

TWO ROADS

PRESENTS



Volume 39

BEST OF THE REST II

TO ALL READERS

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

Rehabilitation involves the struggle for change one confronts during incarceration.

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

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

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

TWO ROADS Editorial Staff

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

TWO ROADS

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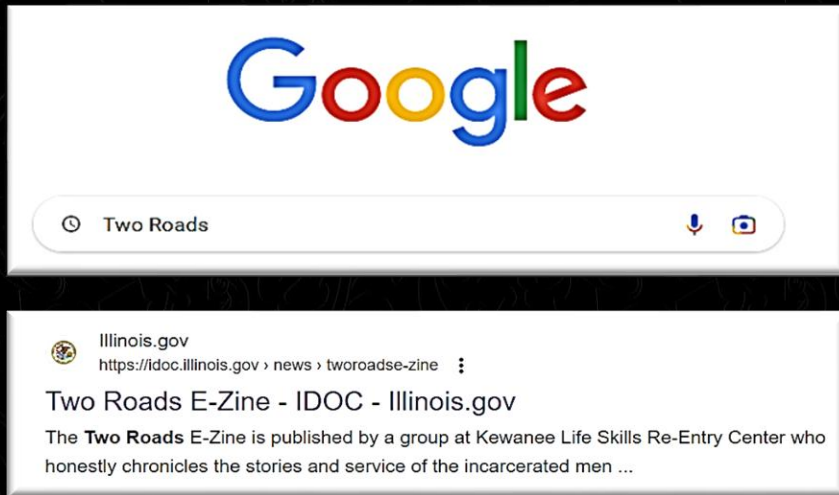
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Want Your Family & Friends To See Your Article?



We encourage you to screenshot this page with the hashtag:



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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

DISCLAIMER

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

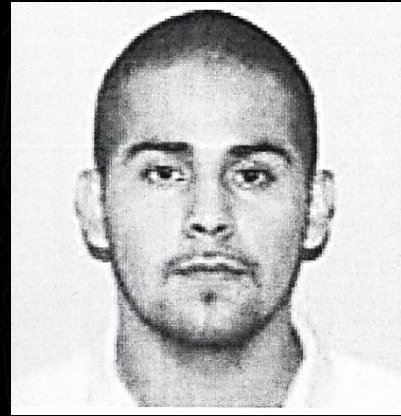
THANK YOU!

EDITOR'S TAKE

Francisco "Sisco" Sanchez
TWO ROADS Editor

Allow me to reintroduce myself:

MY NAME IS SCO! Actually, it's Francisco, but my friends call me by every variant of my name, like Sco, Sisco, or *PAPI CHUULOOO! LOL* And that face on the right, man, I remember it like if it was yesterday; young, dumb, (*Yeah, handsome*) but arrogant and ignorant AF! Today, I'm still young, still handsome, but NOW I'm incredibly intelligent, mature, and... I still got it. *lol*



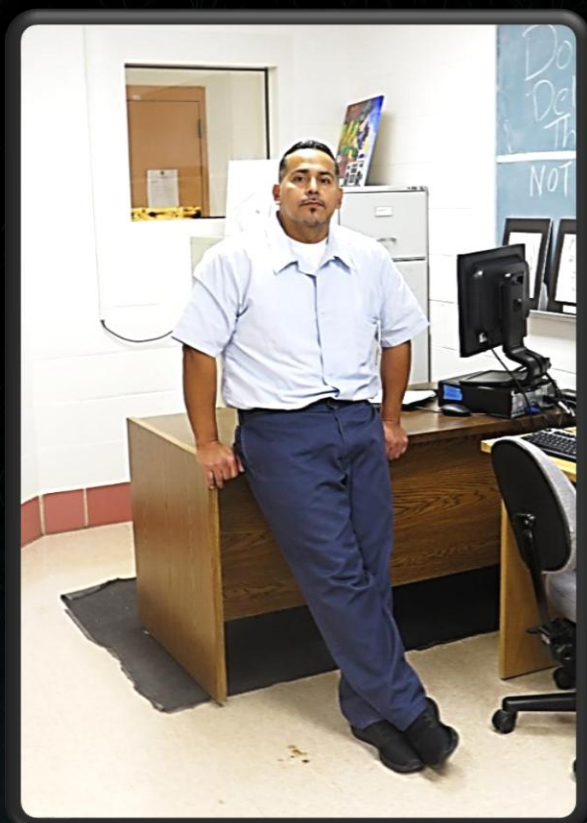
Seriously though, I've come A LONG WAY! I was the stereotypical, criminal-minority gang member full of himself. Without glorifying it, I used to frequent seg for fighting, shanks, smoking weed, drinking hooch, gangbanging (*All of it!*).

Today, as a result of recently completing Custodial Maintenance at Lake Land College, I will soon be acquiring my Associates Degree in Liberal Arts. I'm currently using that to acquire my Bachelor of Arts Degree with Lewis University. I'm an Industries Clerk; I've worked in Industries for the last 8 years. While in Industries, I completed three Department of Labor (DOL) Apprenticeships: Dairy Technologist, Recycling and Reclamation, and Office Manager and Administrative Services. I'm currently working on my fourth DOL Apprenticeship in Journalism.

I'm part of Kewanee LSRC and American Job Center's Virtual Reality Program seeking certification in Manufacturing and Construction. I'm VERY fortunate, and excited, to be in the Kewanee LSRC Industries Welding Class where, if I score high enough, I can be certified by the American Welding Society (AWS). Also, I am very lucky to have been selected for the Defy Ventures program, where we will cultivate our personal character and deepen our entrepreneurial skillset. And as you already know, I have the privilege to be one of the editors here at TWO ROADS E-Magazine.

I share this with you because I want you to know that once you get past the surface, you SEE the aftermath of all the hard work, commitment, patience, heart, and humility I PUT IN to get it done (*And did it RIGHTEOUSLY!*). No boasting (*For pride comes before a fall*). Rather, I keep my ego in check by being grateful to GOD for all the experiences He has blessed me with during my last 27 years of incarceration (see my article, "Through The Lens of Gratitude" in "Attitudes of Gratitude" Volume 36, p. 14, TWO ROADS E-Magazine).

This is true about MANY OF US doing time. Which is why I wanna acknowledge all the GOOD BROTHERS (*Some still doing life!*) AND SISTERS (*Shout out to all the women doing time the RIGHT WAY!*), who through their example, thought me worthy of their time to pull me to the side and give me a dose of raw honesty and truth about this *vida*. It is because of these *hermanos*, and many unsung heroes locked up in their cells in medium & max joints across the state (*And across the continental U.S. of A.*), that I do my part as an agent of positive change—to pay forward all the blessings I've received and to constructively influence and encourage those who are on their own, and often times, lonely path of Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Re-Entry (*Keep your head up! Y Puro Pa'delante!*).



Thanks to all those who have contributed a part of themselves, through their writings, to TWO ROADS (*Please keep'em coming*).

I want to extend an invitation to all those who are still holding back but have some gems many of us can learn from (*We want to hear from you!*).

This is not MY platform. This is YOUR platform. This is OUR platform.
WE are TWO ROADS!

Get at us!

Real Talk,
Sisco

I am thankful for
all of those who
said NO to me.
It's because of
them I'm doing
it myself.

- Albert Einstein

Attitudes of Gratitude

First and foremost, I give gratitude to Allah. All praise to Him.

Secondly, my attitudes of gratitude are to my mother and her two sisters, my aunts, they have been an inspiration for me to become a better person, and to really find my worth.

This bit, over time, has been very humbling, so I am so grateful to God and my family for supporting me and not giving up the love throughout my growing process.

Also, thank you to TWO ROADS for giving me a chance to display my gratitude.



DelamesSullivan@MenardC.C.

One Inch

One inch might not seem like much, but an inch can change everything.

You could win or lose a race by a few inches. Perhaps someone survived but would have perished if the injury were an inch to the left or right. Every inch forward that we move in our lives matter. It is better to put in a little work than no work at all. Small effort surely beats no effort.

Always take the initiative in your life. Assertively govern your progress, as you daily make some sort of improvement in your life. A little something is better than a big nothing. One inch at a time, you will get your feet, your yards, and eventually your miles. So, be encouraged even if the progress seems slow, and always know that your every effort counts for something.

Start small! The more you do, the more you can do. In any endeavor, in the beginning you might start at a snail's pace. However, if you keep going you will enter your cheetah's grace. If you do not yet have the capital, you can pay in sweat, which will one day pay dividends. Keep doing your thing, and one day overnight it might seem you will be proficient in your education, job, career hobby, or craft. Sometimes an inch is all you can take, when life is so busy. However, theses inches add up. They all count and amount to much if they are built up, collected, and are traveled every day.

It will ALL be okay. Do not stop pursuing your dreams, and definitely do not surrender your destiny. Start, go, finish strong every day, and don't forget to get plenty of rest. I wish you the best and here is to your success.



Earl Milton Jr.

Protect Children

Say his name: Deandre Allen Jr., affectionally known as Lil Dee, a 17-year-old rising football star, senselessly killed in his own front yard. I am proud to be his mother. Yet ashamed of this cycle of unprotected children – a cycle that has been ongoing before I was an unprotected child.

What happened to our communities' creating organizations and outlets for these families that struggle to care for their kids? Not just those that are incarcerated but for those that experience homelessness, limited food, uncleanliness, bullying, lack of proper counseling, education, healthcare, and domestic violence in their everyday lives as well.

If you've never felt unsafe as a child, you'll never fully understand the effect it has on you as a child into your adulthood. When we feel a sense of security we latch onto it and start accepting things we don't deserve. Not realizing the effect it has on our kids when that safety is compromised. The cycle continues, then our children start to feel unsafe as we once did. Kevin Gates said it best:

"Protect children, you not suppose to hurt children. We all been through things, it's not our fault you gotta work with them."

As a mother of a murdered child (My only child), I felt guilty for making him feel unsafe by me not being present in his everyday life. Knowing the effects it had on me by not having my mother present. I'm diligently working to overcome that guilt through the mercy and guidance from Allah. By being an advocate and outlet for those that share a common ground of losing a loved one whether through violence, penal system or DCFS, the pain is still the same. It's never too late to give back in support of keeping our kids happy, healthy, fed, clothed, counseled, educated and safe. With me being an outlet for others, my son's name lives on in me and our community.

Help Us Keep Our Families Safe

If you share the same pain, Stand up and say their names: **Deandre Allen Jr.**

Evelyn "Qimayah" Jackson

So I Think

They don't teach us

Control
They teach us to be
Controlled
Like a deep sea
Of tears
Flowing with a current
Each droplet unique
But stuck in the
Invisible force of nature
That pulls and pushes
It around like all
Those around
Never showing
How to break the cycle
Of drowned
Lost to
The control
That is inevitable
To surround
To think
I don't spend my days
Dreaming up all the ways
I could mess up things
To think
I don't lay around
Trying to turn this frown upside down



To think
You don't break heads
With the things you say
Would be a waste of your beautiful brain
I feel the fact that you find peace
Tearing my life apart, ripping the boards out
From beneath my feet
Taking the whole foundation
In which I had stood upon
To turn me upside down, how my every path
Which you believed was wrong
I hope someday you see
My gained grace, in the ways I tell you thanks
Because since that day
I have worked so hard
To build a new house
Upon a floor
No one could be strong enough
To rip apart, except me
As I learn control that washes away controlled
With a deep sea of tears

Sarah Mecum

Don't Fear Change

Hi everyone my name is Javaughn, but everyone calls me Von.

I've been incarcerated here at Vienna C.C. for about three and a half years now and would like to share with you my journey towards change.

I'm a mentor here in a program called Project Phoenix, and I must admit I'm very intrigued as well as captivated by the many different curriculums. I've been completely encouraged by the empowerment of the participants and mentors, both individually and collectively. I would like to use this opportunity to encourage anyone that's afraid of change. Change is not easy but it's a necessity for growth. Being afraid of change is the bondage that holds us captive and ultimately stands in the way of you being the best version of you. You will never know what you can accomplish when you're always comfortable at doing what you been doing. I was once told that comfortability breeds contentment, and contentment leads to complacency. What I'm saying is in life you have to become uncomfortable in order to grow, when you're striving for your greatest you.



I myself was very hesitant to leave my comfort zone and afraid of change. It was when I took a step out on faith to become a participant in Project Phoenix, which ultimately led to me being a mentor is when my bondage no longer became my fear. One thing I've learned is you can't allow your emotions to overpower your intelligence. The process of evolution is constantly building our tomorrows out of our todays. No one is going to help you figure this out. You have to be accountable and take initiative yourself. I know that the change that has occurred inside of me is very noticeable, and I thank God for it every day. I just want to encourage everyone who's reading this to step out of your comfort zone and overcome the fear of change. As we continually grow. Now that's change. *"You got to grow through what you go through"-S. Cooper*

Javaughn "Von" Cooper

Everybody is at
war with different
things...

I'm at war with
my own heart
sometimes.

– Tupac

Foundations of Principles

I have had many positive influences in my life over the years.

I have been locked away since I was the tender age of 15 for murder. During the 15 years I have been locked up I have come across many people – some positive, some not. However, with me being so young, they helped me out in so many ways. I had to grow up fast; I had to learn so many things not only on an educational level, but also on the convict level as well. There were many unwritten codes to adhere to coming into a prison system, especially coming into a maximum-security facility. I was 18 years old in Menard C.C. I did not know what the "rules" of the concrete jungle were, yet I had to learn really quick, or I would have had a much harder bit than I have already had.

I am grateful to my dad, first and foremost, for making me a tough, respectful person. Respect is a must in prison; without it you will only have trouble. I always give everyone respect; however, I never allow anyone to walk over me in any way. So, for the foundation of my principles, I thank my father. For the rest of my journey, it has been fellow convicts who have helped pave my path towards a brighter future.

Many of you know who you are, and you have given me purpose, morals, and knowledge. That knowledge, though freely given, means nothing without change. One must learn to adapt, evolve, and overcome all obstacles in this life to succeed. I have not had my second chance at this life as of yet; however, with the laws changing, I know one day I will walk out of here a free man.

This is the first crime I have ever been charged with, and my intentions are to make myself better every day. I have so many good people who have fought for me over the years. It would be a smack to the face to all those good people who have taken a chance on me. I am not perfect; I have made mistakes that landed me in segregation for my actions. But one thing I will never do is give up on myself or those who want me home.

I want to thank the lady of my life, Bethany and her kids, for helping me focus on my purpose. For coming into my life and showing me how to love again. I have learned many transferable skills since being on the inside; I am a tattoo artist, painter, Certified Paralegal, barber, author, and I am still open to learn more. I have an entrepreneur's mindset, and I want to be successful, I could not have made it this far without all those good people I mentioned.

To all my family, my friends, and my soon to be wife: Thank you. I am forever grateful, and my purpose will be known. I will make you all proud; the fame of one who earns it will never die. My goal is to have my greatest deed live on long after me! Stay positive and Stay True!

Thank you for your time



Clifford Baker

Inspirational Thoughts on Rehabilitation & Change

The importance to rehabilitation and change is that we have to WANT to rehabilitate and make the change.

We fight demons and challenges every day. We have to find different activities to keep our focus. Whether it's drawing, painting, working out, meditation, praying, or just talking to family, friends or someone that helps keep a positive mindset. In addition, a great way to change is attending meetings and groups to see the perspective of others and how they have overcome the same obstacles you have faced. Also, you could be the one to help others with the battles you overcame and the steps you took to accomplish them.

One other thing to change is our surroundings, we have to be willing to separate ourselves from certain people—friends and sometimes family. As hard as it is, if people cannot respect your life decisions, then you have to let them go. Because if you have a hard time with self-control then it is only a matter of time where your temptations kick in and you lose it. Then you are back in the same revolving cycle.

Never doubt yourself; you can do anything you set your mind to. You can be the person you want to; just remember, NEVER GIVE UP, never give in and always push towards being on top. You got this, and there's always amazing people out there with great support, and great encouragement to help keep you on the right track.



Believe in yourself

Garrett Lewis

"A Tale Called Failures of Life"

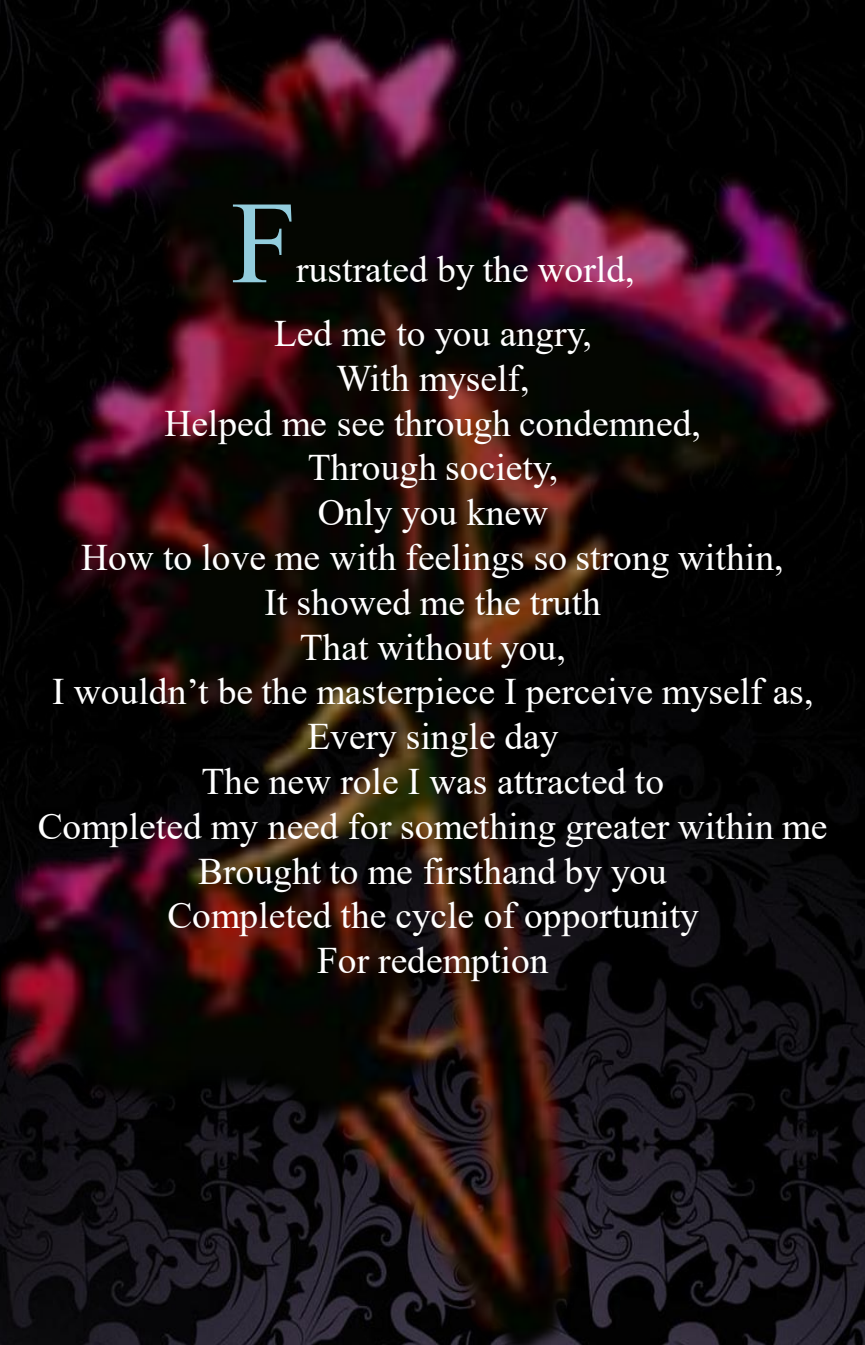
For many years, I began to believe that I was destined to bondage, poverty, and failure.

See, when WE persist in this view of our life, we give up the real possibility of change. I settled for trying to survive. I lived in fear and shame too long. That led me to resentment as my life went downhill. I couldn't overcome the negative assumptions about myself. I allowed the devil to control my core being as a person! As I have allowed my life to get out of control, I hurt family members and myself. Sometimes the insanity of living with guilt can cause YOU to do bizarre things. We may be searching for shortcuts to happiness. Yet the road of life often takes US through painful places WE would rather avoid! I couldn't keep away. At least I've been given a second a chance and opportunity to redeem my failures.

Embrace your failures; because I couldn't control myself, my failure controlled my inner being. Now I say, start over and correct your failures in life. Don't be shackled by failures, mistakes, and sins of the past. If I can change, then I know YOU can too. Respect the process...

Yusef Kareem Brown

Poetry



Frustrated by the world,
Led me to you angry,
With myself,
Helped me see through condemned,
Through society,
Only you knew
How to love me with feelings so strong within,
It showed me the truth
That without you,
I wouldn't be the masterpiece I perceive myself as,
Every single day
The new role I was attracted to
Completed my need for something greater within me
Brought to me firsthand by you
Completed the cycle of opportunity
For redemption

Sarah Mecum

Fortified Fatherly Duties

Lifetime of conflicted priorities, oppression,

poverty, and bad decisions; by design roads to prison; our fatherless children left to their own devices, fathers thinking they are still a good father from a prison cell, a clear abandonment of duties.

Empty words inflaming wounds of abandonment. Fathers believing letters, cards, phone calls are being a good father. Misplaced pride-mirroring narcissism, this discussion among fathers in jail taboo; the love for our children authentic. If that is true then this is not a debate, our children unable to eat letters, live under words or wear cards. Not advocating against those things, this is just an admission, apology, and cry for change.

Our children traveling roads of abandonment. Stripped of our unconditional nurture, love, time, and guidance. Pivotal moments missed leaving scars, no wonder they're hurt, angry, resentful, and distant. Unconsciously and consciously, we forfeited true fatherhood through our actions resulting in our incarceration; as boys do what they want to while men do the things they have to do and many of us did things we wanted to do. Hard truths provoking controversy, discussion, debate, and offense, a public service announcement; children without fathers a much greater chance to fail and keep the cycle going.

Our children cheated, we must self-reflect be eradicated of all self-righteousness, humbly submit our admission, apology, resignation of being a good father while in prison. Demoted to, at best, great guidance counselors. Hopefully it pains you just as much as it does me to understand this. I apologize to my one and only child Marcus E. Harris Jr. Hopefully one day I can make it up!



Marcus Harris

A Notion of Sentiment

An Attitude of Gratitude

In view of years past, so many people have touched my life. The kindnesses, and sacrifices made, make clear, the human capacity to love in extraordinary ways.

First, I want to thank my deceased mother, Ms. Ann Newsome; to put into words my attitude of gratitude would underscore her love, and worth. The Bible says; “it is only God who reads hearts,” mommy expressed a level of devotion that only can be given by God himself. I can recall times when she would make the family ”breakfast” for dinner, sausage, eggs, bacon, pancakes with the works, it was always a special moment, but it showed a standard of love that was unmatched and spoke loud of the kind of person she was. I can’t even mention the countless Christmases, and Easters she made special, that would be something of story books. I’m the youngest of seven kids, and she treated me as her baby all the way to her dying day. For my twenty-three plus years of incarceration, she always sent me money, answered the phone, and made visits; this is something worth more than riches. I’m 61 now, and mommy just passed April of 25 – to express the love she showed would be equal to a whole set of encyclopedias. But I just need to give her a shout out and let it be known the impact she had on my life, I love you Mommy!

Because of the freedom of choice, and humility, I embarked on my journey of incarceration with the goal of being a better man. I owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who enter behind these walls and give of themselves in support of what society considers “worthless people.” They show a level of compassion that only can be likened to the love of God. They know human frailty, and the power and need of a second chance. They say, “Mainstream society may have given up on you, but we haven’t.” This goes out to all the pastors, elders, and volunteers who bring all the love that help us get by every day and give a glimpse of Godly love that is so absent in the world today. To all the teachers that help educate us, and help in the process of growth, and

development. It was said that, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," in most journeys to renewal, things start with our thinking ability, which is a process of the mind, so I tip my hat to all you educators, and thank you for your years of service.

But the most powerful impact of graciousness I've seen in my entire life has been that of all the individuals in custody I've encountered on my bit. Many have shown great empathy in the face of countless hardships; when my mother died, I was distraught and overwhelmed with grief. I screamed and cried, almost in a state of panic. But two dudes from my wing came and hugged me so tight, where the very emotion from my pain was absorbed right into them. They were there to comfort me in my weakest moment; it was the most exemplary act of compassion I ever felt and one I will treasure for the rest of my life. The camaraderie aspect of things is "lifetime" movie status; people give of themselves in every shape, form, and fashion. If you're on the new, people will reach out to you and make sure you have soap, and toothpaste, they'll clothe you if you need underwear, sweats, and even shoes. Many times this is done to total strangers but even more so if you know someone.

In some instances, newcomers are reluctant to receive handouts, mostly because of trust issues. Being kind is not exactly the norm of today, and in certain situations though, you do need to be careful. I've experienced gratitude firsthand, someone would hand me a burrito, I'd say "Why did you do that for me?", and they would say, "I was just thinking about you, and decided to hook you up", that kind of stuff you can't understand. I think of the instinctive nature of mankind, our natural inclination is to be hospitable, you see this when parents interact with their children, it's an indwelt active spiritual gift. Much love to all the many men across the state who have touched my life, as the saying goes, "GRATITUDE"!

As always, I give a big thanks to Two Roads, and Kewanee, for making this platform possible, to let all see in me the side of sentiment they never knew I had. My hope is to see justice reform open up for all of us, men and women, so that our light and new personality will bring about change, and impact views and institutions that shape our lives and the world...In Solidarity!

Last Words:

**A true friend shows love at all times,
And is a brother who is born for times
of distress... A good name is to be chosen
Rather than great wealth. To be respected
is better than silver and gold.**

Vincent Spencer



It always seems
impossible until
it's done

– Nelson Mandela

Better Youth Programs for the Urban Poor Community

A quote to begin with:

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

—The Buddha

Youth programs today are not that different from youth programs that I’d frequently attended during my elementary and adolescent years. Most of the youth within the urban poor community rely on places such as: The Boys and Girls Club, Y.M.C.A., and Christian Friendliness groups. All searching for a place to be, other than a house divided by domestic violence or gang ruled, drug infested streets.

Which is still a positive rout compared to the negatives. What I am getting at is most of the youth programs in urban poor communities have yet to apply within the programs any teaching or learning that can assist them through the struggles they may face in general.

Most of the time it’s all video games, basketball, lounging around, eating snacks, or computer access just to check social media accounts. There’s usually no serious support systems at all, such as mental health awareness or life skills tutorials.

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

The very place they've tried to escape, I have been impacted by this time and time again. When school failed to give me nourishment academically, and my home failed me as well, I turned to youth programs. They were a safe place for some time until I grew out of them.

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

I was about 24 years of age. That was when I began to open my eyes. I had purchased a DVD collection of four volumes called Hidden Colors. I was immediately intrigued. I began to seek more knowledge on my own, knowledge of self-past and present.

This was and still is my outlet, my escape, my joy and pleasure. I am more conscious today than I was yesterday.

Better youth programs within the urban poor community that provides services such as mental health, life skills, and self-directed tutorials for its youth can be a game changer. Think of it as a combination of youth programs and a community resource center.

This method will promote Moral Conscience, helping communities to raise our youth as a family. My idea is to use the youth center as a reading lounge for the youth and community—as a family, starting with self-help literature, and seeking solutions to make it fun for our youth.

A quote to end with:

"Endless our struggle must seem to those whose vision reaches only to the end of today. The present is where we get lost if we forget our past and have no vision of the future.

A healer needs to see years and decades ahead, because healers work for results so firm they may not be wholly visible 'til centuries have flowed into millennia. Those willing to do this necessary work, they are the healers of our people."

Ayi Kovei Armah

Dmarlo Q. Bryant

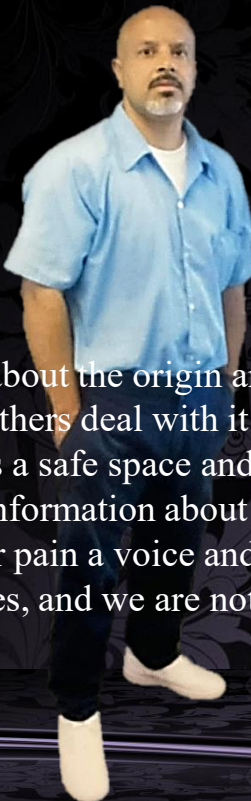
Letting Go & Letting Loose

As Salaam U Alaikum, greetings to all my incarcerated brothers and sisters and all our supporters on the outside. I've been in prison since 2009, and in my 16 years on the inside, I haven't had access to any forms of mental health treatment or therapy. I am aware that some people who have been diagnosed as mentally ill are able to receive some treatment for their illness, and while I pray that it is beneficial to them and they receive more treatment, I am still left to wonder what about those of us who do not suffer from mental illness. There has been no form of preventative care for us to learn to deal with depression, frustration, or normal stress of being in prison for an extended period, since there is no such form of therapy that I am aware of.

I have found my own form of therapy in two very different spaces. C.A.V.E. (Community Anti-Violence Education) is an anti-violence, trauma informed care class through U of I EJP. It's based on seven core commitments:

- Non-Violence
- Growth and Change
- Social Responsibility
- Open Communication
- Social Learning
- Shared Governance
- Emotional Intelligence

We learn about the origin and signs of trauma, how to recognize it, heal from it, and help others deal with it. C.A.V.E. is built on the sanctuary model, which means it is a safe space and the things we discuss stay in the room. We share deep personal information about our past, families, etc. It is very important to be able to give our pain a voice and to know that there are others who have had similar experiences, and we are not alone. Things get very emotional and sometimes



there may even be tears shed, but through our pain and healing, we have built a brotherhood where we hold each other accountable, check on each other's wellbeing, and invest in each other's success – with the help and support of our outside facilitators – on the inside, and when we are released.

The other place I have found my own form of therapy is quite the opposite. EIU Improv class with Dr. Tacke is a class where we learn short form and long form and improv as well as sketch writing. We learn through games like the Pancake game, expert panel, director, or two-line scenes. These games require us to listen, think on our feet, support each other and most importantly let our guard down. There is no sanctuary model in improv class, but we have sort of adopted “Vegas Rules” meaning what happens in improv stays in improv. One of the actual rules of improv is “leave your cool cap at the door.” There is no cool people or tough guys in here, because how can you be tough when you're playing a 3-year-old little girl, an 80-year-old grandma, or a one-eyed cat with fibromyalgia (*Yes, that's a real character! Shout out Trap for that one*).

Improv class gives me an opportunity to not be a convict, individual in custody, or whatever we are being called this month. For a few hours I can forget about prison, let my guard down, and just be a human being and laugh for a while. And they say laughter is the best form of therapy right. Unlike C.A.V.E., the only tears you may see in here is someone cry laughing. We've formed a brotherhood in Improv class too, where people who probably wouldn't associate with each other, can come and step outside our comfort zone, let our guard down, and bond over laughter without worrying that someone's going to go back to the deck and tell everybody “he ain't no gangsta, he was just playing a duck in class.” No, outside of class the most you might get is a subtle “zip, zap, zop” in healthcare or “pterodactyl” on the yard. I am looking forward to the day we can put on an actual performance and display what we have learned and maybe you will get a chance to see some of the super gangstas on your deck act a fool, and you can share some of our laughter and therapy.

Special thanks to Laura Kalmas EJP/C.A.V.E., Elena Quintana EJP/C.A.V.E., Eugene Moore EJP/C.A.V.E., and Dr. Elizabeth Tacke EIU Improv (who once drove through a tornado to have class with us.)

Thank you for your time

Jarrell Griffin

Within My World

My name is Esteban Miranda, but most know me as the One and Only “Alien.” I’m 34 years of age, from a little place called Humboldt Park, inside of Chicago. Although I’ve been incarcerated since the early age of 19, I would like to briefly speak on how sports, in particularly soccer, helped me transform my mind and evolve into the man I am today.

Entering prison with unresolved childhood traumas, a troubled past, and an immature mindset, I was closed off to communication that was outside of my comfort zone. Having the passion and opportunity to play soccer would unconsciously knock down any barrier that I normally upheld.



The little eight-year-old kid inside of me that has always been a competitive and disciplined teammate would “show-up and show-out” on the field. I found myself communicating with people of different ethnic backgrounds, sometimes simply by just asking other people to play soccer so that the team would be evenly matched. Having new associates and getting acquainted with them, on and off the field, of course grooming them to be winners to keep my record above .500, involved much communication to build bonds and strategy for and against opponents.

My initial interactions and communication may have revolved around soccer, but it didn't stop there. I now have friends and close associates throughout IDOC who helped me realize that we all come from different walks of life, but more often than not, we all have common interests that bring us together to share humanity—serving the purpose that we were all created for. My fellow Kewanee teammates would agree, just give me a soccer ball and I will build a WINNING relationship, contributing to my community, by staying focused to stay in shape with the mind, body, and soul, as well as to be accountable for each other, exhibiting a greater purpose.

I would love to thank any and every one that has contributed to and/or been directly responsible for my growth and creating spaces for recreational opportunities and events here at Kewanee and throughout my other IDOC stays. Congrats to the 1st place winners of the First Kewanee Indoor Soccer Tournament... but like I mentioned already, MY record remains above .500. I will be back for the throne (*LOL*).



Esteban Miranda

Call Out

TWO ROADS...

...WANTS YOU TO SUBMIT A 2-3 PAGE ARTICLE, OR SHORT POEM, TO OUR E-ZINE ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?
- PREPARING FOR RELEASE (WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO PREPARE FOR RELEASE?)
- CALL OUT TO LIFERS: HOW HAVE YOU COPEd WITH A LIFE SENTENCE?
- POETRY: SHARE A SHORT POEM (MAX: 200 WORDS) ABOUT YOUR CHALLENGES, SETBACKS, AND TRIUMPHS
- WHO ARE YOU IN YOUR TOUGHEST MOMENTS (THE HERO, THE VICTIM, OR THE VILLAIN)?
- HOW HAVE YOU TURNED A NEGATIVE INTO A POSITIVE?

WE BELIEVE THAT BY SHARING OUR STORIES WE CAN EMPOWER AND INSPIRE OUR FELLOW MEN AND WOMEN IN PRISON TO BECOME DYNAMIC LEADERS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE IN OUR JOURNEY OF REHABILITATION, RESTORATION, AND RE-ENTRY.

REMEMBER, YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN SEE TWO ROADS ONLINE!

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THANK YOU