

HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY



KEWANEE HORIZONS

VOL. 93

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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.**

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.

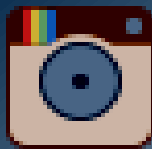
Kewanee Horizons will work to highlight the achievements of our community both on campus and off, inside facilities and outside. Whether individually or collectively and no matter the uniform we wear. We're going to look into the daily lives on our campus and across the state to other facilities on a 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

**TELL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO SCREENSHOT THIS PAGE
AND SHARE IT TO THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA WITH THE HASHTAG:**

#KEWANEEHORIZONS



AND DON'T FORGET TO CHECK US OUT ON THE IDOC WEBSITE!

IDOC HOME PAGE

CLICK "ABOUT"

CLICK "NEWS"

THEN SELECT "KEWANEE HORIZONS NEWSLETTER"



The 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.

UPDATE

By: Melvin King @ K.L.S.R.C.

Greetings Everyone,

I arrived here at Kewanee about 3 years ago, and before I left the last prison I was at (Pontiac Farm), I promised people that I would give updates as to what was going on with me. I kept that promise when I first got here but since then I have been slacking, not because I didn't want to write but because I am a busy guy here, even after 3 years of being here I am still busy. Kewanee offers a lot to help you upon your release and I am still taking advantage of every opportunity that comes my way. What am I doing now? Well right now I'm part of the Day Release Program here, the Day Release Program consists of Individuals In Custody being allowed to leave the facility and work a minimum wage job. Yes, we make good money that if you do the right thing with (SAVE), it will benefit you when you are released. This program was created by Warden Carothers who is now at Pontiac C.C. I have been with this program since July of 2024 and I am so grateful for it. There's 4 different jobs that are with this program but only 2 that go all year round, the other 2 are seasonal, (April-November), I have one of the year round jobs. Another thing I've done here in Kewanee is open up a bank account, that comes in handy if you have a Day Release job, I opened up a checking and savings account, which was one of the best decision I have made because just having the money sitting on my books, I would have been tempted to spend it and trust me when I say I have done that already. I now have direct deposit and if I need anything I can call the bank and have them send me something. It's a good feeling not to be a financial burden on my family anymore, now I can help them out. One other thing I am taking part in is the Department Of Labor Journalism course that started here last year, I will be finished with that in October. They partnered with Kewanee Horizons and 2Roads E-Zines to get us

certified as journalist through the Department Of Labor. I also am the Lead Editor of Kewanee Horizons, I have been part of Horizons since 2023 and I have to say it is a lot to learn to do this. We not only publish the Kewanee Horizons E-Zine, we also make videos here, that's something that you all do not get to see but hopefully sometime in the near future you all can see some of the things that we do here in Kewanee. Yes, they let us run around with a camera to take pictures and film things. Editing videos was something that I did not expect to be doing here, learning it was hard but fun and once I got the hang of it, it became easy. There is a team of us that make Kewanee Horizons work, my primary focus is the E-Zine right now because of my outside job, but when I am here I help out with the camera if something is going on. I hope I get a chance to use what I am learning in the Media Room once I am released. I have one more thing to share with you all, this coming January 2027 I am eligible to put in for ATC, yes, it is almost over for me, I hopefully will be in work release sometime next year. So to all the guys I met over the years in Statesville, Pinckneyville, and Pontiac Farm, I hope you all did not think I forgot about you, know that I am still doing what I have always been doing and that's **ME**. We will cross paths again in the future. Special shout out to the staff at Pontiac Farm- Ms. Wykes, Ms. Wolf Commissary Supervisor, Ms. Boeckmann, Ms. Horton, Ms. Strowmatt, Ms. Copeland, Ms. Klitzing (Graham C.C.), Mr. Baylor, Ms. Fisher, Ms. Chalke, the list goes on and on of staff that have helped me along the way, I know some of you are retired but I just wanted to say **THANK YOU**. You all will hear from me again soon, keep going strong and don't give up.

PROSPERITY, ELEVATION, GROWTH, AND BUILDING

By: Detric Ross @ Danville C.C.

What's up everyone,

I look forward to writing about positive things such as this, not to be praising myself but to show by example what we all should be aiming for. Prosperity, elevation, growth, and building yourself into the individual you ultimately desire. I'm in the process of graduating with honors summa cum laude if I continue to keep my grades high as I've been doing. I will not be graduating this year, but after I get twenty more credits I will be getting my Bachelors Degree from Eastern Illinois University. Not only that, I also will be receiving my Associates Degree from Danville Community College at the same time. I'll be lying to you if I told you that this accomplishment doesn't take hard work and dedication. But we can never reach our goals if we don't position the effort that we need to put into them. I'm writing this because of how I notice younger individuals who see all of the classes I'm going to throughout a semester, and they let me know that they want the same thing. For so long influenced many with negative actions, I'm blessed to be able to make an impression differently. I wish more than anything this will help just one person have the ambition to want to be successful.



(#Break The Seal.)

By: Rafael E. Santos @ Galesburg C.C.

“ASSALAMU ALAIKUM WA RAHMATULLAH,

“ I’m Smiling so hard (LoL)! This is my first time writing & I’m so nervous (LBVS)! Well, let’s get started.

“ This letter is to everyone, who loves someone that is incarcerated. But this letter is also, to those who lost someone because of someone who is incarcerated.

“There’s a Facebook page called, “Break The Seal”, (“It’s all put together”).

“This Facebook page was created by those with Life Sentences, Defacto Life Sentences, and even those who are serving 50% & 85% Sentences.

“ California has Newsletters & Podcasts to tell about Real Life effects & affects of their sentences.

(“What do we have in Illinois. Word-of-Mouth about our pains & experiences”) ?

“Kewanee Horizons & Two Roads are doing great thing’s!

(“But, Break The Seal is different”)!

It’s meant to:

(A): Ask the legislators, after reading these stories. (“ Why are you **“NOT”** supporting, HB-5287/SB-3354 “Credit- For- Change”)!

“ Which is the number & name for the over-turning of the Truth-In-Sentencing, (“I’m smiling hard again LoL”)!

(B): “It gives, (“everyone”), no matter how much of a sentence you have to do.

It gives us all, no matter the gender, race, or pronoun. It gives us and our families of those effected & affected by incarceration and those “Broken Systems”. A real place to tell our “Real Life” stories.

“ you can post on the page, or send a Facebook friend request. (“All friend request are accepted”)!

This is part of Kewanee LSRC– Restorative Justice & Mission Statement”.

“We are a “Community”. My family feels the same pain yours does.

“Let me ask you all question, (“stakeholders especially”) LoL!

(1): “How long does it take for a person, a Human Being,... to Rehabilitate themselves?

(2): “How do **“you”** know, or society know, “when a human being” is Rehabilitated”?

(3): “Have you ever saw someone, or met someone who was incarcerated and said.., “if only they had a chance. They could do Something Great In Society”.

“ That's how our families feel. Everyday!

“We need someone to believe we deserve and earned a chance. But for those who are read-

ing this.., (it starts with you 1st.)

“ I love you all for the sake of Allah (“Smiling Hard Again”)!!!

“And, I haven’t forgot about victims, their families, or our communities. Ya’ll are the reason we rehabilitate ourselves & change. Because even though ya’ll don’t get to see us everyday. If you did, you would see how hard it is to rehabilitate in a place where there’s barely anything to help us rehabilitate ourselves. Ya’ll are the reason we realize: **“HURT-PEOPLE, WE -HURT-PEOPLE”**. (But)... **“HEALED PEOPLE, WE-WILL-HEAL-GENERATIONS”**.

“ Forgiveness Starts With you”!

Ramadan Mubarak.

(“Edovo Recommendation: “Making Amends”, Season-2, Episode-4 By: Steve Herbert)



CHANG [ED] UCATED

By: Christopher (Al-Amin) Greathouse @ Sheridan C.C.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time, we are the change we’ve been waiting for” -Barak Obama

According to many great thinkers of the past and contemporary times, knowledge is power. The most important question is: What does this power yield? Many of the communities that most of us come from have this idea (a terrible one) that taking school seriously is a bad thing. I, like countless others, stifled my own creativity in order to take on the “underachiever” persona that was ubiquitous in my environment. I did just enough to graduate high school, and attend college as a business major, but the encouragement to be less than who I knew I could be led me to drop out of college. I was unequipped and too immature to understand the power that knowledge possessed, nor could I foresee what this power could achieve.

On any given day, I could turn on the news and see examples of people negatively impacted by policies based upon race, culture, class, and/or gender. Similarly, one walk around the yard or one observation of our existence in these dismal crypts (prisons) and it becomes clear that we as a society need beacons of light that can shine the ray of change on the elites of the world as well as marginalized communities. According to Sociologist Jay Gabler, “the choices you make are your own, but the choices you’re given come from the society you’re in.” After years of stagnation, I finally found the catalyst that can affect change within individuals and society— Education.



In order to reach our fullest potential we must be equipped with analytical thinking , conflict resolution, philosophical frameworks, and sociological perspectives-all of which are tools to not only understand the plight of others. The ability to understand the institutions and policies that perpetuate cycles of violence and intergenerational trauma is created through education. Knowledge produces the power to change. My desire to be a voice for the voiceless has led me to pursue an education with Northwestern University through the Northwestern Prison Education Program (NPEP). Not only am I amongst the second group of men to ever receive a Bachelor's degree from a top-ten university while incarcerated, I am graduating summa cum laude (with the highest distinction) and with a perfect 4.0 GPA. Gone are the days of being an "underachiever." My classmates now tease me for being an "overachiever."

I am driven to be better for all of us and fueled by the opportunities I squandered early in life.

The quest for knowledge is a never- ending journey; therefore, we must continuously look for ways to elevate. Next up for me is an MBA (Master of Business Administration) so I can teach others financial literacy, and a Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center application that I pray gets accepted. Education has changed me, it can change you, and it can change us. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "If you can't fly then run. If you can't run then walk. If you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."



My GEO Experience

By: Mark Carter @ Taylorville C.C.

My time in the GEO program was a second chance at life. Let me tell you why... I've been in and out of prison since I was 17 years old, I am now 39 . GEO has broken and stripped me down to my core. It has made me look into myself and throw out all the old manipulating, drug abusing, criminal thinking, and selfish person I used to be. When I first got into the program, I was going through the first phase like...this is it...just do a few worksheets and sit and collect good time. I was getting called on to share and open up about things in my past. I would just pass and that would be my thing. I didn't want people to see my vulnerability, but I had got an assignment and couldn't get out of it, so I wrote and turned it in. Then she made me read it to the entire phase1 group. It felt good because I got to share a piece of my life with people. After that, I kept cleaning out my old ways, getting rid of the old me. They call that doing 'Moral Inventory'.

When I came to Taylorville Correctional Center to finish the GEO treatment I wrote an introduction letter to the whole community and put everything on the table. After that, other members told their story and felt great because I sparked something and showed that it is okay to be vulnerable and that it's okay they're not alone and it's time to close that chapter in our lives and move on. My experience in GEO was the best. It is what I needed and it taught me to not ignore the signs. The gut feelings we get in our stomachs, etc. 'Don't ignore the signs' I feel like if I didn't get into this program, my chances of coming back to prison would be through the roof, but since I've completed the program and put in the work, I know what to look for and what to avoid. This program works if you work for it. I want to thank you GEO program for giving me a cleaner vessel to leave with. Thank you for tearing me down and making me a better man.



GET IT

By: Shawn Gaston @ Menard C.C.

I understand what it feels like to finally “Get It.” to be able to step outside of the destructive norms and view the world through a different lens.

To understand that simple is not always best,
And complicated could sometimes be necessary
To invoke thought, growth and every emotion that’s
Intended for us to excel.

Angry/violence is easy. Wondering aimlessly requires
Zero effort and destroying is much easier than
Building. But everything in this life worth having
You are going to have to grind for it.

It took 35 years to “Get It,” it was signs

Along the way. One I'll carry with me the
Rest of my life. The great Muhammad Ali
Said once: "a man that views the world at 50, the same at 30
Has wasted 20 years of his life.

I'm 37now, and if we ever want to
Create better for ourselves, we have
To condition ourselves to see beyond
Our situation and understand that fear,
Fear of failing are very natural emotions
But not trying is unacceptable.

Lets be apart of the energy that drives progress.

Create a climate where peace is the foundation.

Teach the youth to not accept the life that was given to them.

Teach them to embrace the steps to change the narrative,
Teach them to be thoughtful,, intentional and to leave this fractured world
Better than we found it.



Congratulations to these GED recipients at Pontiac CC from this past December. Great job on your accomplishment!

POSITIVE CHANGES

By: Timothy Petermon @ G.C.C.

As I sit here and write these words on this paper 18 years in on this bid I think of how far I've come. From being so destructive to myself not really thinking and knowing that I control my actions and reactions to whatever is put in front of me!

So I've been doing a lot of educating myself and taking education courses. I've received my associates degree in liberal studies. Got my paralegal certificate through Blackstone career institute. I just completed a research workshop course through PNAP. I completed and got a certificate from Henry George in political economy and social philosophy. I also participated in a peer led group called Boyz2Men. I have even completed 13 courses through EDOVO and have been doing a lot of reading.

I'm still in the process of trying to gain my freedom back and striving to be best version of myself day by day trying to be better today than I was yesterday. I just better understand me now and knowing who I am and what I want to be for myself I will continue to do better.

I just want to be able to help the youth and guide them down a different path. I want to help them not make the same mistakes I've made. I can help them make better choices, mentor them, and help them understand that they have a lot of choices. I want to do that. **I KNOW I WILL BE THAT.**

Prison Ed.

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

Don't think about the years
It will take to finish
Your Bachelor's degree in prison,
This dream,

You'd talk yourself out of it.

If I told you about
Yards missed
Visits rescheduled
Sleep interrupted
The million micro aggressions by both your friends
And those tasked with your protection
That become your new life,
The frustrations, the self doubt
The desperation, the ego-draining
Bedlam

You'd talk yourself out of it

You wouldn't learn that dreams
Perform magic to enable survival,
Meet the people who will uplift you,

Find windows where doors had been shut

Allow sun and energy and space to grow.

If you didn't believe,
If you didn't understand struggle
If you thought this was your whole life

You'd talk yourself out of it

Am I lying
About every opportunity squandered,
Dream delayed,
Am I lying

When we revisit the past?
Notice that hope happens,
Miracles materialize,
And faith endures.

From sacred to confident,
Or hopeful enough
To try and take one tiny step forward...
And then one more

It doesn't make up for the past
But building bridges, any bridges
From the possibility
Of today's choices
Is a step in the right direction.

PURPOSE

By: Kelly Bradbury @ Logan C.C.

I came to Lincoln, IL prison a broken girl dealing with loss, grief, shame, and remorse facing 34 years in prison for first degree murder. During my incarceration I made a decision and commitment to change myself and my life. I have been working diligently at character development and being responsible for my thoughts and actions. Although my past will always be with me my criminal record **DOES NOT DEFINE ME**. I got into a legal writing class and finished it. I got to NA and AA and I am in 4 different bible studies. I also work as a janitor on our unit at Lincoln. I have even joined a class that helps you tell your story. I have been here for a year without any tickets. I want to become a peer recovery specialist and a pastor...that is my dream. I want to help others and give hope. **I WILL SHOW PEOPLE THEY MATTER.**

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

By: Sarah Mecum @ Lincoln C.C.

Things always as easy as they are now to be a positive person during my incarceration. My sentence began on a hard house with hard people, who seen my soft side as something that needed pushed away. Thankfully I was able to keep it alive inside until I made it to the right environment where it could be seen as a beautiful tool in the helping paws program training service dogs. I survived till then by throwing myself into work as a passion, then chasing the yard line to do yoga. From the kitchen to the “yuch crew” (Yard Maintenance), I built up a hard working reputation. I was able to begin healing when I got moved to the working side of the program house, before I got accepted. By this point I had mastered quiet and invented myself so that I didn’t need people’s acceptance to stay sane, I was my own best friend. The big lesson I learned was that good things come to those that work hard for them, and to have patience. My dream job accepted me and I began doing what I love here in prison, working with the empowering women, and the Service Dogs in training, helping paws changed my whole outlook of behind the bars and of restorative justice. The program also has helped me better myself and work through triggers. I gained confidence from DEFY Ventures business class, to make it to graduation and then begin my own Yoga class has helped me to stay the course and keep a clear head for when I am released. Almost every night in my housing unit I run a Yoga Class, I’ve grown more than I believed possible going into this journey. In county I was isolated and angry, now I am so free thanks to my perspective and healing. I see everyday for what it is, this beautiful community built me, positive people sustained me, and re-entry seems so less scary because of the skills I now carry with me to help me build this better life than I thought I was deserving of before.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

By: Maurice Hardaway @ Menard C.C.

Hello my name is Maurice Hardaway, I first want to thank Kewanee Horizons for giving us the incarcerated brothers and sisters the foundation and platform to be able to share our experience in prison and how we done what it took to better ourselves for a better future. I have been incarcerated on this case since 1996 with a natural life sentence. I came to Menard C.C. in 1999 when Menard was one of the worst prisons in Illinois. I started hanging out with some of the younger guys in here and as time went by, I saw myself getting sucked into a way of prison life that was leading me to violence and other bad situations. I could say that I had a life changing event when my mom passed and I prayed to God and asked him to help me and God put so many positive things in my life and showed me a better path. I had a problem reading, couldn't even write a letter. I got in in the school classes here and took my TABE test and passed it, I enrolled in the GED class and passed it, I took some of the peer led classed, also and I took and completed a Art Class. I enrolled in Thinking for a Change, Construction, and Maintenance Classes and I completed them all. That moment God set me on my new path, I felt different, I struggled to read and write, and now I was getting certificate's and a GED. You couldn't have told me a few years before that I would have my GED. I learned skills in electrical wiring, dry walling, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, and I completed all courses. I always stayed focused on pursuing my freedom, I learned the constitution and how those rights applied to me and others, and I started doing paralegal assis-

tance here in prison in which I assisted so many people in getting back to court, getting new trials, time cuts, one was even released on actual innocence. Being recognized as the one assisting these brothers I got a letter from a paralegal firm as well as a law firm inquiring about me. After corresponding with them I was advised to take the paralegals course at Blackstone and a private investigators course at Stratford College. I did enroll in them both and after finding ways to pay tuition, I did complete them both earning my paralegal and private investigators diplomas. When asked what did I do differently with my life when I came to prison, I can show my accomplishments. I mentor and tutor some of the guys here and this has always been my message. How can you make you a better you?

Stay faithful, stay focused

Stay motivated, stay positive

Stay bettering yourself.



Beyond Surface Level

By: Antione "DB" Ridgeway @ Graham C.C.

I can Guarantee, as the Statewide Callout readers read this, people are shocked to see the author! I'm shocked as well because the way I conducted myself throughout the nineteen years I just gave the system. I had pretty much set myself up for the success I was just experiencing out there.

Like I was working at ADM Archers Daniels Midland of Decatur IL. Had the best benefits one could wish for, a nice piece of change in my 401(K), was driving trains bringing home a little over a grand a week after taxes. Had just been submitted by my Parole Officer for early release, had my first child on the way. I just closed on a home, a beautiful woman, like I had it made!

I'm saying all of that to say this and I'm saying this in particular to everyone who's about to go home. I'm back in prison on a Parole Violation with a pending Drug Trafficking case because I kept the same people around. Ask yourself this? If you don't smoke or sell crack, would you be caught in a crack house?

More than likely, you wouldn't be anywhere near a crack house. So if you've got guys that are still doing or selling drugs, Get Out! If you got guys that are still "Drillin" Get out because I'm telling you, This will be you right back on the top bunk, Blew! This one hit different too because previously with no kids it was what it was with going to jail. The fact that I can't be there daily for my daughter has changed the game and it hurts.

So in parting, if you have any vices, correct them now and ya guys included. I can GUARENTEE you my Brothers and Sisters that everyone of those vices will be at the gate the day you leave, to the 10th power.

The Future is Yours!

By: Brandon Tovar @ Danville C.C.

My name is Brandon T. I am currently incarcerated at the Danville Correctional Center. I came here after living in Macon County jail for two years until my trial was over. Then I went to Graham for processing and now I've been at D.C.C. ever since 11.3.22. This prison life is new to me. I hope you will take the time to read this article because it will inspire, encourage and motivate you. Guaranteed. You can use the inspiration, encouragement and motivation to help your fellow peers. Prison is not the end of the road. If anything, it is an incubator and a launching pad.

I was given natural life, but this is nowhere close to the end of the road for me. I am 41 years old. My life before prison consisted of working ministry and taking care of my daughter. I made a devastating mistake and now I'm here.

The first question that was asked is; what positive things have I accomplished? The short answer is many! I hope me listing the accomplishments will encourage you all to look past your past and into the potential of your future.

When I was in the county, I began writing books. I am in the pro-



cess of getting then published. I have completed 10 books and am currently writing 6. I believe your life story can reach and change countless lives. You can do anything you put your mind to. The opportunities are endless. The books I have written and am writing are geared to help you reach

your highest potential.

Other things I have accomplished is; I have started working in dietary. There I have bussed tables, worked on the line and have been a cook and diet cook. I began attending chapel and am an active member of the choir. With God's help, I am discipline to others. I also attend Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Celebrate recovery. I found out that Celebrate Recovery is geared to help everyone, no matter their background, gain freedom from all of life's hurt, habits and hang-ups. I have completed two cycles of the program, meaning I've worked the entire program all the way through twice. This program has changed my life and I will be attending it for the rest of my life whether I am incarcerated or in the free world. That program will change and greatly impact your life as well. Please sign up for it and encourage others to do so. Other accomplishments I've had is that I went to the Leadership Summit they had here. I also attended the Black History events and learned so much. Please do not be afraid to lead where you are. If you are young, I beg you to think about your future and how you want your life to go. While you are here, please take advantage of this time, invest in your strengths and skills and plan out your Future. If you are older, please invest in the young people. Find ways to start conversations. You will be surprised to find out that most of them will say, "no one sat me down and taught me 'this' or 'that'".

One last positive thing I have accomplished is that I got a 7.5 on the TABE test. I am currently on the waiting list to retake the math portion so I can qualify for college. I will also reapply for Bible college. If you are having challenges getting into school, do not give up and do not become discouraged. Put your mind to work. Create positive habits and routines because as you pick up momentum, you will start seeing progress. This progress will inspire and motivate you. All this taken together will launch you into a bright and successful future. You have what it takes . Developing positive habits and routines take time. Start somewhere! If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. You add value to the world! You have everything in you to be successful. Work one moment at a time, one step at a time, one stage at a time and one day at a time. I call it "planet out". Plan-it-out. The sky is the limit. Anything is possible! Say it until you believe it and then say it again!

The next question that was asked is; what is going on with me? Well, the short answer is, a lot. I wake up around 4 a.m. and start my day. I work on my current goals until around 9 a.m. I work dietary from 1 until around 6 and then I go back to the house. From there I get cleaned up and get ready for chapel. I go to chapel about 6 times a week. I take notes each chapel service so I can help those who couldn't go know what was said. I do a lot of ministry. You will find satisfaction helping others. We were created for community. Playing cards and chess and other recreational activities are also a good way to get to know and connect with people.

I have acquired many pen pals. I am constantly writing. I had to go through the struggle of wanting to write but it was more than worth it. If you have a hard time writing, do not be discouraged. If you have a will to write, you will find a way to get better at it. Nothing is im-

possible when you put your mind to it. You will get better. Just don't give up. Your goals are worth fighting for. Your future depends on it.

I have given much thought about the journey of life. I have been focusing on what I am good at and as I do that, I discover so many things I am good at. I found out that I like to bring the best out of myself and others. I am on the Building Block wing and have completed effective communication and conflict resolution modules and am doing the thinking patterns module. I have found out that we are intelligent! You are smarter than you know and stronger than you know!

I lead at Celebrate Recovery. I take in and listen to others war stories at AA and NA. I am working the twelve steps one on one on the deck using the Celebrate Recovery Bible and the C.R. Inside workbook. I am finding out that we need each other. We find out so much about ourselves as we get to know and open up to each other. We have to not be scared to build others up. Helping someone be the best that they can be also helps you to. I do small acts of kindness such as delivering one guy a handwritten word of positivity once a week at work. I am helping my Spanish friend read. I talk to my twin and my Pops throughout the month.

That covers the next two questions of classes that I have completed and what peer led classes I've taken. The next question is; what steps have I taken to educate myself and be a better person? The simple answer is that I have stayed the course of daily meditation and Bible reading. I surround myself with different activities such as prayer and worship. The education application on the tablet has been pivotal to my self improvement. I watch content that

helps me in the effort to complete short term and long term goals.

To finish up, I will try to answer the last two things mentioned in discussion. What am doing differently for myself and my community and what am I doing to stay motivated and focused? The short answer is; I am investing in my future. I am preparing myself to be a light to others. I have thought about all I've accomplished and achieved up to this point. With that I have come up with several goals to reach. These goals keep me focused and motivated. If I get out, I want to start with one push mower and build up to where I bring in around \$300 A day. I have wrote out a realistic and achievable strategy. Then, I have three God-sized goals. They are to 1- Get my books published and continue writing. 2- develop and launch faith based video games and 3-opena homeless shelter. Everything I've done and am doing all feed these goals. These goals will create a future for me and have a positive impact on the world for generations to come. I implore you, find a goal that outlives you and pursue it. go after it. You can do absolutely anything that you set your mind to. Start somewhere.



Untitled

By: Donald Reul @ Jacksonville C.C.

Hello Kewanee Horizons,

My name is Donald Reul and I am currently incarcerated at Jacksonville Correctional Center. I started this length of incarceration in August of 2024. At first I didn't have the mindset to focus on what needed to be done to pick myself back up, let alone how to go about doing so. So my time in Rock Island County wasn't very productive. I spent a lot of time in my head, over sleeping and over eating, to summarize the majority of how I spent my time there. Although before I left I joined a Bible study group which helped get my thoughts and actions in a more positive way. I started reading my Bible, exercising and I also was blessed with a trustee position. Things were looking up. Once I took my time of 10 years at 50%, I began preparing myself for prison. Once I left for Stateville, I felt some anxiety towards what came next. I went through the routine of processing into prison. I admit I began sleeping my time away again, which is common when one is in Stateville, but I did put a lot of energy into keeping my head together. After 30 or so days I got my brown paper bag letting me know I was leaving. Shawnee Correctional was my destination. I heard a lot of negative things about Shawnee but I didn't let that get me off track. To sum Shawnee up, I spent the first four months sending request after request trying to get a job. Finally I landed an ADA position. I worked that job with all efforts needed to be effective for the

fella I was an ADA for. That gave me the opportunity to learn how to be there for and help someone who depended on me. a skill I can apply to being a better parent for my children. It also gave me the opportunity to listen and learn about someone other than myself. A skill more valuable than most people give credit to. I also began as a second shift wing porter shortly after I finished my first contract as an ADA.

I reached the point where I was eligible to put in for a security level reduction to Minimum, which I was given. I also filled out an application for Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center. I formally put my request in for East Moline since that's very close to my home area. I was notified around a month and a half later that I was transferring to Jacksonville. Here is when I have been very productive. Since being here I have:

- Gotten an 8 on my TABE
- Gotten a job in Dietary
- Been promoted to Dockworker
- Been accepted into Lakeland College
- Gotten myself in the best shape I have been in for a very long time
- Began mending bridges with my family
- Joined AA/NA groups
- Started participating in Criminon mail courses

I am always looking for ways to better myself, I feel very hopeful about my future and look forward to a productive life. As a grown man, Father, and contributing member of my family and someone who gives back to my community.

I am grateful for the opportunity to tell my story. Thank you KH!

Untitled

By: Raheem Cirton @ Taylorville C.C.

Even though this might sound like the craziest thing that anyone incarcerated can ever say. I believe coming to IDOC was one of the best things that happened to me because coming into this place has helped to change my life for the better in so many different ways. Most importantly, I'm not the same person I was when I first came into this place. I learned quickly that this place is called the Illinois Department of Corrections for a reason. I learned that it is not up to these people to try to correct you but instead you have to be willing to want to correct yourself which is something that I feel like I've done since I've been incarcerated in IDOC. I've been incarcerated since 2012, but I've been in IDOC custody since 2014. I spent 2 years fighting my case in Cook County's most infamous Division 9. After taking my time in 2014, Danville Area College Community College (D.A.C.C.) in January of 2015. I earned my Associates Degree in 2018 where I graduated Cum laude (with honors). I maintained an A & B average, while taking classes at D.A.C.C. I trained and became a tutor because I wanted to help other people who wanted to do better for themselves. Once I graduated from D.A.C.C. I was blessed and fortunate enough to be able to enroll in one of the most amazing programs that, IDOC has to offer which is the Education Justice Project that is offered through the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

One of the most amazing feelings in the world is being able to say even though I'm incarcerated, I'm a University of Illinois student. I'm also proud that I'm able to say I'm an EJP student. If you are not familiar with the EJP program, just log into your tablet, go into your Edovo app and type in Education Justice Project. Another amazing feeling is being able to say that all of the guys you see in the Mapping Your Future : Successful Re-entry Guide, I was just around those working side by side with them and now they are out in the free world

and they are doing so amazing.

And my EJP family is just waiting for me to come home. I would like to take this time to acknowledge the EJP director Rebecca Ginsburg and my EJP family. Thank you guys for treating us like human beings and helping us to reach our full potential. Just know that it's almost over for me and I'm on my way home.

While enrolled in the EJP program, I was finally accepted into the Automotive Technology program in 2023 which I signed up for when I first got to Danville C.C. back in 2014. I earned my automotive Technology Certificate in 2024 and then I was transferred to Taylorville C.C. where I'm currently on the waiting list to take the Construction class.

These are some of my accomplishments since I first entered IDOC in 2014. As you guys can see I used this time to better myself. And please understand that growing up on the streets of Chicago my whole life, I never saw any of these things possible. But I guess that it took me to get locked up for me to realize that I'm a nerd. Shout out to Sheldon off Big Bang Theory! LOL!

I hope my story helps to be motivation for someone throughout IDOC. Just know that you can do whatever you put your mind to. And please use this time to better yourself in every way, don't return home the same person you were when you came into IDOC. Instead make this time work for you . I'm not sure but I don't know too many companies that is hiring the best spades players or the most reality TV watchers. Have something to show for it when you go back home. Thank you IDOC for helping me to change not only my life, but those lives around me also. I promise that I'm going to be the true definition of a law abiding productive citizen upon my release. Thank you guys for reading my story.

UNTITLED

By: Brandon Johnson @ East Moline C.C.

Contrary to the popular saying, ignorance is NOT bliss! Ignorance is the quicksand that keeps us mired in darkness and close-mindedness, unaware of not only what is actually going on in the world around us, but also clueless as to whom we are, what we are capable of, and what our true purpose in life is. I believe that education must begin with self, for self, and more specifically, knowledge of self.

One of the things I have done to educate myself and become a better person is to first of all be completely honest when it comes to my flaws, insecurities, strengths and areas where growth is needed.

For it is impossible to fix what I do not know is out of proper working order. Being forced to live and interact with complete strangers has taught me a lot about myself. An introvert, I would just assume mind my own business and not be bothered with/by others and what they have going on. However, as certain aspects of prison life foster an environment which can cause one to become, or continue being, 'antisocial', I have taught myself to resist and combat this tendency by making allowances to be more engaging, more receptive of others and their perspectives, and a bit more patient and understanding. At the same time, even with that said, I have also learned that I must be careful of who and what I entertain, and to take measures to ensure that my peace of mind is safeguarded. So it is safe to say that education entails more than academics.

In 2021, I had the luck of being 1of 10 individuals chosen to participate in the Augustana

Prison Education Partnership (APEP), a 4-year Bachelor's degree program with a major in Communication Studies. The various skills, tools, resources and information that I obtained from such an opportunity are innumerable, and I am forever thankful for Dr. Sharon Varallo and the faculty at Augustana College. In May of 2025, I attended the commencement ceremony, in which they allowed us to invite 6 relatives and/or friends. Despite the circumstances, it meant everything to have family and long-time friends there for such a moment. That following July, I fulfilled all of my credit requirements, making me an *official* college graduate. Since then, I have been working as a Clerk for the Illinois Correctional Industries (ICI) here at East Moline C.C. In my spare time I read Microsoft Excel For Dummies and put what I read into practice. I also study Spanish with the same textbook that I used for Spanish 101 and Spanish 102 in APEP to try to stay sharp. Although I graduated high school, when I come across GED textbooks I cannot help but to go through the math section to refresh my memory and tighten up on some the things that I have not needed to use in decades. Use it or lose, right? Recently, during a career workshop, the class was told not to be overly preoccupied with questions such as, "Who will hire me when I go home?" or "Where can I get a job?", but to focus instead on "What skills and assists do I bring to the table?", and "What can I do **NOW** to acquire as many skills as I possibly can?"

With this same sentiment in mind, I submitted an application to Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center in February of 2025 with the hopes of not only acquiring more skills and tools that will help to ensure my success, but to also be immersed in an environment that would undoubtedly help me to be an even better person. Hopefully soon I can begin a new chapter in my educational journey.

Law Of Love

By: Calvin L. Harris @ K.L.S.R.C.

During these eight weeks of *“Law of Love, How God Created Men—The Godly Neighbor”* we thought it very important to explain the serious responsibility of being called a **Godly Neighbor**. Supporting these facts with scripture from Luke 10: 25-37 known as the good Samaritan. We want everyone to understand that indifference and neutrality are not the character of a godly neighbor. Indifference is seeing a need and choosing not to act in compassion. It is deliberate non-action in the presence of suffering. Remembering James 2: 15-17, love is active. Indifference contradicts the command to “love your neighbor.” Neutrality is the attempt to remain uninvolved in a moral situation. Not choosing to help is effectively choosing against mercy. Its not treated as harmless, it becomes participation by omission.

We here at law of love, want all of you to remember that before we can serve like the Samaritan, we must refuse to pass like the priest and the Levite in Luke 10: 25-37. seeing is the first act of love. Our identity as men and women if God is not proven by words, but by how we treat people EVERYDAY! Jesus teaches that love requires action, not passive observation. We are all created to be kingdom men and women, that have been given a kingdom agenda, to complete a kingdom purpose! Remember Jesus did not say “think about it” he said, “Go, and do likewise!”

“THE 3 GODLY NEIGHBOR COMMITMENTS”

1. I WILL SEE OTHERS THROUGH GODS EYES:

I commit to looking past labels, offenses, and appearances, and recognizing the value in every person.

2. I WILL RESPOND WITH MERCY, REACTION:

I commit to pausing before I act, choosing patience, forgiveness, and self control over anger revenge.

3. I WILL TAKE ACTION WHEN IT MATTERS:

I commit to stepping in to help, encourage, or support others– even when its uncomfortable or inconvenient.



KEWANEE ANGELS

By: Julian Alequin @ K.L.S.R.C.

For those of us that are system impacted, we know how difficult it can get behind these barbed wire fences. For many of us we can spend decades in dark places and we start to forget that there is a world outside of these locked doors. It is not easy to start to shed these layers that have begun to fuse themselves to our bones. We know we need to shed these layers and we do our due diligence to scrape away the “*carceral ick*” through self help books and behavioral modification classes, but, it usually isn't enough. We lift weights until our arms hurt and call our loved ones until we run out of minutes and a lot of times that is also to no avail. Nothing is as effective as a human being looking you in your eyes and telling you that you matter. Nothing rips through the pain quicker than a person just treating you like a human being without wanting anything in return. It means that much more when it is from a person whom you barely know.

Hear at Kewanee I can say with confidence that our volunteers are our very own angels because they do that and more. They have become a part of our community without ever spending a day in jail. Each one of them has not only been positive, uplifting, and inspirational but they are most importantly consistent. They have sacrificed for us in ways that we will NEVER be able to repay them and truthfully, they wouldn't expect any repayment even if we could. We have had volunteers that have taken the time to come here and uplift us on

their birthdays, through storms, and even on anniversaries! What more could we ask for? This year I was fortunate enough to participate in a volunteer banquet that was well deserved for every one of our volunteers. There were words spoken by a few individuals that truly hit the hearts of everyone in attendance. Our very own Warden Mason even gave encouraging words of support and appreciation reminding everyone the importance of “pouring into one another” as a community.

All of us here at Kewanee truly appreciate the time and effort that is put in by all the volunteers. Whether its our yoga instructor that helps bring us peace or our church volunteers that help build our faith we are indebted to all of you because you allow us to not only be people, but you allow us to feel human. THANK YOU.







Kewanee's Art and Culture

By: Jerome "Justice" Jones @ K.L.S.R.C.

In life you try to anticipate, at Kewanee you never know what to expect. The following is one of those unexpected experiences...

Drawing is a form of visual art in which a person uses various instruments to mark paper or another two-dimensional medium. Instruments include graphite pencils, pen & ink, wax colored pencils, crayons, charcoal, chalk, pastels and paints. The 'medium' is the means by which these instruments are delivered onto the drawing surface. Drawing is one of the oldest forms of human expression with evidence for its existence preceding that of written communication.

Kewanee is a unique environment, meaning it is highly unusual or rare but not the single instance. **Kewanee**, its **Art** and **Culture**, what is the tie that

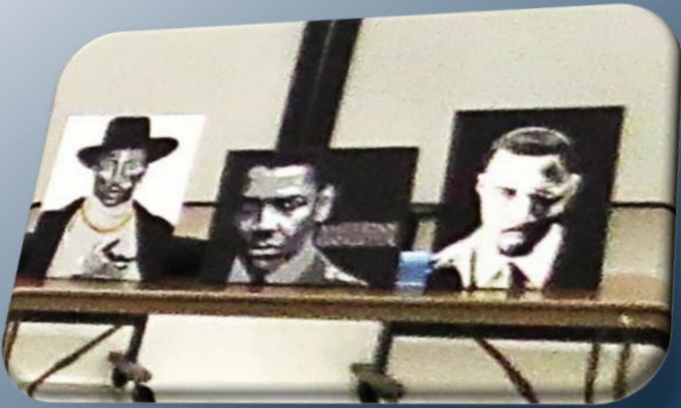




binds them? People, in this instance at this place, a melting pot of “people” artist to be exact, who are showcasing raw talent as they apply their instruments, converting mental images into physical manifestations. Motivations vary, some by pain others through passion end result is pureness with a tinge of satisfaction. There are no chance happenings, while I anticipated doing one thing, Media Room work I ended up unexpectedly being

invited to an Art Exhibit that was conceived and organized by dedicated individuals whose names bear mentioning; Natari Gordon and Julian Alequin, nice work. Julian (A.J.) is an editor/cinematographer/videographer for Kewanee Horizons, not to mention a peer facilitator for a group called “Healthy Love and Relationships”, if you reside at Kewanee check it out. Natari is a constant in the Art Room and you can see the discipline demonstrated in his body of work. Unexpected yet Media Room work nonetheless! In my “Kewanee Experience” I mentioned that my experiences where in their ‘infant’ stages but as they grew and matured I would share. Here we go. One of the two gymnasiums here functions like the United Center in that it is a multi-purpose structure. For this occasion it was masterfully converted into an “Art Gallery” with exhibits commemorating not only Black History but Kewanee's





‘Art’ and Culture. The works on display was a mixture of styles from self portraits to abstract, colored pencils and paint to charcoal. The complexity and diversity of artistry was only a reflection of the range of individuals involved. Distinguished by race, ethnicity, beliefs and backgrounds yet connected by location, environment, goals, purpose, craft and a culturally celebratory event.

Today I witnessed from one table to the next a uniformity of ideas with a gravitational pull that drew you further in. As the experience unfolded you began to understand that what you are “observing” had it’s origins in a blank canvass, bound only by imagination. If you had the opportunity to visit the exhibition you would have wholly appreciated the ambiance of it all.

‘Video Art’ was also featured by our videographer A.J., footage comprised of interviews he conducted with some of the contributing artist. They shared what inspired and motivated the pieces they submitted for the community and beyond to see. The video played continuously on a loop, so if you showed-up and spent just a few moments you would have caught some if not all the footage.

The opportunity presented itself for me to converse with two of the featured artist, both conversations were thoughtful



and insightful. Mr. Natari Gordon served as my de facto guide, helping me navigate the exhibits. He submitted several impressive pieces himself, however one held my attention for a *minute*. I'm talking about a watch, perfectly painted, extremely detailed, except there were no second, minute or hour hands; indicating as the painting was aptly named "**Time Never Was**". Interesting, when it comes to man was there a time in which he did not exist? The question itself becomes timeless, one based in infinity.

Making my way around the gallery I was in awe and amazed by the original works on display. My trip ended with a conversation with one of the two artists mentioned earlier, a Mr. Giovanni, a.k.a 'Gino'. This individual has an energy and a uniqueness that matches his style of painting, regarded as **abstract expressionism**. I've learned this particular art form flourished after WWII, and is characterized by the view that art is non-representational. Scenes are as seen, or are they extracting from the abstract? Perception is everything!

What can you do with state pens, recycled canvases, dried out markers, and a few coloring pencils, materials essentially deemed art room waste? How about a rendering of Erykah Badu, creativity at it's highest. Gino after our conversation I can honestly say "**I See**" and now "**I Understand**". Mr. Espino is always producing



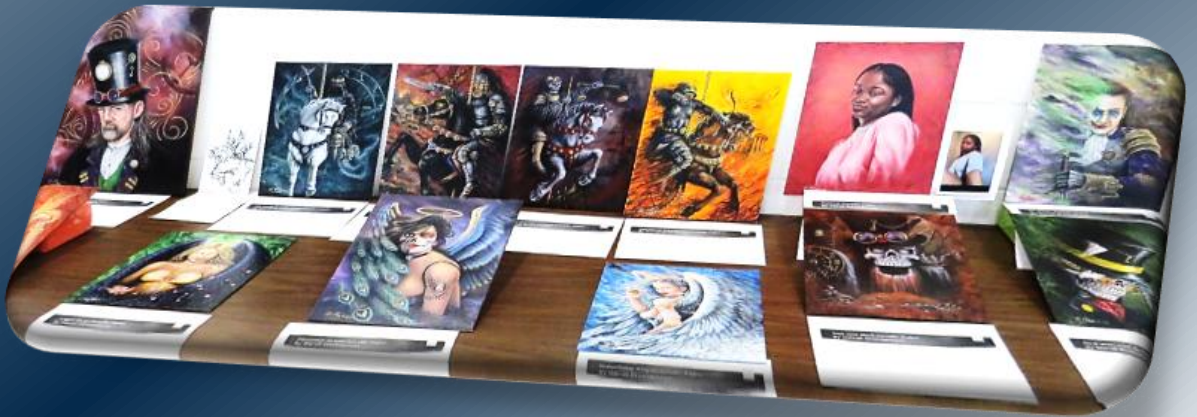
powerful pieces, a true artist, gifted indeed. I've seen charcoal used before for various things, yet he manages to take it to another level like the Jedi he is, may the force continue to be with you.

Much appreciation, gratitude and respect goes to Ms. Draper Art Room and all the artist who shared their pieces. For those who don't know being an artist is no small feat.

The month of February I'm sure we can all agree is only a snapshot, a blip on the radar, a sound bite of information, *a slight magnification of African American contributions throughout history*, during this month or anytime of the year. The achievements and sacrifices are always worthy of mention and celebration.

Black History, Art, Culture and People (***Natural Resources***), will always evolve. We all have a deep yearning to belong—to a community or a people that understands and supports us. There is real value in art; especially as therapy, **art in whatever form can change** lives, making individuals better people.





T.R.E.O.

By: Nicholas V. Barfield @ K.L.S.R.C.

T.R.E.O. (Trade Ready Employment Opportunities) is a peer led group with 4 facilitators: Justin Vantichelt and Tyler Gulli are the main facilitators with myself and Cole Stevens as the new or “junior” facilitators. For an average of 8 weeks, every Friday we are introducing a new trade to our groups. We go over trades like welding, HVAC, carpentry, electrical work, and now concrete construction and union laborers. Each facilitator is also trying to bring why the trades is so important to them to the groups. Tyler talks about his mom and how she is a union carpenter and how she shows pride in her job. Justin is trying to show not only what all jobs are available but he lets everyone know of the jobs that we can fill. Cole wants you to know that without a doubt you deserve fair wages and that you can obtain exactly that. You can tell Cole grew up in LiUNA because he always finds a way to remind us “You do know, we have collective bargaining.” While I want to show you what kind of life is waiting for you after all the hours of hard work you put in.

And here is a shout out to all our incarcerated sisters at Logan, because the trades are not just for men, **THEY ARE FOR YOU TOO!** For those of you who didn't catch it at the beginning of this article, Tyler's mom is a union carpenter! A carpenter that is out there right now building bridges! The best concrete finisher I have personally ever worked with was a finisher out of Indiana, Melissa Williams. Then there is destiny who is 100% laborer

and always had everyone's back. It never mattered how hard the job was, she was right there next to you in the dirt and grime. So if you want more than just a job when you MSR, if you want a career, check out one of your local union halls. Because every one of those women, along with countless others did not just open the doors, they made sure to leave them all wide open, just for you. All you have to do is decide if you want to walk through it.

TREO isn't just about introducing you to the trades, its also about finding out which ones don't appeal to you. if you're a terrible driver (ME!) then maybe the operators wouldn't be a good fit. However if you tried welding and loved it, then go home and chase that dream. Because if your willing to put the work in the dreams become reality!

At the end of the day TREO is about letting other inmates know, that even though most of us are used to living with lower class wages, paycheck to paycheck. **WE DON'T HAVE TO!** When each of us MSR there are careers that are not just friendly to felons, they truly welcome us, and are willing to give us the spring board we need to jump into the middle class. Its right there if we really want it!



CIVICS CORNER

We will be adding a new Corner to Kewanee Horizons, thanks to the Peer Educators in Dixon C.C. we will now have a Civics Corner in each issue of Horizons. We think its important that everyone knows about why its important to vote and how to vote. Did you know that once you are released from an Illinois prison your voting rights are restored to you? Did you know in some states once you are convicted of a crime your voting rights are striped from you forever? Hopefully that gets rectified in the future. So if you have not taken an Civics class yet and are looking for information on voting rights, Kewanee Horizons is the place to look for all the information you need on Civics. There are a few of us on the Kewanee Horizons Team that are Peer Educators and have taught or are teaching Civics Education here at Kewanee. The first article on civics titled CIVICS and it will be in the next edition of Kewanee Horizons . We are looking forward to receiving more information on Civics Education from the guys in Dixon C.C. and we thank you for your proposal.

Showcasing Creativity: Office of Constituent Services presents Coloring Book Sketch Contest

The Department is pleased to highlight the creativity and artistic wit shown during the recent sketch contest held to support the development of a new children's coloring book, *Illustrations of Love: Volume 1*. This project was created to offer minor children a comforting and engaging activity during visits, and it reflects some of the immense talent found throughout our facilities.

Earlier this month, the Office of Constituent Services put out the call and the response was outstanding, with a wide range of thoughtful, imaginative, and uplifting sketches being received. Several of you submitted original artwork for consideration and created *Illustrations of Love: Volume 1*. These pages represent not only artistic skill, but also the meaningful effort participants invested in creating something special for children who are visiting their loved ones.

The Office of Constituent Services extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed. Your work helps strengthen the connection between families and supports a welcoming environment for young visitors.

The completed coloring book will soon be available in each of the visiting rooms across the state and as a digital download on the Department's website. Additional information about how families and staff can access a digital copy will be shared once the release is posted.



Congratulations to all participants and our contest winners.
Your creativity is making a positive difference.

Centralia

Daniel G
Jason J

Decatur

Jeanette D
Jill C
Nicole S
Kara S

Hill

Mercedes B
Adam T
Miracle S

Lincoln

Kyle W
AR

Menard

Maurice W
Oscar V

Pinckneyville

Jason K
Jesse G

Pontiac

Cala F

Robinson

Maximilliano

Sheridan

Cody M
Kennth H
Sam D

Southwestern

Jeffrey F

Participants at the following facilities were anonymous

Big Muddy

Dixon

Hill

Jacksonville

Joliet

Kewanee

Taylorville

Vienna



MY YOGA JOURNEY

By: Antonio "Jedi" Espino @ K.L.S.R.C.

Eight years ago I was about to embark on a journey I would have never expected. In Pinckneyville I was taking a class, on a whim, that spoke of bettering your physical health, as well as your mental state. I was in an institution with no weights & had not been afforded any for well over six(6) years. As I got into this class of ten(10), crammed into a chapel with no mats but the ability to bring a towel for the floor, I was even more **uncertain** of what was to come.

The Instructor had long hair & a ponytail, was a bit older, & guided us through what he referred to as a "sequence", a series of poses strung together one after the other, for an hour. It was in **no way** what I had thought it was going to be. I found myself feeling **extremely insecure & incapable** of holding the poses, & we were only holding them for 30 seconds to a minute each! I was in a pose with my one leg in front of me as if I was doing a lunge with my arms raised; as I looked down my front thigh was **shaking** like a jack-hammer. My "muscles" (non-existent back then) were **screaming** & felt as if they were on **fire!** I felt like I was **not** able to breathe, as the instructor continued to guide us back to our breath? I wondered, **how** he was able to **talk** when doing the same poses we were doing?!!!

As the class ended we were laying down in a pose for about ten minutes...we were **literally** laying down, & the instructor guided us to pay attention to certain body parts & **just notice** them. I was just relieved to not be doing any of the intense poses. Then something happened, my body was no longer sweating profusely, & I felt tension **washing away** in waves. Before I knew it we were getting up to leave back to our house. For some weird reason I wanted to stay there.

As the week passed I almost forgot about class until it came back up again. I went & found my

experience somewhat similar & wondered if I was a masochist & enjoyed torture? The instructor closed our class with offering for anyone to read his materials & further our studies of what we were doing, from his pile of books on **Yoga**. I had found each class **challenging**, yet things were getting a bit **less difficult the more I was present**. I found myself **leaning into the tension** as well as searching my body mentally, pose by pose. I wanted more & more, & found myself competing against myself mentally, physically, and in spirit. The instructor would guide me back to **safe alignment**, & the more I read the books the better my experiences became. There were moments I felt **intense peace**, & moments of **deep clarity**. I had approached the instructor asking if it at all was possible I was to be trained in the practice of teaching Yoga. Began, my training had.

One day, on a beautiful afternoon, I was playing soccer, when I had stolen the ball from someone & I took off. He attempted to steal the ball back & was not able to. In his anger he “football tackled” me in the back, & **I felt a shockwave rip outwards from my lower spine**. I found my body not responding in an attempt to cradle my fall & hit the ground rolling awkwardly & in such a painful & unorthodox way. I knew something was terribly wrong. I could not stand up straight & was stuck in a bent over “L”-shaped position.

For about a couple of months I was **not** afforded any medical help, or physical therapy. I could **not** get into my bed without damn near crying, as **bolts of lightning forked down from my spine** & through my leg. I had to kneel next to my bed in my shower shoes hunched over to sleep. Through my wincing pain, I found myself scouring these Yoga books on human anatomy & testing each slight motion & assessing internally what I was feeling. I lean back it is alright. I lean forward it hurts. I lean left it is alright, but when I lean right another bolt rips through my leg & I fall to the floor. Little by little I started to form a clearer picture of which lumbar vertebrae was displaced, & which direction it was

pinching, what was referred to as, my sciatic nerve. I started to use the Yoga materials I was not only learning about teaching, but utilizing it on myself for corrective therapy. Little did I know, this experience would be a blessing to my studies & future teaching, by understanding empathetically something I would find to be the number one injury in the world, lower back.

As the years went by I found myself passionate about sharing something helpful with others, & found it so rewarding to learn more & more as it deepened my practice. I found myself in Illinois River reuniting with one of my Yoga Instructors (Marco Canas), & he immediately helped me join a beautiful & expansive Yoga community, the first day off the bus! I was afforded the blessed opportunity to not only be able to teach, but to be able to continue my training under another experienced & RYT-Certified Instructor. I got to experience many newer styles & was challenged again externally. **What was amazing was how by him helping me join as an instructor, just that alone provided me such a series of blessings like a row of dominoes falling to beautifully to create a massive image.** There were so many challenges along the way but I had found that Yoga had afforded me a deeper level of insight on how I viewed the world & everyone in it around me. The more mindful we are, the more empathetic we become, & in turn the less people we harm.

As five & a half years went by, covid & all, I found that my own personal practice had not gotten stale or stagnant. I've found there will still be moments of ease as well as challenge (Sukha Sthira). **There were still even moments of insecurity.** Developing harmony in a world of chaos & conflict has been a beautiful & **continuing** lesson for me, for which I find myself grateful for.

I was able to take to sharing what I have learned -& more-with others, & knew it was not just about me teaching to others. That is a hierarchal place of putting oneself on a pedestal,



& this I find a distaste for. I have found it to be a form of service for others. **Sharing** Yoga & mindfulness has become a passion & a drive that pulled me forward even in tough days, even when it felt like things were too heavy a burden. Seeing & hearing the joy & relief it provided others brought warmth to my days, & I asked myself how can we be able to spread this further? I also felt my time in Illinois River was coming to an end, & I thought it would be a shame to see the opportunity to spread it die out with my departure.

I trained a couple friends of mine, (Edward Evans, Daniel Ramirez) in not only how to teach & share Yoga but how to train others as well. I felt the world needed a bigger impact. This came from a lesson I took from John C. Maxwell's book, "Mentoring 101", where he emphasizes leaders attracting leaders, wanting to be succeeded, reproducing themselves, focusing on others' strengths, & -my favorite- not spending their time with others rather **investing** their time with others.

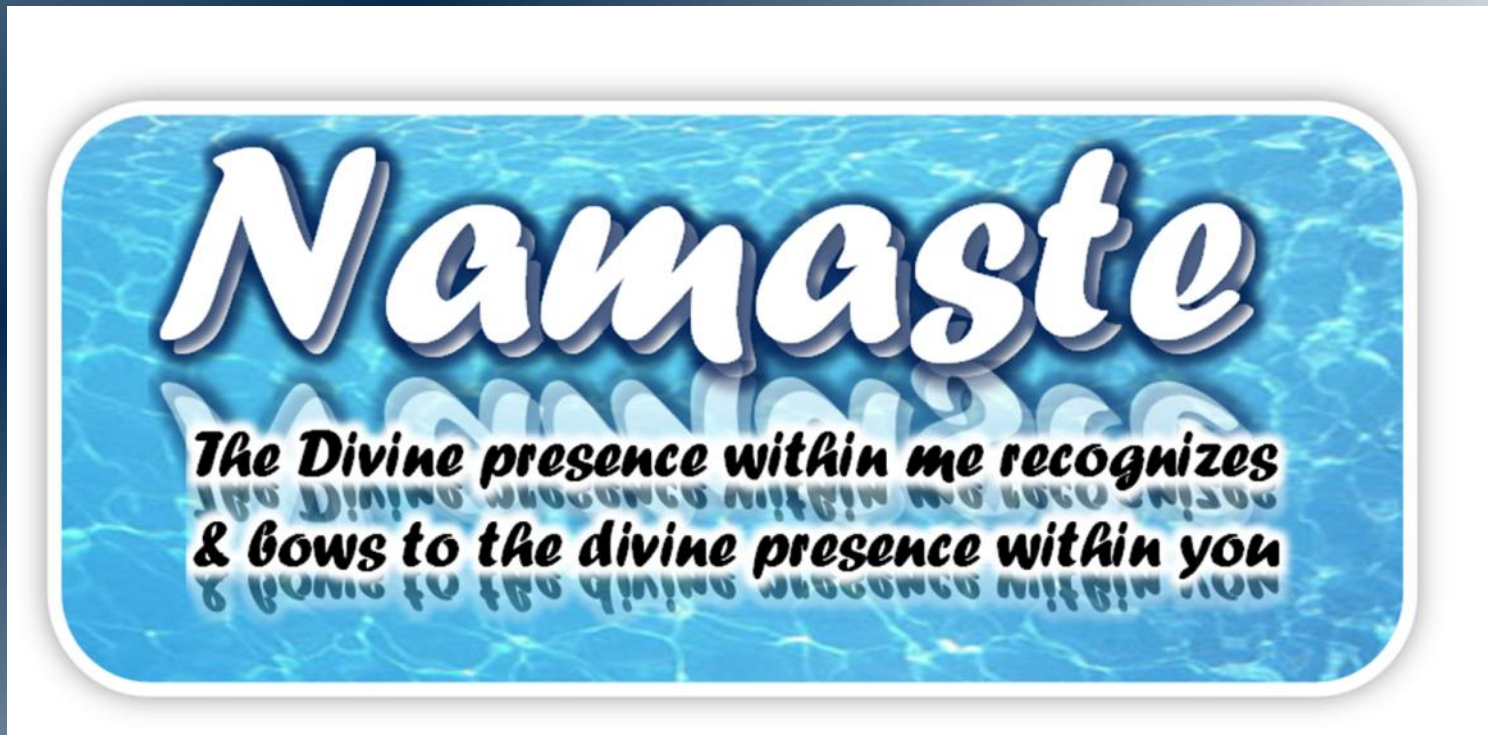
I am exceedingly grateful not only for everyone on this journey, but the challenges I have faced. As I am now in Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center, I have been afforded with the beautiful ability to start a Peer-Led Yoga class, "Eight-Spoke Wheel Yoga". Already it has been profoundly rewarding, & we are just getting started on how many can be impacted by the benefits Yoga has to offer. As we embark on this new chapter & share it with each other, I find I am deeply grateful for those who believed in me, almost from the moment I got here.

When you maintain a deep work ethic, & integrity, you will find **your blessings come right behind your challenges, you just have to have the deep patience to let the water settle.** I thank Mark Stephens, Marco Canas (I see you in Graham, and then Vienna, Na-



maste), Buddha, Eddie, Vamp, John, D-Block, Antonio Strong, Ms. Christine, & so many more for sharing Yoga with me. I thank Rolla, Blades, Imhoff, Tasker, Holmes, Beaty, Louck, Rowan, & Warnsing for supporting my endeavors. I appreciate former supervisors that allowed me to leave work to teach something I hold so dear to my heart. I thank Wardens Jones for trusting in your staff's support of me, & Carothers for granting Eight-Spoke Wheel Yoga, & more possible.

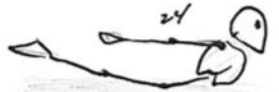
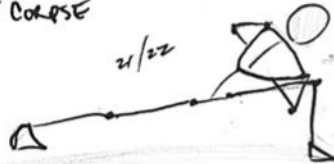
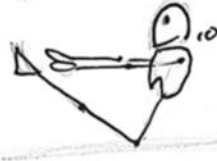
I thank all of my practitioners who share this journey, and believing in me, this opportunity, and yourselves. May your journeys be blessed with light and peace.



FOUNDATION FUNDAMENTALS

ANTONIO ESPINO
2025

- SUN SALUTATION A
- SUN SALUTATION B
- CLASSICAL SUN SALUTATION
- PLANK
- SUPPORTED SIDE PLANK (L)
- SIDE PLANK (L)
- SUPPORTED SIDE PLANK (R)
- SIDE PLANK (R)
- COBRA
- REACHING CHILDS
- 1/2 LOED of FISHES (L/R)
- BOAT
- BRIDGE
- 3/4 LUNGE (L/R)
- 1/3 TRICEP (L/R)
- 1/6 CHAIR
- 1/4 REVOLVED CHAIR (L/R)
- 1/9 FORWARD FOLD
- 20 1/2 FORWARD FOLD
- 22 REVOLVED NIGHT LUNGE (L/R)
- 3 PLANK
- 4 LOCUST
- 25 DOWNWARD FACING DOG
- 27 REVOLVED DOWNWARD FACING DOG (L/R)
- 28 CORPSE



HOROSCOPES



Aries: Don't Overdo it or let anyone take advantage of you. Relax, rethink your plans and adjust whatever is slowing you down. Don't structure your life to suit others when success is your responsibility.

Translation: You don't need to agree to everything they say, just shut up, listen and thank them for sending the Westo.



Taurus: Think big and get involved in something that makes you feel good about yourself. Hard work will make a difference and provide insight into how you want to live your life and spend your time.

Translation: Its about time you get your lazy @## to the yard. Don't talk about it, be about it... give me a 100 Burpees .



Gemini: Stop, reevaluate what's happening around you and avoid doing something unwise. Choose discipline over emotional mayhem. Do something that you find satisfyingly.

Translation: Don't trip its gonna be OK. Buddy is a clown and it ain't worth it. Calm, happy thoughts. Go eat a glazed honeybun instead.



Cancer: Pitch in and help others. Express your concerns and suggest solutions. An interesting idea will lead to a new way to spend time and make extra cash. Try not to take on too much or stretch your budget.

Translation: At the end of your shift empty out the mop buckets, and don't try and bring that back, they shakin down tonight.



Leo: Rethink your financial strategy . You'll have to tighten your purse strings if you want to save money. Don't let others define or change you. Make your intentions and desires clear.

Translation: Your thoughts on tonight's game was a big NO, double up on the other parlay ticket, it a hit.



Virgo: Be receptive to information that comes your way, but verify its validity before you share it with others. Be energetic but not aggressive in all things today.

Translation: Double check that HB number, before you quit your job. It didn't get signed yet.



Libra: Rearrange your home to suit your needs. Sort and declutter. Don't let laziness set in when you know you'll feel better once you have everything in order. Keep busy and learn as you go.

Translation: Seriously, you need to hit behind the boxes, the ants are getting into nutty bars. Quit being a nasty Viking.



Scorpio: Fill in the blanks, and you'll get your answer. You can fix an emotional situation if you share your feelings. Don't let your secretive nature stand between you and something you want. Love is favored.

Translation: Don't be afraid to tell moms that you not trying to go to her house on parole. She'll be pissed but she will understand.



Sagittarius: Don't fold under pressure. Someone will use emotional manipulation to push you in a questionable direction. Put your energy into something that will strengthen your position.

Translation: **No, means No! You shouldn't be drinking that "PopBomb/PourUp" at 9:30 lockup on a Wednesday night.**



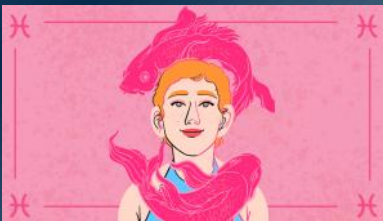
Capricorn: Head to a place that puts your mind at ease and brings you the comfort and confidence you require to move forward. Focus on home, family, and improving your relationship with others.

Translation: **Covid protocols are over but you don't always have to be in the dayroom. Tell your celly to get out and read a book.**



Aquarius: Stick close to home. Bypass situations that are extreme, tense or indulgent. Observe rather than get involved in something that can disrupt a relationship. Keep the ball rolling.

Translation: **You don't need to be playing at the boat right now. Watch from a distance, it ain't your night tonight.**



Pisces: Put every ounce of your energy into what's important to you. Turn an idea into a way to save money and live with less tension. Spend time pampering yourself and relaxing with a loved one.

Translation: **Think about it before you go out and get that 2 for 1. Are you really that hungry for a Scooby snack?**



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.





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!**

