



## Message from Chair

By JoAnn Carrothers

What is Restorative Justice? Restorative Justice is founded on a vision of justice that heals and restores. It is based on an understanding that crime is a violation of people and relationships and that justice is served when those most directly involved in an offence are given opportunities to redress the harm caused. The values of Restorative Justice include caring and compassion, equality, healing, responsibility, truth and honesty, inclusion, trust, safety, respect, non-judgementalism, self-awareness, integrity, flexibility and empathy" -Church Council Justice and Corrections.

For our church newsletter I said, this week is Restorative Justice week, a week in which we consider punitive justice vs restorative justice, and forgiveness and acceptance in the community of those who have committed a crime against society. Restorative Justice enhances community safety and promotes healing of individuals involved with the law - victim or offender, through programs provided by The Bridge and other like-minded organizations.

Kylee, a family member whose life has been impacted by the present justice system says, "My wish is that The Bridge can make the public understand and see it from this perspective. Currently I believe that our systems (whether they admit it or not) are largely punitive, and to make matters worse, the general public tends to be all for punitive action as well. Usually treating past offenders as 'bad people' despite any efforts to make positive changes, and desires to be and do better. I think this puts people in a position of feeling worthless and sets them back into the cycle of harms."

Kylee continues, "I do not wish any member of the public to have to experience what it is my family has endured, but personal experience it seems is often what it takes to soften the heart and help people be more understanding. I do think everyone in the general public could understand and agree though that punitive justice does not help the offender make any positive changes or learn how to reintegrate positively into society. It creates a situation where they are likely to re-offend, which causes

## OVERVIEW

- Message from Chair
- Program Update
- Family Support
- Transitional Housing Update
- Words from the Inside
- Fundraising Update

harms to the community and costs the tax payers money. If they cannot care about the person behind the offense, they should at least care about the direct impact on society."

The Bridge, with the help of your support, provides programs to help clients accept their past and set goals for support from The Bridge programs and outside agencies to overcome addictions and mental health issues that may have contributed to their past actions. Family Support is also available as the entire family is affected by criminal acts.

Thank you to past donors, staff and volunteers for the past 40 years of support in making communities a safer place and by supporting clients to have a better life.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

# Program Update

## Ian Martin Life Skills Program

Being locked up in prison is really hard. People take it for granted that when you are released from prison you can just get on with life. Get a job, go to school and do what needs to be done to move your life forward. That's not easy when you've been told what to do and when to do it every minute of the day or when you've not had to take care of even the basics such as prepare a meal, do laundry or open a bank account. We saw this struggle come up with folks time and time again and reached out to Ian Martin for help. Our Life Skills program focuses not only on all the soft and intangible skills that are necessary to function independently in the community. It also helps build on the strengths people have to help the move their lives forward.



## Ian Martin Employment Program

Back for a second year, our case manager has once again been busy connecting inhouse and outreach clients with employment opportunities, training programs and employment related resources and supports such as resume writing, access to a computer, work related clothing, and interview skills. For 1:1 employment support please email [mike@hamilton-bridge.ca](mailto:mike@hamilton-bridge.ca)

## Bell Let's Talk-Men's Mental Health and Addictions Group

A big THANK YOU to Bell Let's Talk Foundation for giving us the opportunity to start a Men's Mental Health and Addictions Group. Our group is based on the Seeking Safety model of recovery. It's a facilitated peer support 'stage 1' trauma group that helps participants with a history of trauma who have been incarcerated learn how to recognize and manage their triggers in a more healthy way. It does not require participants to get into the trauma narrative. Instead, it focuses on learning new coping skills with the support of peers.



**Every Tuesday from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm**

**Location: Helping Hands, 349 Barton St. East**



### Executive:

Jo Ann Carrothers – Chair  
Wayne Baker – Past Chair  
Denise Mirabelli – Secretary  
Aydan Schat – Treasurer

### Members:

Adam Cox, Kyle Van de Vooren, Sarah Poljanski,  
Meghan Burgess, Miriam Wallbridge, Raman Autar

Board Meetings every 4th Wednesday of the month

**ALL WELCOME**

# Program Update



## **Outreach and Release from Custody Reintegration Programming**

When community members think about people being released from prison, they think of folks being picked up by loved ones carrying paper bags full of their belongings, properly clothed and connected to the supports they need to re-integrate successfully back into the community. In reality, this is not the case. Often people are released without ID, clothed in jail issued jumpers and slippers and with no prescriptions to fill their much needed medication. Many don't even have bus fare to get them home, that's if they have a home to go to or to get to shelters that are always full.

These are just some of the challenges people being released from prison face. Can you imagine the shame of walking down the street with only an orange jumper that tells everyone you just got out of jail. Not a great way to start your re-integration is it?

That's where our Outreach worker comes in. He connects with folks while they're in prison to find out what they need and works tirelessly to try and get it in place once the person is released. Whether it's a winter coat because someone was released in a t-shirt in the dead of winter or help getting their meds set up, we are there to help people not fall through the cracks.

The Bridge Hamilton outreach and reintegration services are for all formally incarcerated people seeking supports in areas of housing advocacy, income support, mental health & addictions support, social connections and life skills.

We are so grateful to the United Church of Canada Foundation who saw the the many gaps for people being released and providing much needed funding for our new:

## **Release from Custody Reintegration Program**



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
**FOUNDATION**

### **PLEASE HELP**

It's cold outside. People being released are in desperate need of warm coats, hats, mitts, pants and boots.

Gift cards are also always welcome.

# Family Support

## Family looking for answers in death at Barton Street jail | TheSpec.com



Zak with his three sisters Kylee, Haley and Rilea.

Excerpt from The Hamilton Spectator- Written by Nicole O'Reilly

"Zakery Rogers came out wearing corduroy pants that barely fit, a zip-up sweater with no shirt underneath and the blue, jail issued shoes Zak jokingly called 'jail force one.' They hugged and wept. Inside the car, she immediately asked about his prescriptions.

Zak told her he wasn't allowed to take prescriptions with him, but was promised they would be faxed to the pharmacy he chose- Samy's Drug Mart on Barton Street East. That's not what happened. The next few days would see Zak spiral. Just over a month after being released, Zak was arrested again and died in his Hamilton jail cell

Since it happened, Kylee has been fighting to get answers about how her brother was treated.

"For myself and my family, the most important thing we want is for people with mental illness and a history of drug abuse to be treated as people and given the same care and respect as that of anyone else requiring care," she says. "Especially by these institutions that are meant to keep them safe."

Do you have a passion for helping others? Do you want to make a difference in your community? We are looking for two new board members who want to help improve the lives of those who have been incarcerated.

Please email your resume and interest to [info@hamilton-bridge.ca](mailto:info@hamilton-bridge.ca) with subject line- Board of Directors.





# Family Support

It's scary having minimal to no contact with family and loved ones inside. With so many lock downs and limitations on visitations during COVID, it was easy to think the worst when you hadn't heard from those you care about in a while. It's even harder when you keep hearing about so many deaths in custody in the news.

Whether it's questions around bail, how to set up a TRAP line or just being around people who understand the pain you're going through, we provide a safe place to share and talk about what it's like to support a loved one in custody with our Family Support Group

**Meetings Held Every 2nd Wednesday  
2pm to 4 pm**

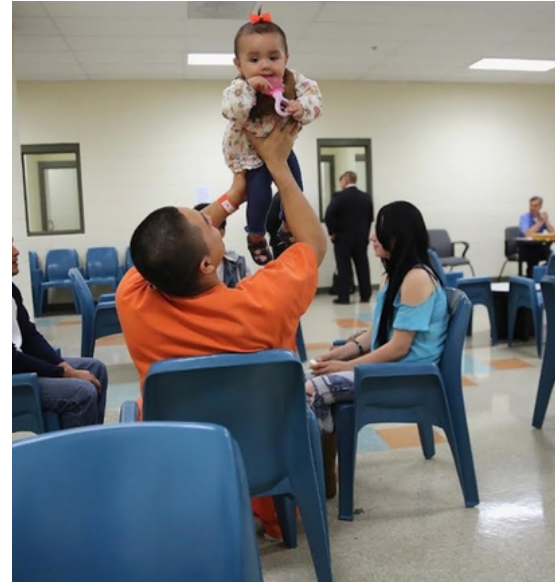
Rittenhouse: A New Vision

Healing, Community, Connections

An online group for families and loved ones of people incarcerated.

**Tuesday December 6, 2022 (biweekly)  
Virtually 5:30 pm to 7 pm**

[www.rittenhouseanv.com](http://www.rittenhouseanv.com)



## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

### Fire Update

Everyone has been asking how things are going at the House on Barton Street. After many months of uncertainty we have completed the demolition work to the house and just in time for winter. We know how important the housing program is for people released from custody who have nowhere to go and we are deeply saddened that we cannot offer transitional housing at this time. However, we are working very hard to move things along so we can get back into the house as soon as possible. We thank everyone for their patience and will continue to keep everyone posted with updates.



# Words from The Inside

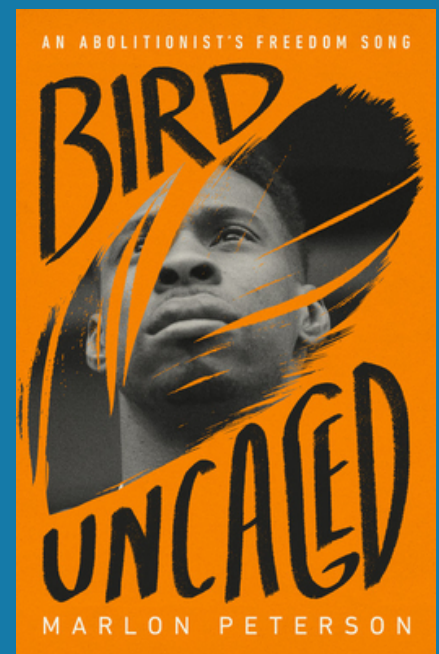
Bird Uncaged: An Abolitionist's Freedom Song by Marlon Peterson | Excerpt taken from Goodreads

From a leading prison abolitionist, a moving memoir about coming of age in Brooklyn and surviving incarceration—and a call to break free from all the cages that confine us.

Marlon Peterson grew up in 1980s Crown Heights, raised by Trinidadian immigrants. Amid the routine violence that shaped his neighborhood, Marlon became a high-achieving and devout child, the specter of the American dream opening up before him. But in the aftermath of immense trauma, he participated in a robbery that resulted in two murders. At nineteen, Peterson was charged and later convicted. He served ten long years in prison. While incarcerated, Peterson immersed himself in anti-violence activism, education, and prison abolition work.

In *Bird Uncaged*, Peterson challenges the typical “redemption” narrative and our assumptions about justice. With vulnerability and insight, he uncovers the many cages—from the daily violence and trauma of poverty, to policing, to enforced masculinity, and the brutality of incarceration—created and maintained by American society.

*Bird Uncaged* is a twenty-first-century abolitionist memoir, and a powerful debut that demands a shift from punishment to healing, an end to prisons, and a new vision of justice.



# "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill

The holidays will soon be upon us. We have just the thing you might be interested in AND there is NO COST whatsoever to you (or us)! When you purchase through our affiliate links below, we earn cash back on every purchase you make on the purchases you are already making. There is a large group of vendors to choose from! All you have to do is shop anytime with the brands you already love.

[The Bridge | Team Fundraising at FlipGive](#)

Also get Perks

Earn bonus cash with contests and promotions throughout the year. And, enjoy special offers from brands, exclusively for FlipGive teams.

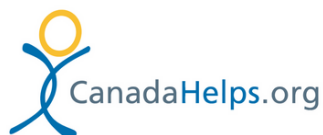
## FlipGive

## FündScrip™

### How it works

Pay for your everyday expenses & gifts with gift cards bought from FundScrip. Each purchase automatically includes a donation to the campaign. Nothing comes out of pocket, you just shop where you would normally shop, pay with gift cards and raise funds for The Bridge while doing it.

[See how it works](#)



*Giving season is upon us, this is your last chance to donate for a December 31st tax receipt.*

*Thank you for your continued support*

We would like to wish everyone a Happy Holidays and to thank our current and past funders, as well as all of our private donors. Our programs wouldn't be possible without you.



Do you know someone on the inside?

Are they looking for housing, resources or reintegration support.

They can call us collect at 905-522-0283

## Head Office

319 Barton Street East  
Hamilton Ontario, L8L 2X6

## Contact Us

[www.hamilton-bridge.ca](http://www.hamilton-bridge.ca)  
[info@hamilton-bridge.ca](mailto:info@hamilton-bridge.ca)  
(905) 522-0283

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