



A Second Chance

By Kylee Rogers

For the population that has not had experience with incarceration, or incarcerated family or friends the thought of prison often brings ideas of dangerous men, 'bad' people and very serious crimes. The fact is though that the majority of men serving time in Ontario prisons at any given time are considered medium to low risk offenders. Many are waiting for trial, or sentencing. More importantly, many of the men have committed petty crimes due to the precarious nature of the lives they were living. Often times they have suffered from trauma, job loss, addictions and mental health issues, and had little support to overcome these circumstances.

There is a direct correlation of trauma to incarceration, up to 60% of men that are incarcerated have experienced some sort of trauma or abuse in their lives. That is compared to only 3-6% of men in the general population. It is true that 40-50% of men that exit incarceration do re-offend, however the reasons found for re-offense include substance abuse, mental illness, low socioeconomic status, family issues, lack or loss of employment and education. When we take this into account, it is easy to see how we could be the change for these men.

Many of these men just need kindness shown to them. Studies have shown that by being given access to proper supports the rate of re-offense decreases by up to 80%. The reality is that what separates 'us' from 'them' is one wrong choice, one life circumstance, one small step. By being a supporter of The Bridge, you are being that one thing that could make the positive difference for someone, you are a supporter of successful second chances.

OVERVIEW

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- House Update
- Prison Pen Pals
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People can and do change.

I am not an anomaly; many people who are incarcerated have done the work and earned that second chance.

Program Update

Do you know someone on the inside? Are they looking for housing, resources or reintegration support.

Thank you to the United Church of Canada Foundation for their generous donation to start our new



FOUNDATION

Release from Custody: Reintegration Program

With these funds we will be able to provide intensive, trauma informed complete wraparound support for individuals being released from the prison system. Support includes connection to housing/shelter, income and employment supports, ID, food security, clothing, peer support, as well as addictions and mental health counselling.



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

Our Mental Health & Addictions group is 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.

Every Tuesday from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Location: Helping Hands, 349 Barton St. East

Backpack Program

As part of our reintegration services we will be providing men recently released from prison with some essential items to make their transition back into the community just a little bit better. We are gladly accepting donations such as toiletries, socks, underwear, t-shirts, shoes, gift cards, etc.



Executive:

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

Members:

Adam Cox, Sarah Warry-Poljanski,
Miriam Wallbridge, Raman Autar, Kylee Rogers

Board Meetings every 4th Wednesday of the month at
7:00PM

ALL WELCOME

Demonstration Dinner presented by The Bridge's own Chef Wayne



The Bridge continues to support the Hamilton community with their reintegration programs and supports for ex offenders and their families. This years first fundraiser promises to delight guests with great food and music. Special guest Cory Cruise will be performing. Cory has entertained at Niagara's Wine Tour and other events. All proceeds go back into the Hamilton community and help individuals and their families.

MENU



- Tomato Basil Bisque
- Egg Roll Casserole or Italian Noodle Casserole,
- Three Cheese Manicotti and Meat Filled Manicotti,
- Mushroom Risotto,
- Cheese Drop Biscuits,
- Chocolate Lava cake.



WHEN

Date: March 11, 2023

Time: 6 pm to 8 pm

Cost: \$40

WHERE

The Salvation Army Citadel
835 Stone Church Road East,
Hamilton

Tickets can be purchased from Joann at (905) 385-1832 or via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-bridges-gourmet-demonstration-dinner-tickets-453243392187>

Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY)

#CNOY

On February 25th The Bridge will be stepping out into the cold with tens of thousands of other Canadians to raise money and awareness in our community. Since 2011 CNOY has raised \$57,000,000. The money goes to Charity partners that provide critical services supporting vulnerable families and individuals in our community. The Bridge will have a team of walkers, as well as a table set up. Come out and join us as we strive to make a difference in our community.



You can support CNOY by registering your own team, sharing the cause, or supporting our team of walkers. Our team can be found at <https://cnoy.org/home>
Team name - The Bridge.

We walk on February 25th through the cold and the dark to raise awareness and show support for those in need in our community.

House Update

It's been a rough 10 months without the house. Our staff, our board and especially those we support are all getting tired with no home base.

Our board is actively looking for office space for us so we have a place where people can come participate in our Employment, Life Skills, Mental Health & Addiction, Dinner & Discussion Programs come for outreach services or just pick up some safe supplies, clothing, a bit of food or to just say hi. We aren't able to provide housing at this time but we still have a lot to offer those recently released from jail or working on their discharge plan.



Writing to Someone Inside

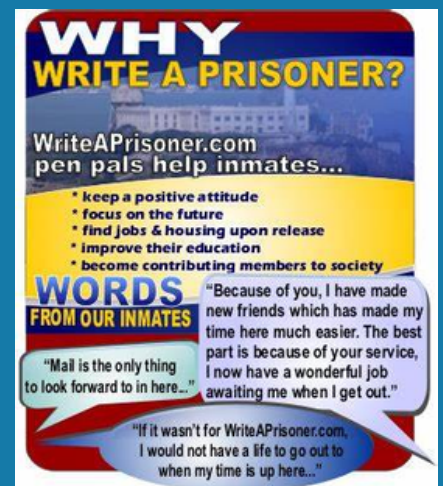
Write On! Prisoner Support Ontario
(writeonprisoners.wixsite.com)

Write On! is a group of concerned students, workers and Ontario residents who support and stand in solidarity with people in prison in Canada, both in the Provincial and Federal systems. They believe that providing resources and information to people in prison is a way to improve the quality of their lives.

They answer letters from people in prison and respond to their research requests. This can include requests for info on: general legal information, resources, programs and services, information on prison rules and policies, and other kinds of information that they need.

They also strive to learn from people in prison themselves through their letters, about the conditions of prison life, and the systemic challenges that they face. They use this information to raise awareness about these issues, advocate for the rights of people in prison, and work toward a more humane criminal justice system, while recognizing that carceral abolition is the only way to meaningfully achieve these goals in the long run.

For Ministry Guideline on writing to an inmate visit csc-scc.gc.ca



GETTING 'BACK' INTO THE COMMUNITY

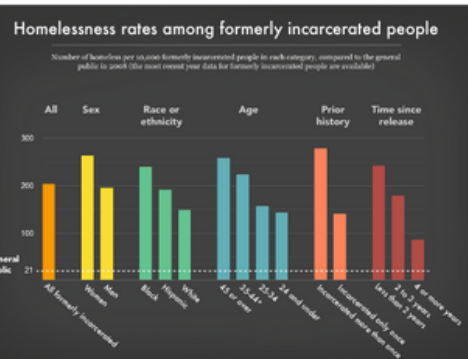
The Bridge has been collecting Mens items and gift cards to create Back Packs to provide to men exiting incarceration. To provide them with some basic needs. When exiting incarceration many of these men have nothing. It is difficult to imagine that someone will be able to make a positive change in their life, without basic human survival needs being met. A simple backpack a gift card, toiletries and an outfit can be all the difference in the world to someone. So far we have been able to fill 11 backpacks that will go to men in need.

Help Break the Cycle

The prison population is largely made up of disadvantaged individuals- Individuals of color, individuals suffering from mental illness and addiction, individuals of low SES. These individuals are stigmatized, and often have few resources available to them upon release.

We are collecting the following items:

men's clothing, socks, underwear, t-shirts/hoodies winter gear, gift cards, toiletries, backpacks and various other items



Facts/ Statistics

- Individuals who have been incarcerated have a much higher rate of homelessness than the general public.
- Youth placed in a group home are 2.5x more likely to get involved in the Justice System
- When children are incarcerated at age 17 or younger, 71 percent end up rearrested within three years of release.
- Males aged 20 to 39 years accounted for over one-half of admissions to custody in Canada (2019).
- 32% of Canada's Prison Population is Indigenous (2022).
- Mental illness rates are about 4 to 7 times more common in prison than in the community.

If you are interested in making a donation, or know someone that could use a Bridge Backpack Contact The Bridge at info@hamilton-bridge.ca



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
info@hamilton-bridge.ca
(905) 522-0283

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