

KEWANEE HORIZONS VOLUME 80





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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

KEWANEE LSRC has agreed to allow us to engage in more *Restorative Practices*. In the Horizons newsletter you will see the terms *RESTORATIVE JUSTICE* and *RESTORATIVE PRACTICES* very often.

The aim of *Restorative Practices* is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. *Restorative Justice* in general, is a process involving the primary stakeholders in determining how best to repair the harm done by an offense. The three primary stakeholders in *Restorative Justice* are: the victims, the offenders, and their communities of care; their needs are respectively: obtaining reparation, taking responsibility, and achieving reconciliation.

The *Kewanee Horizons* team believes creating a better community here is *Restorative*. By indirectly repairing damages and by giving back to our current community and with greater communities at large, we are engaging in *Restorative Practices*.

Community: A group of people with a common characteristic
Or interest living together with in a larger society.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Eleventh Edition



MISSION STATEMENT

Kewanee Horizons has adopted the **Restorative Justice** and community theme. Partly because this has been the fight of our lives, those of us who have sought not only freedom in its many forms, but, also a way to give back, rebuild, and uplift our communities.

We give back because of what we have been given. We rebuild, by restoring back to a state of before our offenses. We uplift, by a conscious and consistent effort to better ourselves as well as those around us.

Kewanee Horizons will work to highlight the achievements of our community both on campus and off, inside facilities and outside. Whether individually or collectively and no matter the uniform we wear. **We're going to look into the daily lives on our campus and across the state to other facilities on a regular basis.** We are hoping to open the eyes to the limitless potential there is in our population, to advocate for more participation in programming, and to give recognition to those who succeed. We want to remain as interactive as possible so **Kewanee Horizons** will be picking your brains for ideas and accepting submissions to make this as interactive as possible. This publication is put together for the purpose of uplifting mind, body and spirit.



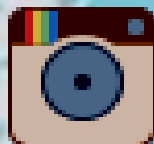
KEWANEE HORIZONS NOW HAS ITS VERY OWN EMAIL ADDRESS!

doc.kewaneehorizons@illinois.gov

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#KEWANEEHORIZONS

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THEN SELECT **"KEWANEE HORIZONS NEWSLETTER"**



HOLIDAYS

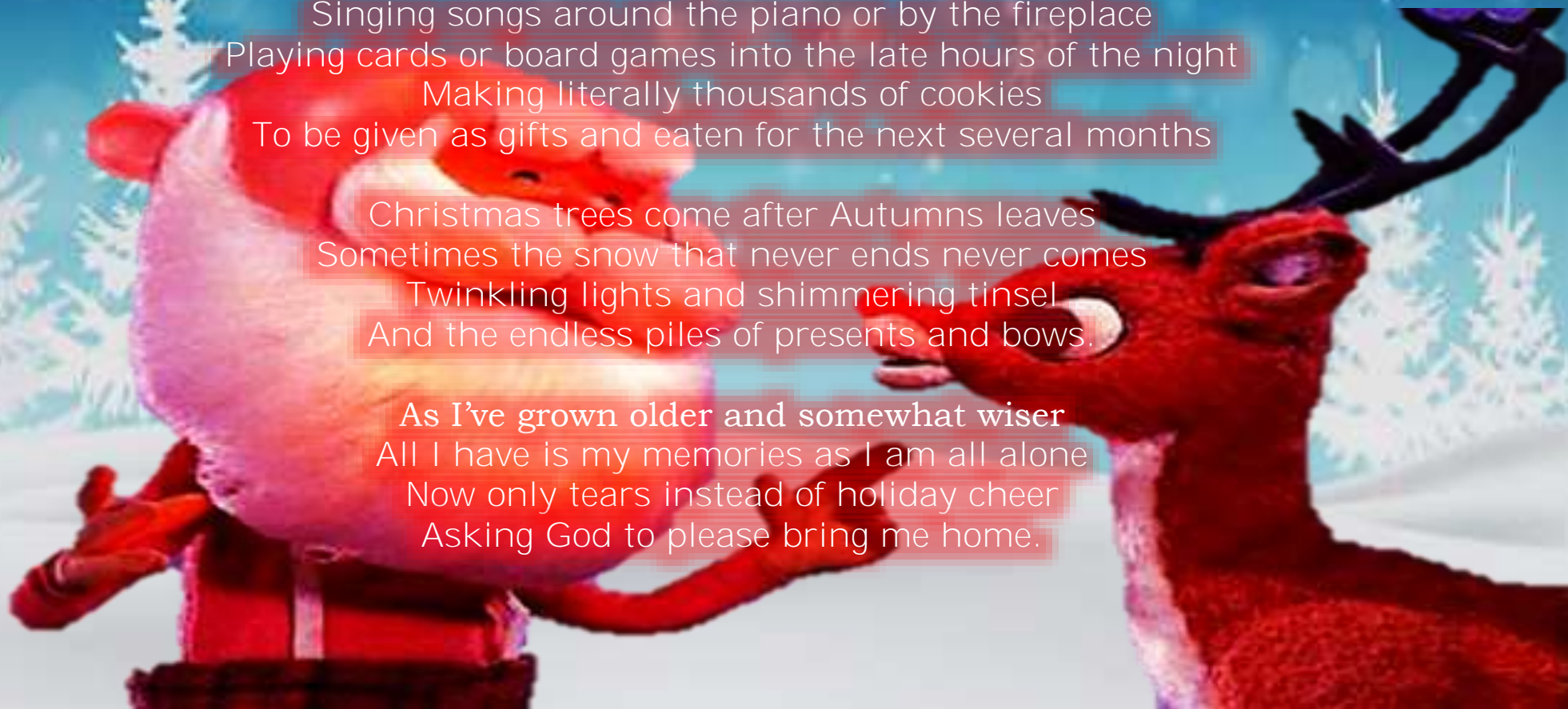
By: Jon Mettler @ Graham C.C.

What do the holidays mean to you?
I know what they used to mean to me
Family and friends sitting around the dining room table
Eating turkey, ham, dressing, homemade pies and cakes,

Singing songs around the piano or by the fireplace
Playing cards or board games into the late hours of the night
Making literally thousands of cookies
To be given as gifts and eaten for the next several months

Christmas trees come after Autumn's leaves
Sometimes the snow that never ends never comes
Twinkling lights and shimmering tinsel
And the endless piles of presents and bows.

As I've grown older and somewhat wiser
All I have is my memories as I am all alone
Now only tears instead of holiday cheer
Asking God to please bring me home.





An Ocean of Tears

By Earl Milton Jr @ Centralia C.C.



Life is good, because the polar opposite is death. As we look through our own lives and see all of the pain, suffering, and struggles of the entire human race, we see if our perceptions are refined an ocean of tears. In life there are good times, yet there are also bad times, sad times, and even make you so mad times. Life seems to be this process of growing, learning, and developing our life force into what it needs to be in order for us to be all that we were created to become. Sometimes life hurts so bad that death seems better. Sometimes life is so good that we lose ourselves in the bliss of the moment. As we come appreciate this rite of passage and understand that many times we are motivated by harshness to keep us moving, to keep us improving, to cause us to have to dig deeper than ever before. So, we must learn to appreciate this paradox as this such as keeps the world moving forward. There were tears shed before you and there will be tears shed after you. Your tears that show outwardly or the tears hidden within are a unique currency mixed with your genetic code. Yours tears are calling for something. Yours tears are an indication that you need or want something so bad. The good times that we are enabled to enjoy mean so much more when **looked at in contrast with the bad times that we've endured. Did you notice that if there were no bad times, the good times would in most cases be taken for granted? How can we know the good and not know the bad?**

Did you ever think that we notice what is good by what is bad? Did you ever really appreciate the breaths that you breathe before you have watched someone who was struggling to breathe take **your trash to the curb before you seen someone who couldn't walk and didn't have a trash can or**



place to take it out from? Did you appreciate your freedom before it was threatened or taken? The examples are numerous but I suspect that you are starting to get the picture. Take an inventory of what you do have and be grateful. When hard times do come be strong because they are not forever. You can smile while you are crying, because you are still alive when you could be dead or dying. Whatever state that you are in remember that you are alive for a reason. And your story is an inspiration, encouragement, or a warning to others. Your tears matter. Every single one. Make your pain count. What you went through, or are going through could ease the pain of another. It also could warn someone to watch out and move purposefully. You have to make it because someone needs for you to make you it. So, that they will feel that they can make it as well. The tears of humanity's past are helping us all right now. Whether we recognize it or not. Blessed be your tears as well as your smiles. Appreciate them both. Because balance is beautiful. Rise up even if you feel down. If you feel elated feel free to share. And always remember that there are people who care. Always remember God cares. God bless everyone, everywhere, and peace be with you all.





GAMIE

By: Deshanta Young @ Lawrence C.C.

No one is born published, Stephen King and every other author who has ever lived was at one time an outsider looking in.

In the early 1970's Doubleday received an unsolicited one-page letter addressed to the editor of the parallax view. It's sender, an unpublished novelist wrote that he was a great admirer of that particular work and since he had just completed a manuscript in a similar vein suggested that the editor might respond favorably to his own work as well.

The aspiring novelist now nearing despair but now also in regular contact with the editor mentioned he had one other manuscript but it was not pure suspense as the parallax view had been. It was more of a horror story.

This time the editor liked what he saw, offered a modest \$2500 contract, and eighteen months later it was published.

This can happen to you too.

Remember, no one is born published, Stephen King and every other author who has ever lived was at one time an outsider looking to get in.





Good Times



By: Jon Mettler @ Graham C.C.

Where have all the good times gone
the times when you could laugh and joke around
and not be worried if anyone was offended or felt
wronged
or took things that you said, twisting them and
using them against you.

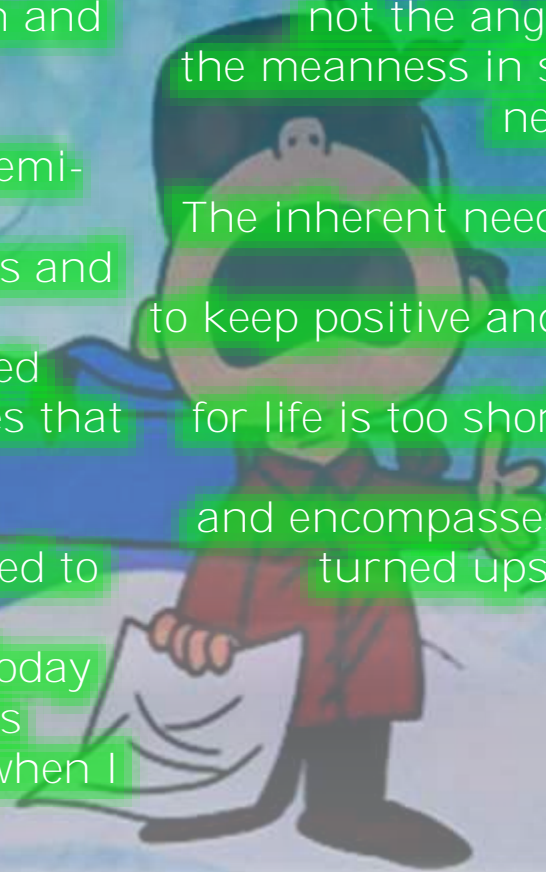
I miss it all when I could smile and just remi-
niscence
sharing the really good times with love ones and
friends that I miss

I am not sure exactly when it all changed
the seriousness that now persists, attitudes that
now seem deranged.

In the past the times that were good seemed to
last
as in years not minutes as they are now today
times have changed so quickly it seems
where now the only peace I get is at night when I
dream.

I want to know where have all the good times
gone
where a constant smile on your face was com-
mon
not the anger and hatred of today
the meanness in spirit where evil and wicked-
ness is at play.

The inherent need through both the good and
the bad
to keep positive and to smile and to be not afraid
to laugh
for life is too short for the negativity that sur-
rounds
and encompasses daily, where our smile are
turned upside down into frowns.





Making Strides

By: Manuel E. Aceituno @ Western C.C.

Hello everybody! Once again I am excited to be putting pen to paper. It has been over a year, that I have on the “Making Strides” program wing here at Western Illinois (recently known as the Incentive Based Living Wing). A lot has changed. We now have a program committee, who are constantly at work developing new programs specific to our needs and situation. “Keep up the good Work!” a writers committee, who coordinates the monthly writing prompts. Thinking up ideas to stimulate the minds of our fellow peers. “Well done!” A wing committee, who facilitates communication between administration and participants. “Great Job!” last but not least, is the paint committee. And now that we have administrative approval to start, we are all looking forward to throwing some paint. As we have transformed our lives, so to will the day-room be a reflection of our vision. The paint Committee have been hard at brainstorming ideas on the many artistic factors that go into creating a wing of art, and positive inspiration. When? What? How? And who? “The Sky’s The Limit!” These committees are comprised of positive problem solving individuals, who stride through life as mentors, father’s, brother’s and son’s. Dedicated to change, transformation, rehabilitation, and uplifting their communities. Utilizing the Making Strides platform to gather and convey the necessary character building tools. Tools that will help them succeed upon their release. With Making Strides now leading the way, we continue to stay the course on our chosen path of change, and positivity. I recently started facilitating a new Personal Change program, and there is a question asked in the Aspects to consider chapter. What would change look like to you? I was going through the packet, and wrote a few lines when an idea started to take shape in my mind.



I thought it would be cool to try to write a personal story about change. I was going along writing when I started wondering about my fellow peers view on change. I decided to find out, and try to challenge myself with creating a whimsical story as a combined effort of our collective view on change. I started by asking the personal change circle, and extended my question to the rest of the wing, by this time very excited about the level of perception and positive feedback I was receiving. The question I asked was, in one or two sentences. What does change mean to you? I have to say, these guys didn't disappoint in the least, on the contrary, they came through for us. While at the same time inspiring my creative imagination. I know you guys are ready for the story, but before we get started, I want to give a big THANK YOU! from the bottom of my heart to everyone here in the Making Strides Program. We all believe in change, I believe in you, appreciate you all in believing in me too. And allowing me to the opportunity to express our collective voice of change. We want to express a special thanks to warden Ms. Goins (congratulation on your promotion!) and program Counselor Mr. Howell. For their continuous drive and conviction in the Making Strides Program. We also want to give a big welcome to our new Warden of Programs Ms. Woolidge. We look forward to your positive work alongside Mr. Howell in building the Making Strides. We understand the significance of the people who give us the tools and opportunity to express the level of our belief in change. We appreciate all your hard work on our behalf, as well as the work still to come in the future. Now for the story. What follows is an inspired story about our collective voice of change.

Ladybug Change

I was walking the yard lost in contemplation of personal change when a ladybug came flying around my head, only to crash land on my shoulder. The necessity captured in her fluttering wings. Hello Ladybug! I am a cognitive student, so don't be scared. My shoulders are strong



and I don't feel your weight. This thought of comfort slipped from my mind. Yet to my utter surprise, the ladybug responded in kind.

“Hi! Thank you Mr. student. The weight I bear isn't in body, but in the spirit of the message incorporated in my being. It has been a long challenging journey with outwitting every stride of my way. A breath of rest is all I require, and then I'll be off to continue my quest.” Your message sounds heavy. Will you share it with me? I know not your quest, nor where your travels will take you, but rest assured that I will help you find a moment of peace. “It is the seeds of humanity's perception of change that I carry. Their words of wisdom travel on the winds in which bear my wings. Giving me sustenance to sustain my flight. To share and be shared in its truth, this is my quest! Ladybug, can you tell me of the change happening within the “Making Strides Program”? Can you hear their truth? “Luck be the Ladybug! It just so happens that my flight has previously taken me across their path. So listen closely my new found Mr. Student, and while I rest my wings, we will share in their message. Because you are not alone, nor are you the first to make this choice of me.” the ladybug started to sing. Her voice as if spoken by the wind. The Making Stride many perception came clear to my ears, and fresh to my heart...

Change Is

“First recognizing that change is inevitable, and committing yourself to the pursuit of it. Until it becomes second nature in my actions” (Jeral Harvey)...

“An evolved method of processing” (Michael J Leach)

“The inevitable impact of a community's collective efforts, driven by faith and hope for a brighter future” (Jermaine Baker)

“Not something to feared” (Clifford Powers)

“An appreciation of life!” (Louis Regenold)



“Going in a different direction” (James Trent)

“Mental growth in mind, body and spirit. Understanding that everything starts with a thought, and being able to process those thoughts. Understanding that you have the power to look at things in a positive or negative light, which can make a big change in one’s life” (Lavelle Archer)

“The greatest challenge to your former self, never fully reached, though worth reaching for” (Shawn Block)

“Starts mentally with the renewing of your mind, then physically with changed behavior. The old self is dead, but the new you has been born” (Chadwick Wallace)

“The want, to make your new habits, personality and attitude, different from your old habits, personality and attitude. That starts and ends with you” (Douglas Livingston)

“To metamorphose into a different, better beautiful being” (Juan Caballeros)

“Growth. A step forward for the betterment of self, and others” (Cornell Cambell)

“Setting a destination in my mind’s eye, taking one step on a daily basis towards that destination, and challenges that I’ll face along that path. More importantly, it is the way I respond to those challenges that will unlock my innate potential. Ultimately, shape the man that I am, and dictate the man I will become” (Giovanni Rios)

“The ability to adapt to your environment . To be equipped with the tools to reshape and transform our way of thinking. To avoid the stumbling blocks of our past. This will enable us to be that conceivable person that has the pure tools to meet our goals in life” (Perry Alberts)

“To bring my new perception as a role model/mentor, in accord with my responsibilities as a father. So that my son can understand the significance of my voice of reason in his time of adversity. It is no longer acceptable as a parent to say “Do as I say, not as I do!” we as parents



must lead by example, in correlation with our words of wisdom” (Larry Felder)

“If you talked about it, it is a dream. If you envision it, it is possible. If you schedule it, it is personal change!” (John Gilbert)

“An acknowledgement of where you are, who you are, and wanting growth within the evolution of your future” (McKerry Coleman)

“It is a surrender to God. To learn to fully be honest with yourself before God. Knowing that He truly knows what change is for me” (Michael Bembea)

“When my life’s normal behavior or routine is altered from any moment, experience, or situation. Be it by force or choice. From one day to the next, change can allow us to see life from a new perspective, and what we do with this change matters” (John McBrady)

“Change has given me a new outlook about myself. It has made me different” (Jose G)

“When you see things differently in areas of your life, believed they were right, and a situation arise that don’t go to plan. Different perspective pop in your mind. You reflect on where you went wrong, even fight mentally with that feeling inside saying you was right, which is change” (Javarus Leach)

“It is constant, beautiful, self reflecting, soul searching. Realizing the errors of your ways, and rectifying them” (J Robinson)

“Growth. Growing from what’s known, to the unknown, and exploring that unknown into familiarization” (Gabriel Antolin)

“If nothing changes, Nothing Changes!” (D. Brown)

“Revising my course to become better in every area of my life” (Berry Wolfe)

“As I allow my mental to elevate more and more, I’ve realized that change is needed in life. To allow yourself to recognize what change means to you, and start taking accountability for



everything you have done, or will do in future acts. To know what I'm going to do, when I don't know when to do them. Wisdom! Mistakes don't define you, everything you've gotten wrong before was a lesson" (Robert Smith)

"To really look at yourself with the willingness to see, and act upon your findings to the betterment of self. "Easy to say, hard to do." Self assessment takes courage, and honesty.

Which mostly comes at a point in your life when you start to question yourself. Either internal or external factors may cause you to question, but in the end honest reflection is the key to personal change" (Eric Wright)

"CHOICE! A comprehensive evaluation of life's trauma's, fears, pain, sorrow, love, humor, strength, truth, NO LIES! Objectively placed into perspective, balanced into convection, COMMITMENT! A deep breath, a next step, a turned page, a new chapter, a new examination, life's continuation, CHANGE!" (Manuel E Aceituno)

"When they ask me, "How I'm doing?" I say, every day in every way I'm doing better and better" (Carlo Bedford)

"Getting up everyday, and pursuing the best version of me" (Charles Childs)

"Seeing the future in a better and different way/ Mirar el future en uno forma major Y diferente" (Juan Herrera)

"It is about loving and understanding self. Without love, change cannot flourish" (Noel De-jesus)

"Change is what you make of me, a lucky ladybug on the wind. As your luck is made through you, so does the value of its truth lie within"

Well Ladybug, thank you for sharing your message of truth of The Making Strides Program. Are you feeling refreshed?



“Refreshed and relieved, thank you very much!”

Good to hear that your strength is renewed, Ladybug. You have renewed my hope for the future. Each stride I take forward while cultivating the land, will be an expression of my love, empathy, and dedication for my chosen path in life. Ladybug, fly strong, fly free, according to your heart desire. “Cognitive, you may call me by name. For in friendship, first names shine true. Thank you for the hospitality, sorry about the conditions of your outhouse, and remember our trust, “One stride at a time, one choice at a time, change is possible!” The Ladybug took to the air with a powerful flutter, but a moment that she was lost to the distance. A shout of OUTHOUSE, HEY! Echoed in her wake. I stared into the distance, mentally sad that she never conveyed her name. A gust of wind all of a sudden flowed around me, carrying with it a whisper of song... Cheer up my friend. You carry my name within, your heart beats with my strength, for I have always been.... CHANGE!

The End! The Beginning!
What does change mean to you?





One Stride Away



By Chadwick Wallace @ Sheridan C.C.

As I sit to write these words it is with a heavy, but hopeful heart. Not long ago I was accepted to attend Lewis University, so I transferred from Western Illinois C.C. to Sheridan C.C. While this is a very positive change in my life, it meant leaving behind the Making Strides Program. Making Strides is a program unit at Western Illinois C.C. that even though has been a functional thing for nearly 2 years, it is still very much developmental and just barely out of its infancy.

I was a part of this program from its first day. I was fortunate enough to be part of the initial committee that helped figure out just how to do it. I invested a lot into Making Strides, but the program invested even more in me. I was far from alone as this program began to form and take shape into what it is today. I was but one part of a team of Peer Educators and Peer Mentors who worked closely with our fearless leader, Mr. Howell from Clinical Services to develop and teach new Peer Led Programs. In the early days of my prison sentence, when I was in Stateville C.C.; I never in a million years would have thought I would ever see a program of the sort, let alone be a part of one. But it happened, and it was good.

When I decided to apply to Lewis University, I never imagined I would actually get in. I thought my long sentence would **have been prohibitive. And, in truth I didn't really want to leave Making Strides, or the family I had found there. But I had to try. I figured if nothing else having yet another rejection letter from a University Program in my file would only help me show the P.R.B. that I've been trying. When I found out that I got in, my jaw hit the floor. I was leaving the**





program that had been the most significant part of my life for nearly 2 years. Developing and teaching classes was a therapy for me. Working with the other Peer Educators was fun and productive. **We were making progress... no... we were Making Strides toward building positive rapport with staff** members, showing the younger generation that there we more to life than just television and commissary. We showed people that you can get to know yourself, and that was/is the first step to recovering from trauma and damage of the past as well as moving forward in a positive direction in the future. Making Strides was about learning how to deal with issues as opposed to suffering. We even had programs that gave people the tools to plan for the future at the same time as surviving the present.

I am no longer at Western, the Making Strides Program is going on without me, and I am glad. I get to work toward a degree now, but the lessons I learned from my Brothers in Making Strides is what is helping me adjust to this new environment. So, to Mr. Howell, Louis, Carlo, Charles, The Jays (both Big J and Little J!), Poindexter, Barry, Jeff-fa-fa, **Trent and all the others.. there are too many** of you to mention! I say Thank You for all that you invested in me. Thank You for letting me be a **part of what was/is changing Western for the better...** Thank You for letting me be who I want to be without laughing too much and tolerating all my terrible Chuck Norris and Blue Chew jokes. You guys, all of you, are part of my family, and I know you're continuing the positive work, not giving in to the negative and **Making Them Strides!** With that, rest assured, that I'm taking what I gained from what we all built together and putting it into play here, on the most recent stop in my journey I wouldn't be here with this great opportunity if not for all that you guys invested in me. Thank You Respect and Love, Chadwick



**Happy Holidays
Everybody**



The Rise of the "Invisible Sun"

By Vincent Spencer @ Graham C.C.

Oh, how well you shine O "Invisible Sun". Although you've played your part, of the statistics on a government chart, you rose from the ashes like the Phoenix. The prism of your mighty light was not held by the walls of a prison cell, you stood as a beacon of hope, like the dawn of a new day.

As your rays of light appeared, and develop, there was still refractions of gamma, and radioactive sunrays that needed to be refined, old habits, and toxic behaviors fell off, as if scaling a fish. You exercised taming the tongue, and having proper thought patterns, and even made strides in basic education. Often in ones journey to greatness, one has to take small steps. The real energy of the invisible sun comes from its core, the spirit of its being. Which allows for escapism of the mind, and stability of the soul (the living person you are). You'll see person that smiles all the time, and are usually in a good mood, un-noticed, these waves, or rays of light are emissions of positive energy that so many individuals need on a daily basis, and just as the real sun-rays are vital to human and plant life, so it is so with invisible sun.

Of course, in real time light goes through transformation, reflect, refraction, interference, and are broken down into electromagnetic waves, and photons, which are particles of sunlight, this can be known as outside noise. You'll have the haters, and the nay-sayers who will deny the precious heat and energy the light emits, but don't be discouraged, "the sun always comes out after the rain". At times we may be off balanced, weighed down by emotional, and mental stress, maybe we may need vent, and need a listening ear, who is there in times of distress? "Invisible Sun". Perhaps tragedy



strikes where food, and shelter is needed. “it has to be an invisible sun who gives its heat to everyone”. Who is going to decide to stand up for what is right, to use morals, and integrity in a double standard world; could it be invisible sun who gives us hope when the whole days done.

The “Invisible Sun” is all who promote positivity in this crazy chaotic world we are presently living in. Those who challenge themselves to go against the status-quo. Today, principles and standards conflict with sound reasoning, they are now based off of individual ideology, so much so that what use to be founded upon is now readily accepted as normal human behavior. We, as human beings are imperfect, and we have many flaws, but that doesn't mean we should lower our standards, disregard our manners, and common courtesy, shouldn't they be exercised properly?

Critical times are amongst us, its time for us to be agents of change, the light, in a world full of darkness, a breath of fresh air that's needed at the right time. May our senses be awaken, and be the rise of the “Invisible Sun”.

I leave you with this: Acceptance of what has happened is the first step of overcoming the consequences of many misfortunes.

I leave you my love and peace. Your brother in the faith, Vinny





Graham Correctional Center

Hello Fellow Readers,

We would like to take this time to recognize some of the people who are working on our behalf in order to make Graham a more positive and program orientated facility so as to better equip individuals in custody with the proper tools needed to cultivate and develop the steadfast characteristics of one who is determined to be better and do better during and after their incarceration.

First, we would like to recognize Ms. Fuson, Graham Correctional Centers Volunteer Services Coordinator, who over the past several months has been working to help bridge the gap of understanding between staff and individuals in custody. Ms. Fuson has gone far out of her way to help bring and facilitate the start of a few new programs. The first being "Because I Said I Would". This program is designed to help individuals to acquire new habits and strategies while developing a comprehension of concepts, such as making and keeping promises, self-control, compassion, contemplation, sacrifice, hope, accountability, and honesty. They then can apply these principles in engaging and impactful ways within their life. The second is a Literacy program that is intended to help individuals in custody to learn how to read. The third is a Math program that is intended to help individuals in custody to learn the basics of Mathematics to start and gradually increase to a more advanced Mathematical curriculum. These are just a few programs that have gotten up and running or about to start under the leadership of Ms. Fuson.





It is important to point out that all these programs are volunteer based by individuals in custody both peer educators and participants. These individuals are involved without the expectation of good time or any other incentive, rather driven by a desire to improve oneself and the lives of others. Currently there is a pool of over 200 individuals in custody at Graham that have signed up to be a volunteer in some capacity. This number is ever growing as word spreads about what Volunteer Services is doing and the impact it is already having on those involved.

We would also like to say “thank you” to Assistant Warden of Programs Ms. Armstrong for collaborating with Ms. Fuson in the shared vision and drive to help make Graham a facility that invests in the betterment of individuals and their future, preparing individuals in custody to be successful members of society.

In addition, another “thank you” to AWP Armstrong and the LTS department for allowing Grahams very talented artists to paint the murals in both the gym and visiting room, having something to look at other than a drab gray or white wall helps lift one’s spirits, even if momentarily.

These programs have a significant meaning and purpose for those of us that are involved and truly want to grow as people. These programs help give us insight to what it means to be selfless, to be accountable /responsible adults and hold ourselves to a higher standard.

“Thank you” to the LTS Department Supervisors Lemons and Miller for being pro-active in keeping various tournaments running year round like Softball, Handball, Basketball and all the others.

Whiffle ball was a blast so “thank you” for allowing us to lose our selves even if for a short time.

These activities have a profound impact on our quality of life. “Thank you” Marco Canas for having the drive to start the “YOGA” program as it has many benefits to our physical, mental, and emotional balance.

“Thank you” to the Correctional Industry staff Superintendent Bowen and Supervisor Bell for keeping the US DOL apprenticeship programs going along with forklift training, the CAT Simulator, and



the Horticulture Program. The job skills that you are teaching us are helping us to see that all the job skills in the world won't help unless you work on "self". You are helping us to understand that one's character and integrity is equally important to one's success.

Finally, "thank you" to Warden Campbell for allowing us the space and opportunity to be involved in these programs, and to all the security staff members at Graham for your understanding and cooperation.

POEM – "Hope, to believe, to have faith, to have light, to still care, to still feel, but when you give up that hope you lose faith, your light goes out, there is no more care, you have gone numb. So hang in there, hold on to that hope and not allow that light to die inside, as it is that hope that gets you through each and every day."



Respectfully Written By:
Michael Frailey & Eric Robles
From Graham Volunteer Services:
Be kind & be the Change!



CONVICT CHRONICLES A CHRISTMAS STORY

By: Ignacio H. Carrillo @ East Moline C.C.

In prison, your celly is ninety percent of your bit. My new celly, C-section (cause his head so big they say he needs a prescription pillow) is the last thing a recent born again Christian needs. He spends his days mean-mugging the guards and stomping around our tiny crypt like he's killing roaches. He won't be leaving prison out the front door and thirty years in the dark magic of these walls have consumed his spirit.

We barely speak, he's old enough to be my dad and from a street culture I so not understand. Last week, I tried to talk to him about the upcoming election, but inevitably the conversation leads to his hate of the officers and how he's innocent and the legal system screwed him. What can I say? I get it, me too buddy but he can't hear anyone past his own anger. I worry how long we might be buried together when an idea strikes me. My mom did it when I was a kid. Christmas Eve lockdown.

We're wearing every piece of clothing we own, but still shivering so hard our teeth sound like maracas. Our "Holiday" meal, essentially a hungry man T.V. dinner wouldn't satisfy a five-year old. I can hear him clicking through channels avoiding the non-stop Christmas movie marathons on his small personal T.V ;this is my chance.

Me: (offering a small piece of hard candy) I gotta deal for ya. You can have this piece of candy, but only if I can't pry it out of your hand.



C: (grabbing candy and clenching it in his fist) Go for it.

Me: (pretending to try and open his fist before going into my box and grabbing a honey bun his favorite, and offering it to him) Trade ya.

C: (suspicious, skeptical, but the deal is too good to pass up) Hell yeah, thanks celly.

I grab a honey bun of my own as I share the story of when my mom offered me a similar deal. In fifth grade we moved to a white slice of Dave Mathews suburbia. I struggle to fit in with my **olive complexion and Latino accent my giant ears and mouth full of metal don't help either. I fight everyone and even punched a crossing guard in his frank and beans. They threaten to kick me out of school.**

My mom did the candy trick and like him, I traded up. She told me holding on to anger so tightly wasn't giving space for anything new or good to come into my life. A fervent Catholic (with shrines to Saints and the Virgin Mary all over the house), she dropped a few Bible verses to sanctify her point.

“...don't let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” Ephesians 4:27

“But now you must put them all away anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. “Colossians 3:8

I told C-Section how I took her advice and joined the school play and soccer team and was soon flush with friends. I was soon enjoying life again. An eternity of silence passes before he nods **his head slowly, “I think I get what you're saying, thanks” he whispers.**

We talk for the rest of the night, I let him vent his frustrations. I tell him about my own struggles with forgiveness and how finding Jesus in prison helped me finally forgive others and myself, and the new-found peace and happiness I found on the other side. We discussed the quote I keep **pasted over my bunk: “When you forgive others, you take their power over you away.”**



I have an idea celly, he states, I will write down the name of every person who's done me wrong, forgive them, and then flush them down the toilet. And we do, he glances up at me as the last pieces of paper disappear down the drain and mouth's: its over!!! The hair on the back of my neck spike as a wave of chills washed over me. Listen, I'm not saying something supernatural happened that night, but I cant say it didn't.

The sun creeps in our window and we can hear the breakfast cart coming around. "Merry Christmas" I tell him. Yeah he says, "think it will be".

This is the part of the story where you want to hear how C Section changed his life, came to Jesus, and is now living victoriously somewhere helping others endure what he has overcome, I wish I could tell you that. I wish I could tell you he reconnected with his estranged family, got his degree while in prison and volunteered to help others, how I saw him years later, a changed man with a glow of happiness around him, I wish I could tell you that.

Shortly after the super bowl, he tested positive for Covid and was moved to the quarantine building, I heard he died in his sleep, by the time the officers found him, he was stiff to the touch. I did not cry when I heard about him, COVID had turned my life upside down and I was dealing with my own problems, but not a Christmas passes where I don't think of him and what I felt that night. I hope that in his last couple months after that night, he felt a new peace, that he died with a lighter heart.





Biological Miracle

By: Nick Roepke @ Vandalia C.C.

For the majority of the Christmas family gatherings that I attended growing up I now know that I was enjoying delicious treats, stoking the fire, sledding and unwrapping presents only a few blocks away from my biological family. As I matured, I knew that I was adopted at birth because of the realization that I was the only person with blonde hair at my 8th golden birthday. It turns out at birth I was placed up for a closed adoption, which meant I could not have contact with my biological parents until the age of 18 if I was able to locate them. I'm not sure why I hesitated throughout my life to begin the search for missing answers, but if I had to guess it would be that life with my adoptive family was already full of opportunities or that I was apprehensive to find out why I was given up.

Throughout my life I didn't understand what addiction was or why it existed because I only thought it could come from drugs or alcohol, which were not prominent in my younger years. As I place the pieces of my life back together now, I can see that the subconscious trauma of not knowing what the face of my mother and father looked like created a hollow void that I chose to fill with risky, dangerous actions. As I would get away without trouble or injury, the feeling of invincibility would fuel the rush of pleasure and dopamine.

Succeeding my college years, work life balance became stressful and sadly my addiction transformed into drinking alcohol. At the age of 30 I was in a heart wrenching car accident that changed the trajectory of many lives forever. After being bonded out and attending a professional rehabilitation center, I came face to face with the reality that the demon living inside of me would soon be carrying me to prison. Consequently this self imposed crisis brought me to the edge of my own destruction. It was officially time to find my biological family and get some closure before I departed to a cell.

One morning while awaiting my sentencing date, ABC News had a special on DNA tests. It was as if God was talking directly to me. I took the leap of faith and ordered a kit from Ancestry.com. I

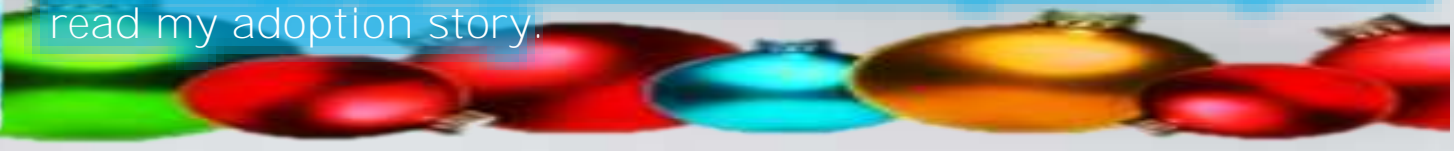


knew that in order for this to work my DNA relocations would have had to have taken the same test before me. Following 8 weeks of waiting, an email notification appeared on my phone that stated **“your DNA results are available”** my heart skipped a beat as the moment was finally here for a miracle to exist.

After opening my results I had over 1,000 DNA matches with a 100% parent/child relationship match. As the tears fell from my face, God had shown me exactly who my biological parents were. I could see a family tree with possible siblings. After a month of messaging with my biological mother, we had our first phone call where she confirmed that she was currently married to my biological father and that I had two full younger blood brothers who didn't know that I existed either. I was now the youngest child in my adoptive family while also being the oldest child in my biological family. In the quest of finding out where my biological family lived is when I became cognizant that we were experiencing Christmas only a few doors down. My adoptive mothers sister lived in the same town as my biological family.

I am extremely fortunate to have met my biological family in addition to making them grandparents and uncles before being sentenced to 10 years at 85%. I still have not been able to experience Christmas face to face with my biological family because of being locked up, but I will get the opportunity some day which is a blessing to look forward to. In the meantime they get a part of me as they spoil my son and watch him do the same things I did as a kid.

The moral of the story is that the word “present” is a gift provided to you in the present moment. Even when times become remarkably difficult, extraordinary opportunities can prevail. Retain your faith because you just never know when a gift will be handed to you. Miracles can happen! Merry Christmas to all my brothers and sisters who are incarcerated and thank you for taking time to read my adoption story.





Christmas on Homer Avenue

By Shannon Z. Hale @ Graham C.C.

Hello, my name is Shannon Z. Hale and this is my Christmas story. I grew up on Homer located in Harrisburg, Illinois right beside Carpet corner. My memories of Christmas was me constantly begging my Grandma "Joann Hale" to allow me to just open up 1 of my Christmas presents early. My Grandmother used to take pride in wrapping the Christmas presents for me and my cousin Greg. The presents were wrapped with all kinds of different colored holiday wrapping with an array of different colored bows. I used to wait for my Grandma to leave or sneak under the Christmas tree. I would shake the presents and rip small holes in them, trying to figure out what the presents were. I hated waiting for Christmas to open up my presents while being forced to look at them everyday under the Christmas tree. When I say this drove me nuts, that is an understatement. I would harass and bug my Grandmother so bad that she eventually started letting me open up a present here and a present there, just to get me to shut up. I could never contain my excitement as a child and sense of wonder would over take me. I was so obsessed with catching my Grandma wrapping the presents that I used to try to look under the crack of her door. One year I eventually caught a break because there was a door from her room to my room that she had always kept screwed shut but had shelf hanging. The shelf broke and my Grandma took it down which left 4 small holes in the door. This gave me the ability to peep through my room door and watch her wrap my presents. One year I was so excited about what I saw her wrapping that I told everyone what I was getting before Christmas. Somehow this information got back to my Grandma and I admitted the holes in the door. After that our Family tradition was for my Grandma to allow my cousin Greg and me to open all of our Christmas presents on "Christmas Eve". Still to this day I've never heard anyone else having the tradition to let their kids open their Christmas presents on "Christmas Eve". But that was mine. That was ours. My Grandma died while I was in jail and I didn't get to attend her funeral several years ago. I know she loved me. She had more of my pictures on the walls then any of the other kids and she had every ornament that I made at school hanging on the tree. She never had a star on the tree, it was always an Angel. She was an Angel. Grandma I love you and miss you.





THE GREATEST GIFT

By Zakobi Hayes @ Robinson C.C

I used to wake up on the 25th to gifts with no wrappings.
Poverty is what happened and not my bad actions.
This vision is what my mother and my Granny saw.
Putting all the blame on Santa Claus
I had questions for this Santa Claus flying on blades.
Getting paid every Winter to watch me behave
Who watching the reindeers when I see you on TV trying to wave?
And how you make it out the hood just in time for a parade?
The gifts I always wished for I never got,
The gifts I always fished for I never caught,
The gifts I always expected never came,
The gifts others collected never had my name.
As I grew older I realized it wasn't about toys
The Christmas dinner reunion that filled us with joy
The laughs from Family,
The visits from Friends,

The price of true Holiday Spirit
Is something no one can spend.
A lot of people I love and miss
Are no longer here
I drop a tear in their memory.
Of another God given year
Staring at the snowfall through
A barb wire fence
And on the other side of it
Is where it all makes sense.
Until then I'm holding on to
My morals and sanity
Keep my faith in a higher power
And pray for humanity.
Right now I share the struggle
And I wish you well on this trip
And if you reading this right
Now you just unwrapped The
Greatest Gift.





Value of a Dollar

By Carlos Padilla III @ Menard C.C.

Majority of us who come from poverty know that eldest child contributes to the household income whether or not through tax paying means or illicit practice. Christmas time 2013 was a testament to how I was raised. I was blessed to be raised by my Father under the same roof. He was a hard working Man, but like may had problems and vices.

When it came time to help him work so we can put the heat back on so the Family can be warm and my Brother and Sister can have a great Christmas – I stepped up to the plate. Pops asked if I wanted to make some money during the winter break cleaning up the entire restaurant he worked at – **Medici's on 57th up in Hyde Park. My teenage lazy ass was in for a rude awakening.**

At the time all I knew was my Dad would get up for work around 5:45am– 6:00am and would not be back until 5:30pm everyday. **That's all I knew he left early and came back late. I never knew how much back breaking work Pops went through on a daily basis to take care of our Family. He showed me just how hard you have to work to earn a dollar.**

When I say Pops put me to work– he put me to work. I was scrubbing grease off the walls, ceiling, and floor for two weeks straight! Scrubbing every industrial equipment in the place, Pops and I **moving these big ovens. Let me tell you scrubbing a year's build up of grease off is not easy. One day after we were done I was so sore and tired, I fell asleep in the car on our way home. I woke up to my Pops laughing as he was pulling up to the gas station, "wake yo lil soft self up! Pump the gas , and buy your Mother some squares". Here he was "the Energizer Bunny".**



When pay day came I kicked it out to my Moms for our responsibilities – I ended up buying myself some clothes with what I had left. Unfortunately I did not realize how hard u had to work to earn a dollar, an honest dollar. I was misguided by the fast money.

Fast forward July 2016 I get wrapped up for the case I'm convicted for now and Pops got indicted by the Feds that same month. He and I faced life sentence's. So, when Christmas 2017 came about, it hit me. During Christmas time 2013, when I was 16, pops taught me that earning a dollar comes with hard work – tenacity, dedication, and elbow grease. I never understood why he chose not to live the fast money life, because the opportunity was always there.

The lesson became clear now that I'm grown forced to stay locked in a cell for 24 hours a day. I realized hard work and what we earn from it cannot be taken away from us – it keeps us free, staying busy. So, while in the Cook County jail for the of Christmas 2017 I rediscovered something that will withstand the test of time. Pops, through all his shortcomings, shoed me what it was to be a responsible man. How to look hard times in the eyes and walk it down. When Thanksgiving and Christmas time comes around again and I'm begging Grandmas, Aunties, and my Momma for some money so I can eat this "commissary" I smile in the face of adversity reminiscing about the good time and prepare myself for the hard work ahead. Now every time I ponder about what my Pops taught me every Christmas season it reminds me that memories bridge the physical gap between us. I'm a glass half full type of guy. Free me and my Pops. Enjoy your Holidays, because there's a silver lining in everything. Happy Holidays



Yule



By Dennis Rogers @ Graham C.C.

This time of the year is always a great disappointment to me. Not because I'm in prison, broke, alone, and away from my Family. Its because this is one of the most Holy times of the year for me but everyone around me has no idea why. The average person has no idea that almost all of their "Christmas" traditions were around thousands of years before Christ and Santa Claus. One of the biggest miracles of this time of the year is that the customs and traditions of Yule have survived despite the fact that most of their meanings have changed. For example; Santa Claus – Santa Claus is based on the Nordic God Odin. He was known as the bringer of Sunshine and giver of gifts. Odin was known for giving gifts those he liked. He would leave them in socks, boots, or clogs for people to find. At this time of year farmers would leave a few stalks of corn in their fields, so Odin's horse Slepnir had something to eat while they traveled. Cookies and Milk; on "Christmas Eve" offerings of baked bread or cookies and cakes were left out with a bowl of milk for the Nisses or House-wights. These were the spirits of the dwelling. Keeping a harmonious relationship with them was very important because it is believed that they can either help or hinder the going-on's of the house. If unhappy they may play tricks and if happy they may help with small chores (the Fairy tales of the shoemaker is one such story). Mistletoe; it is believed that if one walks under the mistletoe they will be kissed by the Goddess Freya. Freya is one of the most beautiful Goddesses of the North, so this would be a great honor. The Evergreen or "Christmas Tree"; the Evergreen represented that which can not die. This tree was green all year around so they seen it as Holy like Yggdrasil the most sacred tree in Northern Lore. This tree was decorated with apples and nuts as an offering to



Odin. The Yule log; each year a bonfire would be made and the yule tree would be burned. They would burn their sacrifices or offerings on it. Once done they would save a piece to light the next years bonfire with.

These are just a few of the traditions still alive today but meanings forgotten. There are a few of us who haven't lost touch with their meaning. I'm proud to say that I am one of them but disappointed there isn't more. Disappointed at the masses of people blindly following a stolen tradition with no idea of its true meaning. But I also Hail those keeping it alive, may you all journey with Odin.





OVERCOMING YOUR STINGINESS

By: Timothy Youngblood @ Lawrence C.C

Many people go through life without ever experiencing the joy that comes from giving. They dream of such happiness, but it always seems to elude them.

I, on the other hand, consider myself one of the lucky few who have been blessed with a joyful heart which is based on giving of my time, knowledge, talents, love, and money throughout the year, not just on Christmas day.

The thing I love about books and film is that there's never an end to what you can learn. I'm about to tell you a story that will hopefully help you transform your attitude and overcome your stinginess.

Who is the one person that most often comes to mind when you think of a tightwad or stingy miserable person? For some of you, as painful as it may be to accept, you are the one. For the rest of you, it may be the infamous Ebenezer Scrooge he is a cold-hearted miser who despises Christmas. His attitude can be summed up in two words: "Bah, humbug!" Dickens describes Scrooge as "A Squeezing Wrenching, Grasping, Scraping, Clutching, Covetous, Old Sinner! Hard and Sharp as Flint... Secret and self-contained, and Solitary as an Oyster". Yes, that about sums up the image we have when we see Scrooge's heartless attitude toward his clerk, Bob Cratchit, whose household includes the crippled child, Tiny Tim.

Maybe you, like me, have run into some Scrooges in the "free society" or in prison-miserly tightwad people who are stingy with their money like Ebenezer Scrooge. The adjective miserly evolved from the Latin word miser, which means "unhappy, wretched." How often do we see unhappiness and wretchedness in the genuinely tightwad stingy and miserly? All the time.

Why are the stingy and miserly unhappy and wretched? Because misers are those who love the accumulation of money and who don't want to help anybody or give anybody anything. In fact, over



the past twelve years of my incarceration I've ran into Scrooges who refused to give their civil and criminal legal knowledge, administrative, directives, grievances, affidavit, state laundry detergent, and toilet tissue to other individuals-in-custody who needed it.

Perhaps it was the love of God that inspired Dickens to write The Christmas Carol- the love of God that enable him to understand that we are formed by our experiences, but all is not lost. If it is not too late; it is never too late, too change. The actual novel opens with a description of Scrooge's lonely and unhappy childhood and his aspiration for money to avoid poverty. Unlike the rich fool in the Bible whose life was demanded of him by God because of his stinginess, Scrooge indeed overcame his early formation and, as we know, when he did there was joy: "I don't know what to do! I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop Hallo!"

It is not likely that your own transformation from stinginess and miserliness will arise from being visited by three ghosts, Past, Present, and Future; however, you do not need nocturnal visits from ghosts to effect a change in yourself. Rather, if you are open to it, you may make the effort to ponder your own past experiences, then meditate upon how these experiences have formed you and resulted in your present, and then make a firm purpose to amend your future, an amendment to be less stingy and miserly with anything you have.

Certainly this applies to any material goods, but perhaps most importantly to your time, time you could spend in prayer for others to receive their freedom, even imploring God on your own behalf. Indeed, what may be most required of us as individual-in-custody is our time. Our business is to attain our physical and mental freedom (By Any Means Necessary), everything else is a sheer waste of time.

Therefore, my fellow brothers and sisters in custody, we must examine our lives to see how stingy we are with our time, and when we do let us keep in mind the sobering words of the ghost of Jacob Marley: "I wear the chain I forged in life" replied the ghost, "I made it link by link, and yard by yard." And let us understand the truth spoken by Scrooge after the visit of the ghost of the future:



“Are these the shadows of things that may be, only?” In other words, Scrooge asked if it was too late to change. No, my fellow brothers-and- sisters- in-custody it is not too late, it is never too late, to change.

Scrooge changed because the three ghosts forced him to examine his stingy life. Let us force ourselves to do the same. Let's do it now.

In the Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* film , which is an adaptation of Charles Dickens' 1843 novel, *A Christmas Carol* there is a slight differences in the story. Scrooges problem, which he doesn't realize he has is that he lacks the Christmas spirit. The big event is the appearance of Marley's ghost.

During the middle of the film, three more spirits appear to Scrooge, but the crisis comes when Scrooge sees his name on a tombstone, and he asks the crisis question: “Is this fate or can I change?” The film ends with Scrooge getting the Christmas spirit and helping the others solve their problems. The film is about transforming his attitude. In the end, the change in Scrooge is revealed through his charitable actions and words.





CHRISTMAS STORY



By: Tommy Robertson @ Lincoln C.C.

The best Christmas story I can recall is the one with my family at my home and us all sitting around playing cards, eating, and dancing. I especially loved when the few of us that stayed or was left, and they proceeded to help clean up. Folding chairs, washing dishes, vacuuming and putting food away was all we had to do, and then we chilled by the fire place. I long to do that in the future with family and new friends. I'm someone who loves to cook and decorate for the holiday's, my menu looks like this, turkey, dressing, grilled jerk chicken, oriental stir fry with the extra water chestnuts, pre al a mol, 7up cake, fried perch, mac -n- cheese, potato salad, yams, corn, corn bread casserole, cherry cheese cake, key lime pie, lemon pie, and finally drinks. Yeah, I cant wait to do that again. In prison I look forward to the meal, I am so grateful to finally be full and not fed like a 3 year old. I am learning to cease hating prison, when I go outside I look up to the sky and take myself out of prison, the blue sky, the clouds etc.. Or looking at the sun going from orange, red, purple and other colors helps to ease me. Have you ever just looked up at night and stared at the stars? In Chicago, you are not going to get to see them like down here. And I'm learning to know that God will change all things via prayer. See many know God as God, but I pray to Allah which is another name for God. I am learning we all have different ways of seeing things, but when we take time to think about it, we all will have the same outcome. So I will stay open to myself and accept everything as it comes my way. I know I only can control me and better myself, so I will stay focused on how to better self and all else will fall in place.



WEST-CARE



By: Kensey Mesy @ Decatur C.C.

I was very unsure if I would get anything out of West-Care because I have been in other treatment programs and nothing seemed to “set in” with me. I never came to believe in myself and know my self-worth. In West-Care, we work not only on how to stay clean but that we do matter no matter what we’ve done, that just because I’m where I am doesn’t mean that I don’t deserve a better life, which will come with staying clean and sober. And I do know that I DO matter. I’m convinced that the counselors truly want to be here with us, to share their knowledge, and do everything they can to help us succeed. That in itself means a lot to me.

-Kensey Mesey, Decatur Correctional Center
(pictured with West-Care participants in their winning Christmas Decorating Contest dayroom)





BEST FRIENDS FOREVER



By: Kira Wall @ Decatur C.C.

Christmas and all holidays are usually hard for me being away from my family and loved ones. Honestly, I don't remember the last time I decorated a tree or enjoyed a family dinner. This year was different. I decorated a tree even though it leans to the side and is so far from perfect! I was able to do it and enjoy the process with someone who I now consider my family. This year was bittersweet – she is now on to the next step towards freedom. Although I had to say goodbye, I couldn't think of a better Christmas present than decorating that tree with her.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas! – Kira Wall, Decatur Correctional Center (pictured with Shirley Miedema, now at Fox Valley)



CHRISTMAS JOY

By: Star Lawyer @ Decatur C.C.


Being able to work with nature has truly been a blessing to me. And even more so, bringing joy to others while making creative boughs of fir, balsam, and pine bring the spirit of the Yule Season to life.

– Starr Lawyer and Nicole Morris (with help from Mr. Vercellino's Horticulture Class) created gnomes, wreaths, etc. to display on Decatur Correctional Center grounds.



A Christmas Story

By: Ernesto Valle @ Big Muddy C.C



Greetings, I remember my last Christmas of being free spending time at my brother's house, having all the family's come together and celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Even though it was a lot of people, from Grandparents, Parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts uncles and all the kids too many to count. Some how my brother and sister-in-law made it happen. I used to call it a MTV crib. We grew up remembering eating "hood" food, even the dogs trying to eat off my plate. Just having a good time with the family until we open gifts. Remembering that Christmas we picked out of the hat to determine the gift exchange. The rule was we couldn't spend more than \$10. I can't remember what I gave or what I received but I do remember what I gave my niece. She was only 4 months old. I bought her an all pink and white Cub's jumper which came with a cap & small gloves. Yeah it was cool!

That was not the best part, my brother asked me if I wanted to hold my niece. To be honest I was scared. So small and fragile. She was crying, so he gently put her in my arms crying and all. Having her in my arms was special. Overhearing my sister-in-law "OMG she stopped crying!" only to hear my 2nd oldest brother yelling "she stopped crying because he fat and soft!" in the same time it was a Kodak moment, even though everyone was laughing at what my brother said. Haha

I keep this memory close to my heart now that my niece is on to college. This memory is truly a gift.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all my Brothers and Sisters in the I.D.O.C

Remember God's Good all the time!





PEER LED SHOWCASE

The Ladies and Gentlemen that you see pictured above are the very people that help make our vision come to life. These individuals dedicate their time and effort to help teach our fellow peers things that are much needed in their personal development in life, which we anticipate will inspire us all to step up and do the same. We are beyond appreciative for the submissions we've received from other facilities, and other peer educators, and it's truly a wonderful thing to see. We all lead by example, and the example that we've set with these peer-led classes show that we are more than determined to prove our worth. We are all leaving behind a roadmap to success, and for all of those that are involved, to everyone that makes this possible, our gratitude cannot be expressed in simple words.

However, thank you to Everyone, and please, keep up the good work!

Trust me, it's not going unnoticed.

ATTENTION KH READERS (AGAIN)

WE HERE AT KH WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO SUBMITTED ARTICLES FOR OUR CHRISTMAS EDITION OF KEWANEE HORIZONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO FOLLOWED WHAT WAS BEING ASKED IN THE STATEWIDE CALLOUT. IN THE STATEWIDE CALLOUT WE ASKED FOR CHRISTMAS STORIES, AND MOST OF YOU GAVE US JUST THAT, CHRISTMAS STORIES, AND THEY WERE PUBLISHED AS PROMISED, BUT WHEN YOU TAKE WHAT WAS BEING ASKED AND TWIST IT TO WHAT YOU WANT IT TO BE THEN WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO NOT LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD. WE DO NOT MAKE IT OUR BUSINESS TO SILENCE INDIVIDUALS BUT WE ASK THAT YOU FOLLOW WHATS BEING ASKED IN THE STATEWIDE CALLOUTS. SO FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, WHEN YOU SEE A STATEWIDE CALLOUT PLEASE DO WHAT'S BEING ASKED IF YOU WANT YOUR ARTICLE TO BE PUBLISHED. THANK YOU!



A GENUINE FRIEND

By: Melvin King

What can I say about a guy named Demario Brooms aka (Cesar)? I can honestly say that he was a genuine person, and there are a lot of people who would agree with me on that. I did not meet Cesar until I arrived here at K.L.S.R.C. as a matter of fact he knew who I was before I knew him. I used to work in the kitchen on 2nd shift and everyday between 2:35p.m. and 2:45p.m. Cesar would make his way into the kitchen with a garbage bag in his hand to throw away and then grab a cup of water (Cesar loved to drink water), and on his way out of the door he made it his business to say what's up "Free". I always greeted him as well but I did not know who he was, never once did I stop him to ask did we know each other, I figured it would come to me at some point, but it never did. So with the same routine everyday I tried to figure out where he was coming from, turns out he was a member of the Kewanee Horizons team and a good friend of mine was trying to get me to join Kewanee Horizons so I guessed that (J.R.) must have told him about me. Once I finally decided to join Kewanee Horizons that's when I got to see Cesar at work, he stayed in the Media Room for hours. I found it kind of funny that as smart as he was with computers all he wanted to do was type for Horizons leaving all the other work that comes with getting the Kewanee Horizons issues done to the other guys. Me being new to the team I had to start at the bottom, so I was tasked with the job to file paper work and do Horoscopes, Cesar was right there to lend a helping hand. I also had to learn how these computers worked that we use for Horizons, and that's where Cesar excelled at. Any questions that I had he did not hesitate to answer, if he saw that I was stuck on something he came to see if he could be of assistance. He would



teach me something one day and the next day, here he is having to explain it all over again to me, but he did not hesitate to do it, he never got mad about that, he just did what was needed. Cesar was part of the book club also here at Kewanee, and he faithfully attended every session. Cesar asked me to join the book club, I never did. You have some who have known Cesar for over 20 years and then you have me who only got to know him for a few months, and I am grateful for those few months because without his help I wouldn't be where I am today. I remember him saying this one day, you don't have to take Ms. Mango class Free, you going to learn Microsoft Word, Publisher, Excel, and Power Point in here. (the media room), he was so right. Cesar touched a lot of people throughout his incarceration (IIC's and Staff), you couldn't help but like the little guy because he was so genuine and he conducted himself in a positive manner. I'm glad I was one of the lucky ones who got to meet, laugh, work with, talk to, and learn from him. Thank you Cesar!

R.I.P.

Demario "Cesar" Brooms

FOREVER WITH US

ALWAYS REMEMBERED

NEVER FORGOTTEN

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE PART OF THE KEWANEE HORIZONS FAMILY!



R.I.P.
Demario "Cesar" Brooms



CHRISTMAS FAMILY TRADITIONS

By: Melvin King

What's up KH fans? Happy Holiday's to you, I wanted to share some family Christmas traditions with you all. I know for me family getting together to celebrate the holiday's was big, every year we had a designated family members house that we went to that was decided on the previous year. It was good to see family that I hadn't seen all year and I liked the presents that I got from them. There was one thing I didn't understand, we all went to one persons house to eat dinner together, but every household always cooked their own food. Normally, going to someone's house you will bring 1 dish to add to the table for dinner, not my family, everyone cooks their own food and goes to the designated persons house to eat up their food. Most of the time everyone cooked the same exact meal, funny right? Another Christmas tradition I'm sure every family had was the kids getting up before daylight to open presents, I never knew the exact time I got up but it was always still dark outside. I remember one Christmas eve my mom was cooking and me and my sister were eager to open our presents because we knew that we had gotten a Nintendo and we wanted to play with it, so we decided that at midnight since it would techni-





cally be Christmas day we were going to go and open our presents. Well, what we did not plan on was our mother stopping us and making us go back to bed, she said it is not time for you to open the presents yet, so we went back to our rooms and fell asleep. We got up around 5:30a.m. and attacked the presents, (I checked the time before we left the room), the first one I opened up was the Nintendo which I proclaimed to be mine even though both of our names was on the present. Lets take it back before Christmas to when the Christmas tree comes out, my mom used to always pull out the Christmas tree out the day after Thanksgiving to let it breathe. She started decorating the tree around the second week of December and me and my sister would help with the decorating **sometimes, I wanted to eat all the candy canes. Who's ever gotten 2 of the same gifts on Christmas?** Well that happened to me on one occasion, my mother had bought me a robot that shot missiles out of its head and had a screen on its chest that showed some type of picture as the robot was walking. Well every year my grandfather would bring me and my sister a bunch of gifts and this one particular year he bought me the same robot that my mom had gotten me, once they realized what had happened my grandfather offered to take his back and get me something else but I told him no I want to keep them both, we all know how things go, our Christmas presents do not last that long, they are broke before we know it. I have a lot of good memories from Christmas past and I'm sure everyone of you have some too, don't let your current situation keep you from celebrating the Holiday's, I know I don't, I make sure I call all my family members, cook a meal, and watch A Christmas Story and It's a Wonderful Life every year, and you cant forget the Hot Cocoa and Chocolate Chip cookies. That's my holiday tradition for now but when I get out I'm going to jump right back in with the family and the original tradition.



HAPPY HOLIDAY'S TO EVERYONE IN I.D.O.C.!



Cheers

By: Brandon A Wilds

“Men grumble because God put thorns with rose’s; wouldn’t it better to thank God that he put rose’s with thorns?”

First and foremost I would like to wish everyone inside and out a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Years. I hope this year is better than last but not as good as the next! So its around this time of year many of us become consumed with what should or shouldn't be and truthfully I understand more than anyone these feeling's and emotions. The holiday season has become such a capitalistic and commercialized holiday losing what I believe is it's true essence. Growing up and still till this day I love Christmas. Putting up the holiday lights and seeing a beautiful Christmas tree brought such joy. Even though every year me and my siblings were supposed to take turns on who put the star atop the tree but my sister found a way to “Never” did it but did it every year; I look back and laugh. Daddy's princess, I get it. For me Christmas was more than the gifts, it was and still is about family. Where our society went wrong I have no clue but as each year passes and I get older I have realized what most important to me in my life. This last year has been truly a test of patience and fortitude. As I creep closer to my outdate and see the “light at the end of the tunnel”, the urgency of figuring what my return looks like is more important than ever. Wanting results NOW but I like majority of our society try to grasp too much of life at once. Sitting here worrying and anxious about what am I coming home to is a constant forethought. An old man dying told his children “During my long life I have had a great many troubles, most of which never happened.” Hearing this reminds me of how much we forget or take for granted what's right in front of us and



trying to live in the future rather than be present and live in here and the now. A clock would be of no use as a time keeper if it should become discouraged and come to a standstill by calculating its work a year ahead. It is not the troubles of today, but those of tomorrow and next week and next year that Whitten our heads, wrinkle our face's and bring us to a standstill. Worry is the foe of all beauty. We all want to go home but what are we doing to get there? Do we deserve to go home? Truly if released today would you be an asset or a liability? I hope that as one year ends and another begins so does our motivation to become the best person for not only ourselves but our family's and loved one's. The old Cliché live today for tomorrow is not guaranteed is more truer than ever. Don't cry over spilled milk, just milk another cow!!! The work we do today is for the hope of a better tomorrow. Please remember the way to be beautiful without is to be beautiful WITHIN! Was it not *Shakespeare* who said that a light heart lives long? Everything needs not be taken so serious outside of becoming the best version of yourself. Please appreciate EVERYTHING and remember Complacency is killed by Curiosity. Average never changed the world!

"I haven't failed I've just found 10,000 ways that didn't work"- *Thomas Edison*. Please continue to fail often to succeed sooner. I hope with where ever you are and whatever you do for these holidays you find some sense of joy. Prison is never a good place for any of us and especially during the holiday season but please remember it could always be worse. Blessings to you and everyone you love!



Christmas & Reentry

By: Jermaine Brown

On Dec 4, 2024 I was approached by my supervisor with a mission to put up a Christmas Tree in the visiting room. I took to it with enthusiasm; as I continued to remind myself that this was my first time ever putting up a Christmas tree. I wanted the visitors to see that we put some thought, and love into decorating the tree. To my surprise it worked, seeing the visitors reaction and saying good things about it was so rewarding. I kept it to myself that I was involved in the process of decorating the tree. I didn't want to take the credit, but wanted Kewanee to receive it instead.

Then on Dec 7, 2024 I attended a special Christmas gathering in the gym presented by KLSRC in combination with Kewanee's Hill and Heritage Church. It was nice watching the outside volunteers pass out cookies to decorate, hot chocolate, Christmas cards, ornaments to decorate and watch Christmas movies. However, the most beautiful part of it all was watching everyone sitting having fun and engaging with the volunteers. Sounds so simple don't it, but in all honesty it's not.

Many of us behind these bars and bricks rarely have moments where we can just relax and let your guard down, but on this day these men in custody experience some form of freedom as they all forgot where they were and ended with feelings of normalcy. One guy we call "Real estate Joe" came to the gym in his gym attire only for the cookies, but left feeling amazing from the great conversations he was able to have with two of the Church volunteers. Joe ended up staying longer than he thought he would. The purpose of this story is not to brag about the cookies and hot chocolate of this day but to create thought provoking insight. Ask yourself why would Kewanee allow such an event to happen. The answer to that question is that KLSRC actually cares about it's



residents. The staff and community here understands what reentry is all about and that's providing us with all the tools and experience we need to succeed in life. I am so grateful to not only participate but to also be in a position to cover this story as a journalist. I could have added more pictures but I chose only two because I felt this story deserved less visuals and more written content. So with that said, Happy Holidays to all of you on the inside and outside, and a big shout out to all volunteers that care for us.





Connecting with the Community

By: Jermaine Brown

On July 26, 2024 I was happy to attend an exclusive meeting held in KLSRC library as an addition to Mr. Berringer's class called, "Connecting with the community". The class teaches those whom have been gone for a decade or more. The key is to bring light to the situations we face when returning home. What made this day so special was the fact that the key speaker went by the name Curtis Fernand whose a great friend of mines and served time with me in Galesburg. Curtis was released by Clemency in 2020 after serving a total of 24 years on a drug charge, (crazy right). He also brought with him a woman by the name of Shalom whose a professional voice and art therapist. Together they work for a non profit called Chicago Torture Justice Center.

Although, I speak to Curtis by phone, it was such a blessing to see him face to face in free-

dom clothes instead of prison blues. Not only did I sit in attendance to listen to him speak, I was honored to have been one of the few to give him a tour through out the facility. It was amazing watching all the guys that knew him come up and either shake his hand and give him hugs (sometimes both). The meeting started at 12:30pm after Mr. Berringer introduced them. Curtis (sort of quiet mannered) began speaking as everyone waited; before you knew it he demanded the attention from all invited.

Suddenly, hands began to fly into the air with questions. The men whom all served a lot of time wanted to know specific questions about reentry. One guy asked, "How do you handle those that flock to you when released when they was never there for you when you did time. Curtis smiled and said, "hold on to the relationships that matter most". He went further by saying "if

he wanted them in his life and they mattered that he spoke on how he felt and still kept them in his life, but if he didn't then it was easy to cut them off. The 2 hour event was full of knowledge passed down from one of the wise

Shalom was just as great, filling us in on the importance of expression through Art Therapy and what all they do in regards to Re Entry. I recommend that if you are planning to be released and you need a helping hand, to reach out to The Chicago Torture Justice Center because they provide so much more now when it comes to re entry. Actually, one of my friends (in attendance) that's getting ready for release asked Curtis about providing housing. To his surprise Curtis told him to reach out to him to get the process going.





HOLIDAYS IN KEWANEE



(By Antonio “Jedi” Espino)

As time goes on, holidays feel cold & empty. We lose touch from any “Holiday Spirit” due to the walls around us, more so, because the metaphorical walls we place up around **feelings** for our loved ones, in an effort to protect us from **vulnerability**.

For 15 years I was victim to these “walls” of my own making, & yet I realized to do such a thing for so prolonged a period, will cause more harm than help. I saw a version of myself that had been in an isolating stance, sitting with my loved ones, unable to adapt because of something so practiced, so ingrained. I was disgusted with this “Grinch/Scrooge” I was creating.

For the last 5 years I have been making an effort to undo this terrible practice & make better ones ingrained for those in here. I started celebrating holidays inside with others making some light of joy in these perceived dark times/places. Even for one day there was a shift for my fellow residents around me, when I decorated my room for Halloween, and gave out candy to those who had a costume to some degree. TP’ing my own room & playing a “Halloween sounds” soundtrack over my radio. Seeing a sense of neotony/youthfulness come over others as it brought smiles was rewarding, but for me it was more than just what was right in front of me. **I was practicing what I would do with my Family**, with my Nieces & Nephews I imagined having in my future. I was connected beyond time to a place in our future, distorting the idea of disconnect.

Now at the fifteen (15) year point, I am in a place where I have felt such an amazing set of experiences that have validated all the hard work, the stares from other “Grinches/Scrooges” the like. We had the opportunity to paint ornaments for our Family & Loved ones in the gym. Many were hesitant as well as myself, but I know when I feel hesitant it is **a sign to lean into my discomfort**. I went in & had an amazing time getting creative trying to figure how not to do cliché ornaments for my siblings & their kids & significant others. From turning a Gingerbread-Cookie cutout into a mini Chewbacca for my Nephew Leonardo, to turning the circle ornaments into R2-D2 & BB-8, Dragon Balls, Pokeballs, a stocking into a White Sox cutout, & more! People laughed, but I was excited making custom work for my Family I Knew they would love, even though I suck



at painting...lol!

Another night we painted ornaments to decorate a tree here, as well as had cookies & hot chocolate with welcoming guests from a local church. No, the cookies & cocoa were not Keto, contrary to what some were attempting to convince me of. We also had an a Christmas movie night with popcorn, & Christmas dodge ball & some classes were decorated along with the Barbershop. Little efforts to dispel the disconnect. Yet these were not what affected me the most of this all.

On a Friday I was sitting in a room with my nieces (Victoria & Chanel) & my Nephew (Leonardo). I read them each a bit of a book I hand picked for them, & felt warm inside. I was not literally in a room with them, rather this is what it feels like when I partook in Aunt Mary's Storybook Program here! The feeling of disconnect was dispelled once more, I was smiling, describing the pages, making voices, & sound effects. This is what I looked forward to in coming home for them & if I were ever blessed to be a Father again. It was something I regrettably never got to do for my Son Anthony & that alone breaks my heart. Yet, here I was, in an idea of a new role I foresaw back in 2014 that was a catalyst for many changes of my character inside.

On Christmas weekend & I was with a visit with my Ma, Sister, Brother, Niece, & Nephew. There's a Christmas tree & a backdrop with gift boxes underneath. Our Art room Supervisor Mrs. Draper also afforded us paint, paint brushes, as well as ornaments to paint together in the visits! It was such an exponentially amazing experience for me to sit up there & partake in such an activity with my Family. I thoroughly enjoyed my Sister, Selena Genevieve, cracking her sarcastic shots at me & how horribly I painted! I miss my Family so terribly & to share this allowed me to see a clearer picture of our Family being together at one of our homes around the holidays.

I cherished sitting with my Chanel & Leo on the floor by the tree, while joining them in playing with toys, even though they were all Disney Princesses...lol! I loved holding them, lifting & throwing Leo, making him cackle with laughter, attempting to paint a sea turtle for my Ma, creating a "Pig-bodied Reindeer with a chocolate heart" for Chanel, as well as nurturing her concerns through tears while integrating a fundamental lesson of "Sharing". I found grounding myself in every moment, with my Family, such a cherishable practice. To then follow up with a Christmas phone call & hear everyone's reactions to their custom ornaments was fun.

This was followed by a long-needed one-on-one visit with my little Brother AJ after ten(10) years! It was phenomenal to hold my brother in my arms again, crack jokes with him, to see his smirk Han Solo-like grin, & share in some much needed catching up. For me, I felt connected & warmed by the accumulation of events I was blessed to have by Kewanee & my Family. **This was the best Christmas I have had in fifteen years** and it motivates me even more on my path of development.





Kewanee CDL

We would like to take time to honor and salute a few of the working class members of America that are the backbone of our economy: Nurses/First Responders, Teachers, Police/Firefighters, Military & Truck Drivers !!

Our team of facilitators here at Kewanee have been able to add to this working class number by offering CDL classes to our residents preparing them for a career (that is VERY felon friendly) upon release. We offer CDL license class, CDL business class, and NOW have the CDL Simulator available. Upon graduation of our class, residents get the opportunity to practice on the simulator for a very realistic experience further preparing them to excel in the field.

The 12 week course for the first class offers up-to-date videos and study packets consisting of General Knowledge, Air Brakes, and Combination Vehicles. As it is a pass or fail class, students must take tests weekly to retain the information. Covering topics from Driving Maneuvers, Cargo Securement, Regulations, Equipment etc. allows students to go to the DMV and obtain a CDL permit with this information. This could save them \$1,500 - \$2,000 when going to a trucking school by already having the permit as opposed to giving the school the money to help get the same information and take the same tests and get the permit through the school !

Our 8 week Business course is for residents who have completed the license class and want to maximize their earning potential in the field by owning and operating their own equipment. No matter if their path leads to Cargo Vans, Box Trucks, Hot Shots or our favorite 18 wheelers, they will leave this course knowing fully and confidently how to run a transportation/logistics company. Topics include: How to set up an LLC or Corporation, Business Credit, Obtaining your own authority, How to calculate cost per mile, Top tax deductions etc. Graduates also receive a step-by-step guide printed out from start to finish that will get them established.



The CDL simulator has given students real life-like experience that will translate into confidence and safe practices in their career. Learning how to shift gears, backing, and dealing with various road hazards are just a few of the things in the lesson plan.

This rare opportunity can be life changing for those looking for a career that can support their family and keep them from returning to a life of crime.

The wealth of knowledge and experience of our peer educators has been invaluable to the success of these programs and would not function without them !

Congrats to the recent graduates of our latest classes !

Thank you again to all who make this possible: Ms. Rowan, Mr. Warnsing, Mr. Ebersole, and Warden Carothers.

Salute to the CDL Team Facilitators: Ralph Gray, Michael Birks, Max Ambler, Orlando Luke & Walter Webster

Merry Christmas
to all us Misfits



Kewanee CDL Study Group



Facilitated by:

Ralph Gray Sr. Mike Birks. Walter Webster.

Max Ambler & Orlando Luke





The Art Of Giving

By: Malcolm Russell

When you think of Christmas people have a lot of different emotions and different reasons why they celebrate this particular holiday. Well as for me it's the giving part that's gets me! Just to see the face of the person that's receiving the gift, that is an amazing sight. The feeling you get when you see another person on the receiving end of the good thing you did it's a feeling that can't be explained. That's what Christmas is for me. The reason I'm writing this is because the fellas at Kewanee came together to do a amazing deed. When I say it was amazing, it truly was. That thing was donating to the Peace Circle. I know some are wondering what the Peace Circle is? What the Peace Circle is, it's a peacemaking practice that draws on the ancient Native American tradition of a talking piece and combines that with concepts of democracy and inclusivity. Peace Circles allow for you to unburden yourself, form relationships built on trust and shared experiences as well as receive support and guidance. These brothers came together to give back to something that gave some of us so much.

What I want to say is "Thank you so much" for giving from your heart in a way that made some kind of difference. The wonderful Sister Janet and Eric Anderson was so blown away from the gift that it was a emotional moment for them both. People don't understand how hard it is to get funding for things that will make real change inside of these dark places we call prison, but it's always money for the negative like housing more bodies.

People that gave money without even knowing what a Peace Circle is, or Circle training, or Sister Janet, or Eric Anderson says a lot about your character as a human being on this earth. I'm just



so amazed at how people sit back and judge a person that have made a mistake in their life not knowing thru my experience that some of my closest bonds and some of the most humble, unbelievable, amazing people I have met right here inside of prison and the guys who went above and beyond to donate knowing that its hard to get money inside of prison, but the fact that with the little that you do have you all was willing do something extra-ordinary. So PLEASE ACCEPT THIS THANK YOU because you deserve to be praised.



MERRY GRINCHMAS

By: Melvin King

They have done it again, the ladies in the Placement Office have created another ambience, but **this time it was for Christmas, or should I say Grinchmas. I've never seen Grinchmas being celebrated before, but like the saying goes there is a first time for everything.** The office was decorated top to bottom in Grinchmas accessories, there was not one wall that was not covered even the file cabinets were decorated. Just like the Halloween decorations took people by surprise, the Grinchmas did the same for those who got to see it. For most of us there has been a long time that has passed by without us being near any Christmas decorations, for me that has changed because just walking around K.L.S.R.C you see them almost everywhere, even if it is for Grinchmas. Walking around K.L.S.R.C. reminded me of home seeing all the decorations set up. So to Ms. Rodriguez and Stg. Segura, thank you once again for helping to bring some holiday spirit to Kewanee, even though it was for Grinchmas. I hope you all enjoy the pictures.







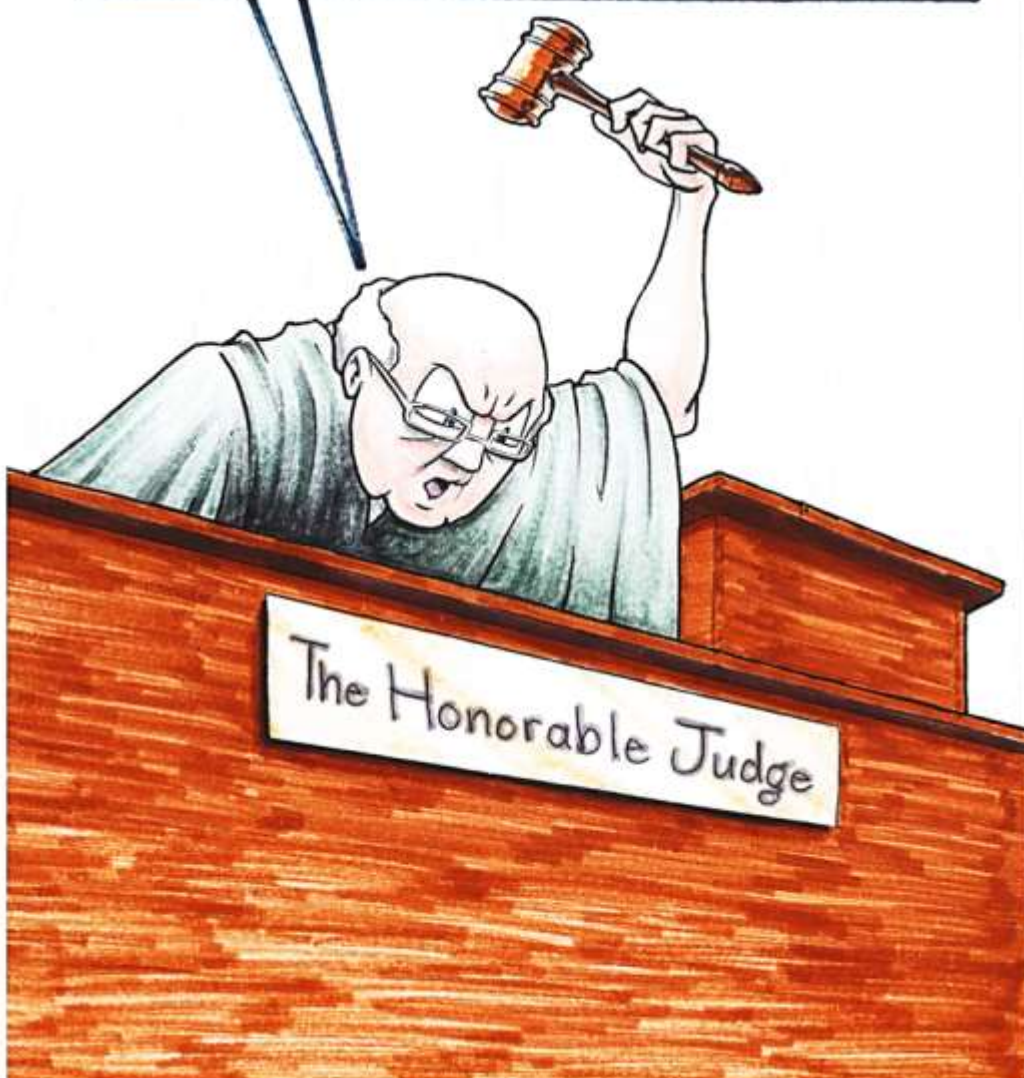


Christmas Charades





The defendant here will be charged with 15,000 counts of home invasion! NO BAIL!!!



Are you SERIOUS!? It's ME!!!



GRAPHIX



HOROSCOPES



Aries: There's a possibility someone has some information you need to make a decision— but who is it, Aries? Make it your mission to talk to everyone you meet this week.

Translation: **Silence is the last thing the world will ever hear from me. how about you?**



Taurus: When others are panicking, you're able to remain calm, Taurus. However sometimes you need to panic! This might be one of those times.

Translation: **Our lives are stories in which we write, direct, and star in the leading role. Some chapters are happy while others bring lessons to learn, but we always have the power to be the heroes of our own adventures.**



Gemini: You could be wondering where you went wrong. Gemini. But what if you didn't? a mistake could've been just the course correction you needed.

Translation: **Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.**



Cancer: Someone says something a little pointed, Cancer, and now you see them in a different light. Before assuming the worst, try asking what they meant. It could be innocent.

Translation: **We have to be better. We have to love more, hate less. We've gotta listen more and talk less. We've gotta know that this is everybody's responsibility.**



Leo: You have a creative opportunity now, Leo, so embrace it full force. You could have been in a slump, and this could be the push you need to shake it.
Translation: Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong.



Virgo: It's better for you to let someone else handle the problems you're having with another person. You aren't seeing the situation clearly, Virgo, so delegate!
Translation: Weaknesses are just strengths in the wrong environment.



Libra: Check yourself, Libra. You're operating out of some assumptions that are blocking you from seeing things clearly. You don't want to be too stubborn right now.
Translation: You don't always need a plan. Sometimes you just need to breathe, trust, let go and see what happens.



Scorpio: You're primed for some financial benefits now, Scorpio. Maybe something comes to fruition in a surprising manner. Either way—embrace the windfall.
Translation: Trying to grow up is hurting. You make mistakes. You try to learn from them, and when you don't it hurts even more.



Sagittarius: There's an offer on the table, Sagittarius. You might be thrilled to accept it—except for what it means for the other areas of your life. It would be quite the juggling act— can you handle it?

Translation: Consider what resources you would need to make a go of it – it's possible to have it all.



Capricorn: Take it easy, Capricorn. It's not something you do well, but even you need to slow down. The upside? You'll be able to assimilate all the changes happening in you life.

Translation: Learning how to be still, to really be still and let life happen— that stillness becomes radiance.



Aquarius: You love to be social, Aquarius, but you also love your alone time. This means you're going to have to really balance between the two as you receive several invites.

Translation: The only journey is the one within.



Pisces: You're willing to change your mind, Pisces. Just make sure not everyone knows that. You want to formulate your own opinion— not be swayed by others.

Translation: Embrace the Glorious mess that you are.

STATEWIDE CALL OUT



Everyone here at Horizons would like to take the time to express our sincerest gratitude for all of the viewers, supporters, and participants of Kewanee Horizons. Our approach is different from other material that has been of benefit to us all, especially in regards to highlighting the successes of our fellow peer's, as well as highlighting the fact that we have an outstanding amount of friends, family, and loved ones that contribute to our overall success. Horizons is more than just a platform for us to use to spread content throughout I.D.O.C., it's also valuable to us all to show that we are indeed a community made up of "real" people, striving to make it through this journey. With Horizons, we are experiencing amazing things. Things that weren't the norm just a few years ago, and that's the evolution of "US", (the incarcerated individuals), and our desire to spark an already contagious thing, which is a change in the utmost positive direction. Change begins with us, and that's exactly what's been shown, as well as proven.



STATEWIDE CALL OUT



Being able to see some of the Peer led groups is something that is a blessing for us all. For so long, some of us didn't have the courage to teach what we knew, and quite possibly, the issue was that we didn't know what we knew would help anyone. Kewanee doesn't make Horizons, we "ALL" make Horizons. It's about all of us. The things we do during this incarceration not only impacts us, but our community as well. If we want people to believe in us, we first have to believe in ourselves. The entire Horizons team is honored to be able to be a voice for some of those that feel that you don't have one. Our focus is on positivity and how any occurrence that you've encountered since being incarcerated has impacted you in a positive way. Our driving force is positivity with a Restorative Justice mind-set. We don't look to focus on anything negative, we don't want anyone dwelling on yesterday's bad decisions, we want everyone focusing on tomorrow's goal of productivity, positivity, and finding ways to help one another in the best way possible. Please don't shy away from submitting your article to Horizons. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

