.



The moment a man is honest with his woman the relationship began to sour simply because women say one thing and mean another unconsciously, I suspect but again I'm not an expert. We have a duty to fix what is wrong with us before pairing ourselves to someone else so that we can be the best version of our self and the key is to be honest with our self.

The last pillar I think is **listening**. Men we have a tendency to block our mate out when we are preoccupied by something, it's in those moments she wants to connect and though it may seem to be an inconvenience stopping what you're doing to acknowledge her and actually engage in a conversation will help you better understand her. she really just wants to tell you how she's feeling and how her day was either messed up or how it was amazing. What the women have to understand is that you have to stop trying to talk to your man when he is watching sports or in the middle of taking care of business.

We know that a brain can process multiple streams of information at one time but give us a chance to process why Justin Fields just threw an interception, or how the referee didn't see Kobe get fouled on that three-point attempt. I know you think that now would be an optimal time to express how you feel about the day's events, but we really just want to watch the game. In conclusion I would like to express that if you disagree with my assessment on relationships remember that what I believe doesn't mean you have to, these are just the thoughts of a man who through self reflection has come to these conclusions.

Peace and blessing to all the Brothers and Sisters reading this.



Black Sheep to Rams

Anthony Williams - Kewanee

Note: The Oxford American Dictionary says that rams are adult sheep.

I can't speak for everyone, but growing up, a relative called me a black sheep. She probably had every right to because her son, my cousin, was involved in a little mischief during our childhood. Although my relative has been deceased for several years now, that label stuck to my subconscious for a while. Here's the thing though, men aren't the only ones who are called "black sheep". Women are as well.

If you're like me, someone who's been labeled a black sheep or troublemaker or any other name that carries negative definitions, I have some very encouraging news for you. I've been on this incarcerated journey for twenty-seven years and discovered a few things I'd like to share with you.



First, I changed the way I think. I learned that what I believe controls the way I live my life. If I believe negative and evil things, I'll inevitably live out what I believe. That's how I received a seventy-year prison sentence.



However, when I replaced what I once believed with the contents of the Bible and being inspired by the resiliency of people like Nat Turner, Booker T. Washington, Harriet Tubman, John Maxwell and other documentaries and scholars, I evolved.

In conclusion, you can't microwave this. It won't happen overnight. I just transferred to Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center over two weeks ago (August 2023) and it's been a culture shock! I'm serious because living in an environment where there's tension is what I'm accustomed to.

Everyone here is serious about the next man's success—from mental health to your career path and all in between. I'm still detoxing from all the movement and the variety of needed classes and groups that meet daily—all designed to help me succeed. One day soon, after my orientation, my expertise will be needed to help those around me succeed whether in Kewanee or society. As I get ready to reenter society, I won't return as a black sheep. I'll return as a ram. In the sheep class, rams are mature and excellent decision makers. Now, so am I.



Paying it Forward

Mark 'Turk' Turkowski - Centralia

I hope that you and yours are well and blessed as you receive this. I am doing well as I can be. I recently read your issue posted on my tablet and was thrilled to see the last section, which encouraged people to submit for the Personal Transformations issue. So, please allow me to introduce myself and give you my story.

My name is Mark Turkowski, but everyone calls me "Turk". I have been incarcerated for almost 28 years and I am a Christian. As I have made changes in my life, I like to help people when and however I can, with whatever it is I have the ability to do. I even give money to organizations for various reasons and things that I believe in wholeheartedly.

In July 2012, I was transferred from Stateville to Pinckneyville and while I was there, I got my GED with good scores. Immediately after that, I made sure that I was enrolled in college. The whole time I did this; I worked and assisted in other programs (lifestyle redirection and TRAC 1).

When my father passed on July 9, 2015, he left something for me. It was an inheritance. I had been gone for 20 years at the time, and here was my father, leaving behind something for me to have. In all that I had learned in the time of my transfer and education it had given me,



I wanted to give back. In May 2018, I helped to promote and support the Illinois Foundation for New Beginnings (ILFNB) to create the *School for Restorative Arts: Stateville Master's Degree program*. I had promised the founders of the program, *Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Wendy Horton* that I would support in any way I could.

My heart also led to support the prison ministry “*Companion, Journeying Together*” so that the Aunt Mary's storybook project could continue throughout IDOC every year. The reason I mention this is first, I saw something from the Stateville about the 27 or so men who were the first graduating class from the Stateville Master's Degree program.

Mr. and Mrs. Horton sought out to do more by contacting North Park University and Mrs. Michele Clifton-Soderstrom, who are now paying it forward by creating the Georgia Foundation for New Beginnings (GAFNB) and are still working with the Georgia Department of Corrections to plan that program.

The emotion I felt when I saw that posting of the graduation overwhelmed me. To be able to support something that allowed others to be a part of and to succeed was awe-inspiring. I don't have children and so for a very long time, it used to bother me that I would have no legacy that would linger on after me when I die – that there would be no lives that I had personally affected, to give them what was given to me, as my father did before he died. I am a humble person, but to live a life and wonder if you'll be able to improve their lives, is huge, and, if you cannot achieve this then what's the purpose of life to begin with? It can't just be about me!



There are many things that affect me and sadden me, and I strive to do what I can about them. I cannot change the world, but I can do my part. A single act of kindness goes a long way and may have far-reaching effects that go beyond what we initially imagine. This simple act could be a smile, a “hello” or a plain compliment that boosts someone else’s esteem or morale, which may cause that person to affect someone else.

Your acts towards that person might determine how he (or she) interacts with the next person, thereby causing a “ripple effect” or “chain-reaction” of events that may have started with you. How do your day-to-day interpersonal skills affect others around you – are these positive or negative? I was always taught the “Golden Rule” in life – you know it “*do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*” However, I was also taught that we should be careful how we treat others in life, because we never know it, we are entertaining angels. This is so true.

This is my experience with programming in the Department of Corrections. I truly do believe that you get out of life what you put into it. If you put in good, then you (largely) get good. If you put in bad, then you (largely) get bad. Do you want to know the very best part about all of this treating others good? It doesn’t cost you a single thing! Please remain well and safe, and God bless you all!



M&M's Story

Melanie Grant - Logan

12-6-81. The day M&M was born. She was the 1st born child of her mother & father, and one of the most precious beauties of all God's creation. While still in the womb, each movement she made intrigued and enamored the heart of her mom. Upon her arrival today all the pain and time it took to get her here all melted away at the sight of her face. Each moment she grew and learned lessons that would shape her mind and heart as she explored the motions of life. As a toddler, she took steps and formed words. Full of life & zeal, M&M asked inquisitive questions about her feelings and emotions as she became aware of them.

At the age of two, she became a big sister. When her little brother arrived, she was excited to show her little brother all that she knew. When he turned one, their baby sister arrived. A new adventure to show her baby sister all she could do as they drew together.

When M&M was four years old, life as she knew it began to change and glide in a different direction. M&M and her siblings were taken from their parents and placed with relatives to live and explore in a more fluid fashion. M&M quickly learned how to value relationships and wanted to do her best to take care of her siblings since their parents weren't always around them. That was when M&M's love for babies grew & blossomed. M&M loved



to hold babies, make them laugh, and feed & groom them. That was what made her heart happy. She dreamed of being a mom as she grew up. Then, one day as she looked to the heavens, she saw the moon and the sun on opposite sides of the sky... she fell head over hills for a guy named Putt. Together, their first born arrived. M&M named her Moonie, because, even in the dark, this baby shined and at just the sight of her everything seemed brighter.

M&M always wanted Moonie to have the best, so she started to make it work with Putt-but they grew apart and life took another turn from left to right. M&M struggled to give Moonie the best she could. For years, six to be exact, it was just Moonie & M&M... until M&M fell in love with Gene. To their surprise they brought a daughter into the world. A beautiful spirit, a fighter from the start of her life... so tiny, and perfect, strong. Sweetpea grew, and against all odds, she thrived and followed, and mimicked her sister, Moonie.

Ups & downs constantly occurred. M&M had abortions and gave birth just the same. Until one day, along came a Sugar Plum. Full of love and sassy she was until the day she left this earth... Before she left this earth, Sugar Plum shared so much-many hugs, kisses... love. M&M & Gene grew apart after Sugar Plum was born. One last abortion, another Shaq-slice in M&M's heart which now looks torn and worn. Since M&M is so determined to give her girls



what she never had, she takes some time to find herself, and ultimately tries to love once more.

Not willing to settle, she lets go of a “sure love” she had found between Putt and Gene. So sure, but unsure of what twists life could still bring when she met Dee. I was giving love another try and hoping this time things would turn out right. It was all a dream and as quickly as it began, it would end. But this time was worse than all the slices in her heart before. M&M found out that she & Dee were to be expecting.

They shared the good news with Moonie, Sweet Pea & Sugar Plum. They were all so very excited. But before Baby Blue would make his debut, tragedy came and broke this family to shattered shards that seemed as though nothing could repair or mend them.

M&M & Moonie took a walk, leaving Dee at home with Sweet Pea & Sugar Plum. When they came back, it was all bad and Sugar Plum began to fade away. Sweet Pea had no words to say, for a long time she stayed silent in her pain.

Moonie saw what M&M couldn't comprehend, and because of Sugar Plum's absence, their lives would never be the same again...

“A day late and a dollar short” is a metaphor, they say... but the heartache and pain lingers longer than a day. No amount of money could ever replace the spirit & joy we lost that day. M&M cried some of the most painful tears of her life that day, and in the days and years that passed.



When Baby Blue came, all of his sisters were displaced. The home he should have known did not exist. Siblings gone he would not hug or kiss. Not to even mention the pain he grew with while inside the womb, altering his chemical DNA...Once Baby blue entered this earth, he was such a bundle of peace & hope, a reminder that all in life could be great again. As quick as he was born, M&M would have to leave him and return to a cell that was filled with gloom and doom. Separated from those she loved and cared most about. M&M fell, head first, into the “great depression”. Alone, heartbroken, and confused.

She questioned all of her choices, and questioned whether or not those who claimed to love her were really telling the “Truth”. Then she heard a still, small, voice say, “You can trust ME.” Man will fail you but I will never leave nor forsake you”. With nothing left to lose or give, she accepted the invitation to trust one more time and learn how to be loved, truly and wholly for who she was meant to be. The voice told her, “you will still have troubles and go through some storms, but in the midst of your trials, I will always remain your anchor, hope, and compass in life. I will bring you through any storm and give you double portion of Blessings for your troubles, pain, and patience. Stand still and see the Salvation of your LORD.”

M&M knew that she could not fix this mess and so, with a broken heart and contrite spirit, she said, “I will trust you, Lord! I will listen and obey Your Voice.” M&M began to remember how she felt while in church as a little girl. Her aunts, grandmas, godmother, mom, and dad would all take her to meet and greet the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.



She had a dream that all that was happening now would come true. She then cried from the depths of her soul, missing all that she had lost and all that was ripped away from her. Even though she knew God would do just as He said, her flesh was weak.

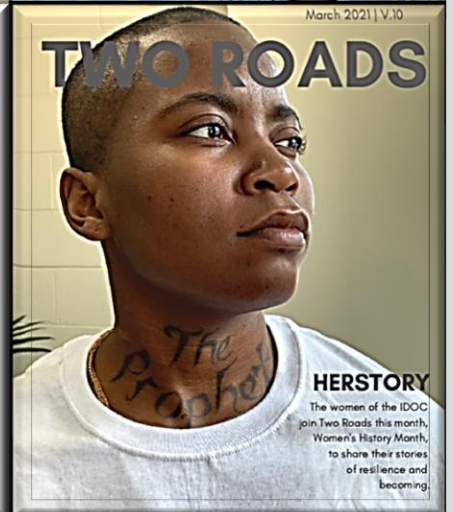
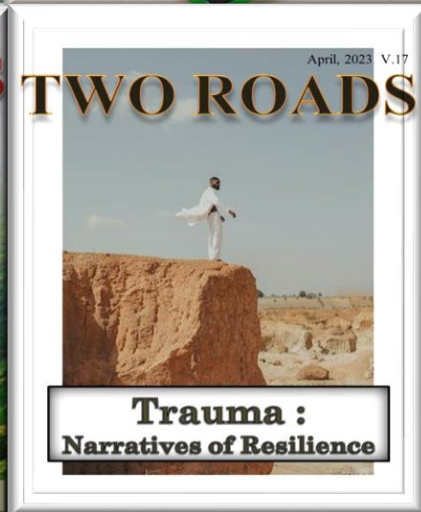
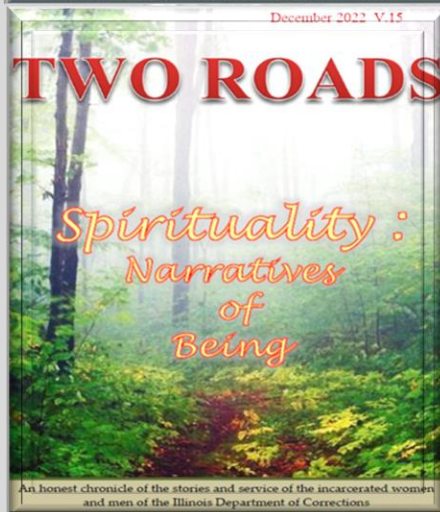
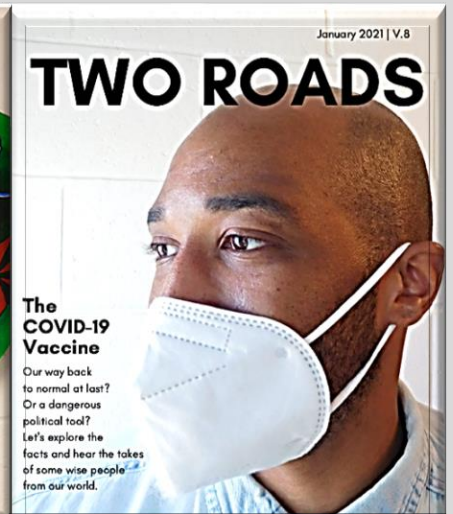
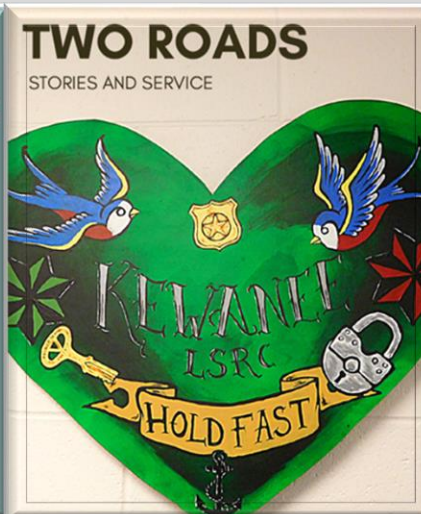
M&M began to get in a rhythm of singing & praying, trusting & waiting. As her bond grew with God, she met so many spirits who had been broken and shattered by troubles & woes from left turns and poor choices. M&M prayed, “Lord, show me how to help them see You. Sometimes the answer was, “just listen”, “give a hug, a kiss”, or “share time”, “feed my sheep”.

M&M obeyed all that the Holy Spirit directed her to do. Years continued to pass, life changed, heartache & pain came & went away. But one thing remained; God’s Voice & Spirit guided M&M the way to walk and when to be still. So, though this chapter ends, the book continues to be written...

We learn by seeing, hearing, and feeling at an age early age. As we grow & experience things for ourselves, we become creatures of habit. Sometimes we are enlightened to change habits and do better. I grew up surrounded by Domestic Violence. However, I did not want that to be a norm for my children. Things have happened to drive home the fact that I have to be the one to end the cycle in my family; and though I would not have chosen some of my experiences, I embrace them all because each one had shaped me to be the woman that I am today.



PSST... SPREAD THE WORD



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