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11.1.18

Two Roads



STORIES AND SERVICE

An honest magazine, written by and for the incarcerated men and women
of the
Illinois Department of Corrections

"LETTER FROM THE EDITORS"
EDITORIAL BOARD

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JIM ESTES

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Letter from the Editors

Thank you for taking the time to read our first edition of the Two Roads Newsletter. We are Kewanee LSRC's Two Roads Restorative Justice program . This newsletter is our voice. Our mission statement reads in part “... we are committed to empowering those most impacted by harmful systems as servant leaders and agents of change. Using connecting tools such as stories and service, we will build the road that brings us together to conquer many of our societal ills such as violence, poverty and mass incarceration.” We are blessed to share our message of positive change, and do our small part in this monumental task of criminal justice reform.

Our newsletter focuses on three phases; rehabilitation, restoration and re-entry. These are the necessary phases of a successful incarceration. Rehabilitation involves the struggle for change one confronts during incarceration. Restoration reflects the refined version of one’s self we become during our incarceration. Our restored self seeks service, feels called to give something of worth to the world. Finally, re-entry. As we re-enter the world we begin our new and more productive life in the free world.

We are Two Roads, and we are becoming a valuable resource for our readers. We will serve you by sharing a plethora of information, entertainment, and resources suited to meet your needs. Join our movement.

Two Roads Editorial Board



Will Serrano, Flag Box Project July, 2018

TWO ROADS

Publisher's Letter

The people who write this newsletter live and work at Kewanee LSRC.

Two Roads Newsletter is our effort to craft stories and retell narratives of pain that liberate the teller and give a hard-earned, wise gift to the listener. The Men who bring you Two Roads are “Dreamers of the Day”. They know the restraints and false limits of a hard world, and keep on anyway. They serve a vision greater than themselves and have become servant leaders.



We did not choose our name, “Two Roads” lightly. As we prepared to launch, the guys asked me to write an article. I thought about our name. I gave some thought to how prison changes a person, and I set out with a blank sheet of paper and asked random folks questions related to the Big 5 Personality Inventory, as good a sketch of the social human as any. This is what I learned:

Michael Cannon (27 years) on "Conscientiousness", “I’ve seen everything since I’ve been locked up. It was about me first. Now I’ve grown. I don’t want to rob. I don’t want another man to come up short because of me. I am so much more than I was.”

Mannie Maddox (32 years) on "Extraversion", “I didn’t want to talk to nobody. There was always trouble. I found work and liked to work by myself. The main good thing about Kewanee, I’m in groups and classes and I talk. I’m starting to talk to more people. It’s getting so I feel like goin’ out there and takin’ off flying’.”

Charles Chew (8 years) on "Neuroticism", “I was more confident before I got locked up. Now I’m conflicted. I’ve seen the dark side of people and myself. It’s better here, but I know I won’t be comfortable in crowds in the world.”

Timothy Childs (10 years) on "Openness to Experience", “I grew up without a father and came to have trust in all the wrong things, like gangs . They led me wrong and let me down. Now I trust the Word of God. He don’t tell me to kill my brother, he tells me to love my brother. I live with integrity.”

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Two Roads, continued

Roosevelt Kennedy (23 years) on "Agreeableness", "I was a fun, friendly person before I got locked up. Then I started only trusting certain people. You had to know, to be sure. Now at Kewanee, people call me my name, like a human, a man. It's been so long since I've been treated like this, I'm actually tearing up thinking about it. If you treat me like a human I can only respond to you as such."

Zora Nealy Hurston said, "There are years that ask questions, and years that answer." The men committed to this magazine have given many long years' thought to the meaning they seek in their stories. I am moved everyday as I learn their quiet stories of loss and strength. Now they draw near their return to the bright sun of our world, and they will make this a year that answers.

Jim Estes, Publisher



Walter Brown and Komell Riley Kewanee Garden October, 2018

Meaning Maker

Incarceration is a challenge unto itself, but what part is the greatest? Is it being parceled to a prison a long way from friends and family? Is it having every aspect of your life controlled? When to eat, when to exercise, when to buy food... Those are strong examples, but I believe the greatest challenge of prison comes in the form of being able to overcome the great challenge many of us carried long before hard, cold steel was placed on our wrists. That challenge is Us conquering Self.



Meaning Makers Town Hall Meeting March 30, 2018

It's during our period of incarceration we're forced to face our greatest challenge because we are locked in a five by nine cell with it, at times up to twenty-four hours a day. No longer distracted by ready avenues of escapism like drugs, women, or hustling. In our quiet, lonely cells we cannot help but see the cause of our struggles sitting right there in bed with us. Unfortunately, many of us have learned to ignore this person for years or even decades. Getting out of prison only to come right back because we never took the time to learn about or conquer our great challenge...Yet many do. Some of us accomplish this after a significantly subtle moment in our lives, a moment that provides much meaning; a moment that makes us deeply re-evaluate our lives and decisions and in turn pushes us to change. On March 30th, 2018 we did an amazing thing here at KLSRC, where we had twenty guys agree to be interviewed and discuss their very own "meaning maker" moments. For some, it was subtle moments in their incarceration; like a conversation with a five-year-old daughter explaining to a man that all she wanted for Christmas was him, or heavier moments like a guy losing his sister on her way to visit him. These are moments that force us to really look at ourselves and not just see the flaws but change them. Moments that lead us to true rehabilitation and True Rehabilitation starts with Us. So I end by asking: have you had your meaning maker moment? If not, ask yourself what's it going to take?

Ricky Hamilton

Two Roads Editor-In-Chief

Rehabilitation

Hundreds of men coming from corners, crevices and cracks now dealing with the consequences of bad decisions and criminal acts.

We had time to look in the mirror at imperfections we couldn't ignore our self-assessments humble us to our very core.

We've used this opportunity to mature and retain knowledge some acquire G.E.D.'s while others matriculate through college.

Just when society thought we lacked empathy or even self-pride we are now poised to become activists to improve the community in which we reside.

Simply speaking our truth, nothing fabricated everything scribbled or uttered has been authenticated.

We have an opportunity to purify our reputation to win over the hearts and minds of an entire generation.



Give Back

Most of you reading this have an out-date and all of us have big plans for that day, but what about the days that follow? What will the unfortunate time in these cells mean? Will we look back and see that we only sat and watched Maury and hit the gym, or will we be able to say that the time the State gave us was spent bettering ourselves? I know that not all of us have many other options but to sit in our cells and hit that gym when the doors roll and to those brothers: know that you are not alone. This is a call to action to all those incarcerated peoples with a desire to see this taken time spent usefully. Restoring your life when you step beyond the bars means more than hugging your girl and getting a job. These things are important but strengthening your soul, means more. For those of us with a mind for restoration it means going back to the communities we harmed and doing something to make them better then we left them.

This could be as simple as helping an elder safely across the street or as difficult as finding a constructive place for these kids to be after school instead of running the streets. We can help ensure that fewer people experience the horror of the places we currently find ourselves in; the loneliness, the feeling of abandonment, the humiliation at the hands of our jailers. Truly, the fate of the future of our mothers and sisters, sons and daughters is in our hands, we need only but take the steps to make a brighter place for them. It starts with us, here and now. It begins with us picking up a book, helping a brother with a noodle, or taking that GED.



When the day comes that the front door rolls and you step out into the world, what will you leave behind, what will you have created? You've already been down one road and you know where it leads, will you choose to travel it again or will you choose another? I am calling on you to use this time to consider the ways you can give back to the community you will go back to, to leave something behind in this world worth having. Don't do it for the state's forced penance and don't even do it for yourself; do it for the little boys and girls in your neighborhood who still have a chance to be better than anyone ever let us be.

Antonio Bowie-Rivera

Editorial Board

Will I Be Ready?

My name is Michael Cannon, better known as “Brother Saadiq.” Come 2019, it will mark the end of a 28 year nightmare called incarceration, GOD-WILLING. I’ve been away from free society for over a quarter “century.” That is a very long time...

My epic homecoming is quickly approaching. Will I be ready for the world of time and circumstance when I manifest back into the free atmosphere? Where will I live, what will I do, where will I go??? I was a young man of 29 years when I entered prison. All of my thirties, all of my forties, and now more than half of my fifties were lost to long-term imprisonment. Upon my release my age will be 57 years. I will be closer to sixty years young than fifties years old. I say it like that because I’m in great shape, probably in better shape than the average forty-year old man who has been out in the free world indulging in years of drugs, alcohol, loss of proper rest and diet. Yes, I have been preserved like a dinosaur fully intact like a woolly mammoth frozen in time found in some remote region of the Andes Mountains. Yes, I’m in great physical, mental, and spiritual shape with my moral compass squarely intact. But will it be enough? After all, probably the first thing a prospective employer will notice on my job resume and application is my age and picture an old man with a felony record who hasn’t had a job in thirty years. Why would he/she choose me when he/she has a pool of young men with an extensive and impressive job history to choose from? Where will I work, how will I eat. After I am given the \$10 and kicked out into the free world, where will I go when I get off of the bus in downtown Chicago? After I have stopped at Mickey D’s and bought a burger, fries, and a soda on the long drive to Chicago and am left with fifty cents in my pocket with cars zooming by and people rushing on their way somewhere at 100 miles a minute, what then? My stomach may be full for a brief moment but I’m sure that “Happy Meal” won’t feel so happy if I have nowhere to go from there, meaning no place to live. I mean all of my immediate family have died and passed on to the spiritual realm of existence, except for one sibling who left me for dead years ago. So...where will I go, will I be homeless? Where will my next meal come from, will I starve to death, or resort to eating out of garbage cans like so many other homeless people do? And oh wow, what if I get sick? I have no healthcare insurance so will I die in the street gutter?

Without any real answers to these REAL LIFE issues, will I resort to a life of crime in order to fulfill these needs? After all, the first law of nature is self-preservation, right? Will another human being have to come up short due to my come-up? Will I eat and live to the detriment of another person I have to rob, or do even worse? Fortunately for me, I won’t have to resort to any of these criminal acts because I methodically planned for my future in the free world for the past few years. I didn’t just sit on my hands and do the time. I made the time do for me!

I obtained my Associate Degree in Liberal Arts College Degree, and I got a vocational trade (Culinary Arts) under my belt. I’ve drafted business plans from A to Z and I have tried to prepare and plan ahead for all of the things I mentioned above. But is it enough?! Despite all of my years of planning, I’m sure you all agree that a brother is still going to need a whole lot of aid and assistance when this seal of incarceration is lifted and I manifest back into the free world.

Michael “Saadiq” Cannon
Two Roads Vice President



Paving the Road

For this first edition we spotlight St. Leonard's House, they paid us a visit here at KLSRC and I spoke with Program Director Christopher Roach and several other staff members. I was really impressed with their staff as they spoke with the residents. They were genuinely concerned with our desire for change. Having many staff members who were formerly incarcerated, St. Leonard's has a very unique care, concern and experience that appears very promising for those that choose to go through their program.

St. Leonard's House located at 2100 and 2110 W. Warren Blvd., Chicago, Illinois. St. Leonard's House provides interim housing and supportive services for formerly incarcerated men returning to the community from Illinois prisons. Their services include:

- Individual and group psychological counseling and group activities through the Adler School of Psychology programs to promote the development of life skills.
- On-site intensive out-patient substance abuse treatment. Addiction counseling and relapse prevention assistance in connecting with community support services.
- Housing placement assistance (transitional and permanent).
- Education and employment services.

Social and recreational opportunities; residents periodically attend a variety of activities that help them transition back into the community (sporting events, plays, Gospel music events, other social activities sponsored by other community and social service organizations).

In each edition we will feature a different organization throughout the state that provides a service or services in your area that can assist with reentry needs. The Illinois Department of Corrections does not endorse any of these organizations or guarantee that these resources will be helpful to everyone.

Two Roads

Restorative Justice Program

Kewanee LSRC Chapter



Left to Right,
Back row

Estes, Harding, Arrington, Price, Booker, Riley, Metzel

Center Row

Rosario, Brown, Taylor, Cannon, Bowie-Rivera, Hamilton

Front Row

Pizzello, Wharton, Chew