

Inside The Walls

Volume 2, Issue 7

April 22, 2025

Anson Correctional Institution

Polkton, NC

Reaching Out from Within Sponsors Crime Victim Awareness Walk

by Michelle Theer



The week of April 4-7th is designated as Crime Victims' Rights Awareness Week by the US Department of Justice. Women's Reaching Out from Within (ROFW) sponsored the first ever awareness walk at Anson Correctional since it opened in 2019 in order to promote this cause. A Breast Cancer awareness walk had been attempted previously, but was cancelled. Over 725 residents of Anson Correctional Institution signed up for this walk, an amazing turnout and far above what was predicted.

This event served a variety of purposes, and one was to recognize that crime victims come in all ages, races, genders, and classes; just like crime comes in all varieties. Most people in prison were victims before they committed their crimes; many of the people here have suffered abuse as children, sexual assault, domestic violence or more. There is a saying, "hurting people hurt people," and the best way to stop the cycle of violence is to begin healing. Recognizing and acknowledging this cycle is the first step for most people.

On Tuesday and Wednesday residents came together in solidarity to show their support and walk to this year's theme, 'Kinship: Connecting and Healing.' The weather was absolutely beautiful and it was a perfect day for the event out-

side Tuesday afternoon. Many residents walked in honor of a particular person. For some it was family members who had been a victim of crime by murder, identity theft, sexual assault or dating abuse, stalking, domestic violence, money scam or fraud, elder abuse, child abuse, or the effects of addiction. A surprising number also walked in honor of their victim, the person they were here in prison for harming. Resident Tiffany Weber said she wanted to walk in honor of the person for whom she is serving a murder sentence, who died of an overdose after she sold them drugs. When she is released she wants to go to schools and speak publicly about the dangers of drugs to young people in hopes of saving them from the same fate. She and many others say that acknowledging the damage done by their crime has enabled them to find healing in the process.

The walk was a therapeutic event for the residents that generated positive conversation about recognizing the injury they have done to society, how to begin making amends for damage done, and healing their own wounds. ROFW member Dorothy Moore spoke with a group of residents during the walk who had all experienced domestic violence in their home and would like to see a support and recovery group, even if it is not formally moderated, for them to get together and process the abuse they experienced.

ROFW member Penny Jarrett shared that many residents told her both during and after the walk that they appreciated the opportunity to do something positive and uplifting. In addition, many of them donated hygiene items to be given to crime victims in the community.

Although there were no extra staff on the yards, it should be noted that everyone conducted themselves outstandingly and there were no problems despite all three yards being full; absolutely no disruptions, fights, arguments or horse playing were observed.

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Warden: Ms. Carol Torres
Publisher: Ms. D. Williams
Editor: Michelle Theer
Co-Editor: Gwen Moorehead
Photography: Sgt Bethea

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Mission Statement:

Our objective is to provide a platform for the voices inside, and to inspire positive change and prosocial behavior that demonstrates rehabilitation.



Moore unit residents walk in the gym.

Awareness Walk continued...



Hygiene items donated by residents.

(Continued from page 1)

{Full disclosure: this writer is Vice Chairman of ROFW and was the primary coordinator of the event which was requested by the parent organization at the state level.} The walk was

originally planned to take place for all units on Tuesday, April 8th during afternoon yard call, but due to communication and coordination issues it didn't happen that way. Moore unit had to delay their walk until Wednesday in the gym and Union got their snack the second day although they walked on Tuesday.

Speaking of snacks, Culinary Apprentices Jessica Tyson and Lori Chappelle deserve a huge round of applause for providing refreshments after the walk. They made delicious homemade cinnamon rolls and pineapple punch for all participants. It was an unexpected surprise for those who walked and the chefs went above and beyond! Many thanks also to Ms. Clark and Lt. Allen who oversee the kitchen for allowing them to provide this for the community.

While everyone was grateful to see Warden Torres and Ms. Bivens at the event in the gym on Wednesday, however,

it was disappointing that none showed up to participate in the event or cheer on the residents outside Tuesday when the majority of the population walked. Almost 400 hygiene items were collected with an estimated value of \$525. These items will be donated to Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition to help victims here in our local community. This is one way the residents here at Anson Correctional are seeking to make amends to those we have harmed. Although we may not be able to make direct reparations to our victims, we can begin to heal ourselves by helping our communities one small step at a time. Perhaps over time we can also help the staff here see that we are also more than just "offenders;" we are humans with a heart who want to better ourselves and the world we live in.



Resident Donna Walters enjoying a cinnamon roll baked by Culinary Apprentices in the kitchen.



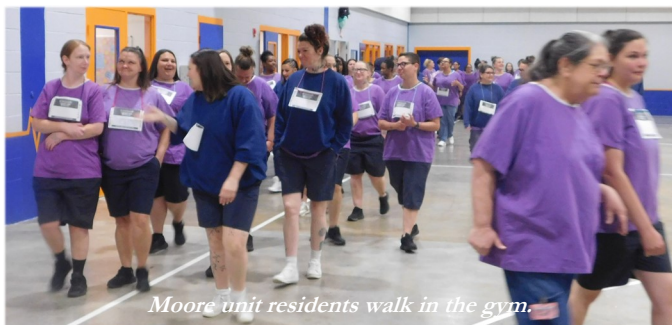
India Lindsay, Dorca Gomez, Ashley Velez & Whitney Steen.



Sherry Lyden & Jessica Lewis.



Autumn Burhams



Moore unit residents walk in the gym.



Chastity Davis, LaToria Anderson, Amber Garriss, & Patricia King.



ROFW Group Members

Crime Victim Services and Information

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Website</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Text</u>
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	988LifeLine.org	988	online chat
National Child Abuse Hotline	ChildHelpHotline.org	800-4-A-CHILD	online chat
Disaster Distress Helpline	DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov	800-985-5990	text
love is respect (dating abuse)	LoveisRespect.org	866-331-9474	LOVEIS, online chat
Image Abuse Helpline		844-878-2274	
National Domestic Violence Hotline	theHotline.org	800-799-SAFE	text START to 88788, online chat
National Elder Fraud Hotline	justice.gov/StopElderFraud	833-FRAUD-11	
National Sexual Assault Hotline	rainn.org	800-656-HOPE	online chat
La Linea de Ayuda Nacional de Abuso Sexual	rainn.org/es	800-656-HOPE	online ahora
Safe Helpline	SafeHelpline.org	877-995-5247	online chat
StrongHearts Native Helpline	StrongheartsHelpline	844-7NATIVE	online chat
Veterans Crisis Line	VeteransCrisisLine.net	988, then 1	text 838255, online chat

Congratulations to the newest HSE Graduates 2025

Jenny Childress
Ryesha Lovick
Jasmine Malloy
Michelle Mathis
Alexxa McKnight
Alexis Mills
Kandice Puckett
Wordaja Staton
Kayla Stroud
Pachea Tomlinson
Patricia Waldroup
Miklyou Williams



Great Job Ladies!
Never stop learning & growing.

Kairos Clipboard

April Attendance

Prayer & Share:

Union: 25
 Moore 44
 Richmond: 11
 504: 3
 Volunteers: 4

Reunion

Moore: 22
 Union: 17
 Richmond: 5
 504: 2
 Volunteers: 13

Let's Go to the Mardi Gras!

by Gwen Moorehead



Imagine walking down the hall causally looking at your surroundings. Then you peek into the gym and you see eight beautiful tables set up with decorations of various colors. These colors are a mix of green, purple, red, gold and blue. You see the Anson Alliance Club (AAC), residents took these colors and made beautiful decorations for

their Annual Service Club banquet, the first since Covid.

The vases that held the greenery were created and painted and glittered up so they would shine like diamonds. These vases were held down with paperweights wrapped in a colorful hexagonal mesh called tulle (a silk or rayon used chiefly for wedding veils and ballet tutus), on purple platforms. The greenery was added as colorful beads were strung throughout to look very festive. Next, berries of various colors were added to give a shiny effect. Then a masquerade mask that was created by the Photo committee was made for each vase in various colors and trim were placed in the center of each vase along with green or purple feathers attached for a special touch of magic. Let's not forget the colorful flowers in the corners at the top of each vase. The tables also had different colors of Tulle as centerpieces around each vase with gold foiled chocolate Easter Eggs were scattered on the table. Simply beautiful.

As the guests arrived they were escorted to their assigned seating and the program began. All administrative staff and case managers were in attendance. Mr. Smith and Ms. Murray from our PIE program were also in attendance. Jessica Lewis was the master-of-ceremony she was funny and had a lot of cute puns. The program started off with the welcome address given by Heather Surratt. Then Dedric Mason came up next, and told about what AAC does for the inside and outside communities. Then came a short invocation by Anita Mobley. Entertainment was provided by Crystal Owens- a beautiful poem and beautifully recited, called "Driven to Give." Gwen Moorehead- a poem written by her called "My Storm" written by her when she was in a bad place in her life, and a song entitled "My Help."

Lunch was served. The meal consisted of entrées: Pulled chicken or pork, Macaroni and Cheese, Barbecue Beans with pork, Barbecue sauces and pickles and onions, and collards, cornbread, and Ba-

nana Pudding along with tea or lemonade or water. The meal was enjoyed by all. Ms. Lish outdid her self on this one.

Tremayne Izzard continued the entertainment after lunch was served, a song was written by him in a time of grief, he left it untitled.

Everyone who knows him, he's sort of quiet and to himself, but at this banquet we all saw a side of him that was simply unknown to everyone who knows him.

Mental Health was the focus today. Ms. Saint-George from ACDP talked about this program being for those close to re-entry to society. She said "we want people to graduate as close to their release dates so they will try to remain sober and drug-free." If you are interested in this program send a request to Ms. Saint- George. Next Dr. Housen-Wong brought all her entourage with her to help demonstrate some of the different techniques for dealing with stress. This group talked about Sensory grounding and Body tapping. Great job

from our Mental Health Staff. Then Ms. Webster came up and introduced a program she called Progressing Through Therapy, she has offices here in Wadesboro and Greensboro NC. She talked about how everyone deals with mental health some way in their lives. No one can be happy all the time. People need the tools to be able to function day to day. Mental illness not everyone has this. But in maternal family members everything is usually passed down from generation to generation. All these talks were a welcome change on how people see mental health. What a great bundle of information that was planted in our minds.

The last entertainers "Fan Dancers" Donna Walters, Heather Surratt, Zenaida Talubee. They stepped it up to "Boots on the Ground."

Warden Torres thanked the Alliance Club for taking care of population. She told the crowd there are 1200 residents a lot of different emotions. Her and the staff here have been in training for programs they are looking to start here. She especially thanked mental health for being on called at night when they have crisis's that medical can't handle. Ms. Williams stated the Alliance Club's main goal was to be the example of good behavior. Keep being

that model it would be worth it in the end. She thanked Ms. Lish for doing what she does with the Alliance Club.

Ms. Lish spoke and then presented certificates and gift bags to the members. She wants this club to be kind to one another and

(Continued on page 5)



Mardi Gras continued...

(Continued from page 4)



Zenaida Talubee enjoys a good laugh.

continue to work together. Sgt. Bethea was comical, he was recognized as being someone you could go to for help when things were not looking hopeful. He would fight for you. He was commended for being an excellent model of smooth leadership throughout the institution. Go Bethea!

We were honored to have Reaching out from Within (ROFW) Board members as special guest. Jackie Alexander, who is President of ROFW said "I think this banquet was great. I am glad that clarity has been made and we have come to a common ground of working together with the AAC and doing some events together. The Banquet was exceptional, I got to see were the AAC members got along with each other laughing and having fun. I am so grateful that all ROFW members got to come and enjoy a meal with AAC. It was a great gathering (Jackie is crying at this point) they got to take photos and use the props that the AAC used as decorations in their photos. What a great invitation from AAC to included all our members to participate in their banquet I love my ROFW crew, they get on my nerves sometimes, but I love them anyway. Thank you AAC for opening the doors to ROFW, let's do what we need to do together and make this institution proud."

Melissa Labrador, who is President of the Alliance Club, said, "this banquet had its ups and downs coming together. The Board wanted to ensure that everyone had a great time and just wanted the club to know they are appreciated as individuals as well as a group. Without them none of this is possible. Each person that was brave enough to open themselves to not only entertain us, but to give us a glimpse of who they are. Also, I want to thank ROFW board members for showing up and mixing in with the AAC members. I hope sooner rather than later both groups can come together and do something for the whole Anson Community and our outside community also. What lifted my heart was seeing everyone laughing, and enjoying each other's company and getting full. Shout out to the "Smoke Pit"! That man did great.

We appreciate everyone who attended and hope you enjoyed the meal and entertainment as much as we did in



Counterclockwise from Bottom R: Jennie White, Catherine White, Michelle Theer, Brandie Bullock, Jenny Childress, Diane McCracken, Emmalei Trevathan

putting it together. Thank you to all! A big SHOUT OUT TO MS. LISH, YOU DID THIS!!!"

The biggest surprise was trying out the new popcorn popper, Sno-cone machine, and cotton candy machine. It was a big hit with everyone getting a sno-cone, something a lot of us haven't had in years. What a treat. Photos were made by Inside the Walls (ITW) photographer Sgt. F. Bethea and Alliance Club Photo Chairman Brandi Granger. This was a great event and enjoyed by all.



Counterclockwise from Bottom R: Lori Chappelle, Melba Slaydon, Leiah Helton, Mary Helms, Donna Walters, Velma Westling, & Teresa Culpepper.



Ms. Lish gets a standing ovation for her hard work on behalf of the club.



Bryanna Jarvis, aka Phoenix



AAC VP Dedric Mason

Grace It Up

by Michelle Theer

Inspiring music and stories of redemption after brokenness. A message of unconditional love and delicious food. Grace It Up (GIU) Prison Ministry came to Anson Correctional Facility April 15-16th and shared the love of God with Anson residents. Over 970 out of 1200 residents at the facility came over two days to participate in the event. Mr. Chuck Neely said that the Bible mentions Jesus feeding the crowds or bringing bread ten different times in the New Testament, so it must be good policy to provide food when spreading His message, right? You won't find many prisoners who will disagree, and it is a sure way to draw a crowd. No sign up was necessary and every single person was welcome to come when their unit was called. It was beautiful to see so many people singing, praying, worshipping and praising God.

The residents entered the gym to live worship music played by volunteers Sam Ettaro and John Barker with the words projected on a large screen so everyone could sing along. It was an amazing feeling to stand in the crowd and sing with powerful music surrounding everyone, hands lifted in the air; like being in a real church. The first speaker was Becky Holtan, who talked about her strict religious upbringing and how she felt she could never be good enough for heaven so she might as well go all the way being bad. When she found Jesus and learned her past could be erased she learned about true love and has a desire to share that message with everyone. Reaching others with scars is a mission of Grace It Up. Next was Sara Kane, a "baby Christian" who introduced herself and said she was speaking for the first time in front of a crowd. Although she was nervous, her love for the residents was evident and everyone gave her a round of applause for her courage.

Chuck Neely who described himself as an addict who has been sober for 30 years and was arrested 11 times in his youth, gave his testimony next. He admonished everyone not to underestimate what God can do in their lives if they surrender it to Jesus. His message was, "God has something amazing for you." He also shared the story of Anthony "Smiley" Willis who, although not able to be present, is part of the ministry. Sentenced to Life Without Parole (LWOP) at the age of 16, Smiley experienced anger and rebellion for the first five years, but then found God. For the next 22 years he shone God's light throughout the prison and three years ago Governor Roy Cooper commuted his sentence.

Next, Mrs. Leah Lewis told everyone about God's unconditional love for them and how He is always there. Giving her testimony she revealed that she had attempted suicide many times in the past but God never let her go. Then she introduced her husband of 17 years, Pastor Deon Lewis of Evangel Assembly of God in Gastonia.

Pastor Lewis told his story to the crowd – a difficult childhood, a troubled youth, an immoral lifestyle and find-

ing redemption. In the end, he called on Jesus and was pulled out. He said it is the Glorified Christ we have in common, that makes us one family of brothers and sisters. He reminded the audience, "Man will forever accuse you and dangle your past over your head, but God forgives you. You are a brand-new person." He told everyone to never forget that God created them for a purpose and has a plan for them; to keep the focus forward because with God you have the opportunity for a clean slate.

Grace It Up is a relatively new ministry started in North Carolina within the last three years. Right before his release, Smiley was sent to a minimum custody camp that was across the street from a Bojangles chicken. Smelling that chicken all day every day, inspired him to raise the money to feed all 250 men in the camp. That was the seed of the idea for this ministry. Then when he was released he was connected to Chuck Neeley by his former prison chaplain and the two hit it off immediately. GIU works with local churches to help initiate and provide their prison ministry. GIU actually is made of 3 or 4 primary associates who connect with churches, partner with them and help them get the training and knowledge to go into correctional facilities in their community. Pastor Lewis said his church, Evangel Assembly of God, got connected with GIU about three months ago and, "it was the greatest thing ever."

Anson is the biggest facility GIU has visited in its 2 ½ years of ministry and also the first female facility. Becky Holtan said that being here for the past two days was, "more of a blessing than words can explain. It still blows my mind that I can come in here and leave when I want." Chuck Neely said he was, "overwhelmed with joy at having the privilege to come in." About six other volunteers also came from Evangel Assembly of God to pray and minister to with the residents. Staff wasn't left out either, GIU fed both morning and shifts on Tuesday and Wednesday, which means everyone got a taste of their love. Even the workers on the roof got fed. No one is left out of God's love and GIU left no one out when they came to visit. GIU has been featured on KLOVE radio and their website is GraceItUp.org for anyone who is interested in finding our more information about their ministry.



Michelle Theer took Photography, Yearbook and TV Journalism classes her senior year in high school, all of which have been helpful in producing this newsletter and which just goes to show that no education is ever wasted; sooner or later it all comes in handy.

Substance Abuse Awareness Month



To the Ones Left Behind

by Ashley Boyd



As a long-termer, I've met some pretty good people throughout my last 20 years of incarceration. In an environment such as prison, we tend to get close to people, lean on them in times of need, even call some "state family" members. Sometimes people come into our lives for a reason, a season, or even just a moment. But even in a small amount of time, some can be a big impact

on our life. Whatever the case may be, we need to start encouraging each other more instead of tearing someone down because the outside world is real! When we prepare ourselves for that world, a lot of us don't know what our future holds. But one thing is for certain: the dangers of drugs are real! No, matter what kind you choose or prefer to do, majority of everything is laced with Fentanyl.

We've lost so many people throughout the years to drug overdoses, whether you may have just heard of the person or they were very dear to you. As a lot of you may know, I lost someone very dear to me in January, Tosha (T.T.) Neal. She did 22 years in prison, and was only out for 3 years before drugs claimed her life.

When we leave this life, we don't realize the people we affect—our families, children, siblings, parents, friends..... We not only lose our own life, but other's feel like they lost a part of themselves as well. My prayer is that if you know you have a drug addiction, you will get the help you need and don't be afraid to ask for help. Find whatever resources you can (especially in here), and do what you need to save your precious life! I just don't want to see anyone else's name added to the list of lives already lost! God bless you.

Ashley Boyd is from Charlotte, NC and enjoys listening to music & dancing. She loves pigs, cats and rabbits. One of her passions is helping the less fortunate and she never leaves out the underdog.



TOSHA "T.T." NEAL
AMANDA NENNINGER
TREENA JONES
BRANDI MIZE
MANDY KLONTZ
ANNA CRIM
TANYA "BARCODE" SHEPHERD
MELISSA "MELLY" BOLING
KATHY "LIGHTNING" PHILLIPS
KATIE MOODY
MARGARET JOHNSON
JESSICA SUMMEY

Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.

~Bessel van der Kolk

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

To All the Women Out There

by Amie Skeens



I am Worthy! I am Enough! Hi baby girl! I know you feel like you are all at fault for the advances and unwanted touches from loved ones, strangers, and the ones you thought had your back and were supposed to keep you safe. I'm here to tell you the acts your father committed, that stranger in Walmart, the man in the streets and the attempts your step-father made are *not* your fault.

I know you were told you were pretty, you have bedroom eyes,

and would be in trouble, if not killed, if you didn't succumb or told anyone what happened. And, yes, you are a pretty girl, you do have big brown eyes; but you also have every right to say no, to speak out about unwanted advances, and inappropriate touches, and being violated.

Whatever your age, 5, 7, 11, 13, 22, 33, 44, and on into eternity, I am here to tell you - you did not deserve any ill treatment. You are not at fault. The ones who touched you, frightened you, and took something from you are the ones who are at fault. The men who had you feeling guilt shame are the ones who should be ashamed and they are the guilty ones. You did not cause their actions. Their mental health and the core of their disease caused their sins. So, baby girl, there is no shame to carry - no guilt to hold on to. You are innocence and innocent. You are free while they are not.

I think of my emotions as being like old plumbing. On one side of the sink is a faucet for cold and on the other side is a faucet for hot. You can turn both on, but the streams don't mix. They're forever separate, two halves to one plumbing. I have a spout for all my past traumatic

emotions and a spout for my real life. They exist side by side but don't mix. I like that analogy. On some days I pour more out one faucet than the other. And some days, I go back and forth—strung out and sleep deprived, yet breaking out in spontaneous laughter at something I see on TV. One faucet or the other suddenly kicking in. Just like there are times you can be happy, having a good day, yet there's still a shadow around your vision, a creeping sense that this won't last, the worst is yet to come. I begin to isolate and withdraw into myself barely functioning. I try medication, mindfulness, and other techniques to calm my "inner squirrel" to give me at least a moment to where I am not assessing the latest possible threat and run up with fresh suspicion. I usually have the fight or flight response.

I know I'm full of emotions over what happened. I know I blamed myself. I'm here to tell you let go of old hurts. Release yourself from the bondage of the sins those men committed. You were a child of worth now you are now a woman of worth. You are a Queen and deserve to be treated as such. You deserve respect and your body deserves respect. You are me. I'm hugging the 5, 7, 11, 13, 22, 33, 44-year-old, and even now... me. I am free. Love - A Phenomenal Woman...Me!

Amie Skeens is a mother of six, a grandmother of five and a creative children's story writer. She also writes poetry and draws. She is recently completed GriefShare and is a work in progress with recovery who advocates for it on the good days and the bad.

Congratulations to the Winners of the Influential Women Essay Contest

504 - Amanda Justice
Moore - Jacqueline Alexander
Union - LaTina Ray
Richmond - Valencia McLean



Second Chance Month

If I Had A Second Chance....

by Lenneek "Stud Barbie" Thompson



If I had a second chance to do it all over again, I wouldn't change anything. Let me explain. Hold on, is this mic on? Okay, kool, mirror check Nicki, smile, and we are good. So, as I was saying, I wouldn't change anything about my life.

I believe everything happens for a reason. Our mistakes are what makes

us wiser and our accomplishments makes us proud. Now if you woulda asked me this a year ago I would of went all the way back to 1993 and changed my mother to Nicki Minaj and father to Bill Gates, LOL. But looking back on my 31 years of life, even thru my struggles, pain, pride and several prison sentences, I can see the beauty (blessings) that came from all those adversities.

I'm a believer of Christ, so my faith has helped me see good in everything. My grandmother told me that in the beginning God created heaven and earth and it was good. Everything God creates is good. Now my grandmother said that if God made me, doesn't that mean he made it so my life would be good? I read Romans 8:28 where Paul says, *"And I know that all things work for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose."*

So, I like to tell people its always gonna be good that comes from our pain, struggles, grief, addiction, prison sentences etc. Just because we can't see the good in the midst of our situation, just know when God is done it's gonna be good. Oh, on a side note - Unicorns are real.



I Wish I had a Second Chance To....

I wish I had a second chance to take back all the things I said I'd never do, to go back and say all the things I should have said.

I wish I had a second chance to undo all the hurt I caused you, I'd try harder to make you stay.

I wish I had a second chance to be who you wanted me to be, maybe then you could have tried harder to stick around.

A second chance to show you everything we could have accomplished.

A second chance to unbreak my heart.

A second chance to make you believe that we were worth trying to save.

To be honest, I wish I had a second chance to be yours again.

I wish I had a second chance to rewrite our chapter.

I'd rewrite our chapter into a book,

since a chapter doesn't give enough room to describe you and me.

I wish I had a second chance to become everything you've ever dreamed of, like you once thought of me.

I wish I had a second chance to explain to you what my life is like now that you're gone.

A second chance yes, that's all I would need,

A second chance to get you to fall in love with me.

I wish I had a second chance to be yours and call you mine.

By Krystal DeBernardis (Krazy)

"Stud Barbie," the only stud Bhad enough to be a Barbie, is a 31 year old rapper, actress and comedian serving an 18-23 sentence. U would think "Murder Was What She Wrote," but negative - I'm a retired scammer. I'm a mother (boy mom), and my favorite color is pink...most importantly, I'm a woman. So no he, him or sir for me.

Second Chance Month

Make a better first impression. Amy Pollard
 To be a better friend. Adrian Porch
 Hug my grandma. Kimberly Martinez
 Say no to drugs the first time. Skylin Upchurch
 To be a mother to my children. Jackson
 Do it "All" from the beginning. Robin Gosnell
 To live my life over. Beverly Whitted
 To be a teenager & a mother. Ashley Ballance
 Kinder, Wiser, Stronger, Thankful. Tyson
 To do the right thing. M.R.
 Listen to my parents. Christina Steele
 Save my best friend in Afghanistan. Okley
 Be there for my son's childhood. Kayla
 Make my parents proud. Morgan McDonald
 Go further in my sports career. Lakken Bowman
 Expunge my criminal record. Meredith K.S
 Go forward. Sakinah Benton
 Go to school & get a degree. LaTonya Gattis
 Enjoy my kids growing up. Emily Rosado
 Raise my kids again. Julie Bean
 Be a better person, better mom & never do drugs.
 Hug my mom goodbye. Cassie Vann

Do my teenage years over again. Bri
 Take back drug addiction. Cai Lahni
 Be there for my kids. Kayllia
 Make better mistakes. Mimi
 Make better decisions. Lisa Hill
 Never miss a day of my son's life.
 Change the past 20 years. Jessica Brooks
 I would never have tried drugs! Kimmy
 Be a better me. Teakale "Kale" Grant
 Prom would be great! A. Skeens
 Be a mom. Vanessa Mariah
 Not get no infractions in prison. Rasul
 Rethink the decisions to land me in prison. Gray
 Be a professional. Christy Leigh Ann Jessup
 Be a better parent. Miranda Jones
 Do the right thing. Denise Williams
 Make the right choice. Sunshine Jones
 Relieve my youth again. Crystal Howell
 Rename my child. S. Hustle
 Be a better parent. Miranda Jones
 Be a better mom. Tiffany Spencer
 Get an opportunity to work. Kiera Medley

Get my kids back to a good home with me. VRL
 Live life over again, Dyisha Poole
 Surrender all to Jesus in my youth. T. Parker
 Get a college degree. Lariska Gaskin
 Be a mom. A. Gulledege
 Save Marcus's life. J. Lewis
 Go back to the day of my crime. LA
 Go home and be free. Tiffany
 Be a better daughter. Ice
 Take my young 'uns fishin.' Red
 Raise my son. Brittany B.
 Be a mother to my baby girl. NeNe
 Never take that first hit. Jenn Moyer
 Not come to prison. Josalyn Unchurch
 Say I love you to my father. Unknown

I Wish I Had A Second Chance To... Holla Back!

Spend more time with my grandparents! Valerie Robbins
 Go to Prom. & have a better Baby Daddy. Zhakeithia White
 Tell my mom that I forgive her & love her. Nikkia Cooper
 Hear my mom & dad's voice just one more time. Chelsea
 Make better wiser decisions throughout life. Alexis Mills
 Be a better mother, daughter, sister, friend. Alexis Greene

Make you stay, to love you better, to show you I'm sorry, to save your life. Krystal DeBernardis
 Make better decisions with past friends/relationships & not be so toxic. Kimberly Martinez
 Fix the relationship with my children so that we wouldn't be where we are today. Nikkia Cooper
 Wish I would've had more time on earth with my daughter before she was called to heaven. S. Thomas
 Relive my entire life having already learned from my mistakes & live happily. Brittany McKinney
 Listen to my parents because they became my guardian angels 10 years ago. Jacinta "Baby" Morgan
 Be a healthy mom & daughter. To be able to hug my mom again. Audrey Goble
 Spend more time with my family and to see my mother before she passed away. Dee Mason
 Sit next to my dad, hold his hand, talk to him about life, and share some laughs. Michelle Theer
 Apologize to all those I hurt, to make a better choice about my crime, and apologize to my deceased sister. Taya
 Go back 20 years & start over with my life, so I would've been home when some of my family passed. Be with my kids and grandkids. E. Baker
 Go to the Air Force Academy when I had the chance! My life would have been so different. Cynthia Rupel
 Be a part of my children's lives and be a healthy person so I could've been the mom they needed and deserved. Tina Swink.
 Support my only daughter, care for my grandchildren and be a caregiver for my aging brothers and sisters. Marlene Johnson
 Be free, not be in prison, never get in trouble, do what's right, to live by God before lock up. Angelia Melvin
 Tell my grandparents & passed away loved one's I love them, & spend more time with them. Christina Alexander
Slow Down after I graduated high school, finish college, and not rush into marriage and starting a family. Heather Surratt
 Have a conversation where the true narrative is heard, and the stories of others do not form the truth from their lies. Tuesday
 Tell my mom I love her, I'm sorry and I graduated to honor her. RIP mom, I love U. Samantha "Bliss" Williams
 Redo my freshman year in college, retire from the military at 20 years, make a better decision concerning the night that landed me here. Kim Smith

Life Lessons from a Life Sentence

by Cynthia Rupel



In here, patience is not just a virtue - it's an absolute necessity. Having to wait in line is an everyday, all day experience in prison. And you know what? It's no different on the outside. Waiting is one of the hardest tasks you'll ever have to do. No wonder God teaches us patience, it is part of the fruit of the spirit (Gal.5:22) and its how love operates (1Cor.

13:4). Impatience, on the road, is a blood pressure-raising stress machine, and it does nothing at all to shorten your drive.

Since waiting is inevitable, it is a good idea to get creative with it. Learn to channel the negative energy of frustration into something more positive and useful. Whenever possible, I like to read while waiting, or do crosswords and other puzzles. It's not hard to carry one or two in my pocket and I always have a pen! If I can't do that, I'll opt for positive conversation with others waiting with me. I may simply practice mindful breathing, or pray silently. I may use the time to plan out a project. There are many ways to make constructive, positive use of waiting time.

It isn't always easy to turn off frustration. It doesn't happen by chance; you have to deliberately choose patience. I still have to remind myself whenever I'm forced to wait, "This is an opportunity to exercise my patience."

What you exercise gets stronger!

Patience works in more situations than just waiting. Patience toward others usually gets a better response than pushiness. Patience treats people as fellow struggling human beings. Isn't it so much nicer to be treated with patience and understanding by both our fellow residents AND staff? I have found that a smile and a kind word open more doors than an impatient scowl any day.

Proverbs 16:32 says it best: "Better a patient man than a warrior; a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city." The next time you find yourself forced to wait, stop. Breathe. Tell yourself it's just an exercise in patience. Do something positive and creative with the time. Your example of calm may even become contagious!

Life Lesson #5:
***Patience is
more than a
virtue, it is a
necessity.***

Cynthia Rupel has been incarcerated since 2001. She is assigned to Anson Cares, and loves learning and reading. Life Lessons will be a recurring feature every month.

Softening Stones

by Ulana Burks



So, when I first came to prison in 2000, I sat on my bed and started crying. I said, "God I can't do this!" I started talking to him right then. I asked him to do my time for me so I could get through this. I asked him to not take my babies from me, to soften their hearts, to at least give me a second chance, and for them to still love me. That was my biggest fear was that my children

wouldn't love me.

Over time I've prayed for officers and to give them insight on how they would feel if the shoe was on the other foot. I've watched prayer change lives and attitudes. We had one officer in Raleigh, she was so mean to long termers and lifers when she started working in the Cardinal unit. She ended up moving down the hill because her own son got locked up. Today she is still hard, but she is sweet and will do her best to help you.

I've been down 25 years now. I've not only not had to do my time, but both of my children have told me they love

me and I'm talking to them again. They want me to be back in their lives and they are now looking at coming to visit. Prayer works! That's what softens them stones!!

God wants you to depend on him like our babies depend on us. He will provide our needs and our wants, all we have to do is ask! I've been very blessed to have been raised by some great women and have the best friends here in prison. I've learned a lot and grown a lot with prayer! He is my best friend. He knows exactly who I need in my life and who needs me at the perfect time. So, pray - talk to him, just like you talk to your dad. Then be still and listen! He will talk back to you and guide you through everything! I just wanted to share and let everyone to know what he did for me because he will do it for you too! He restores lives and he restores families.

Ulana Burks is a US Marine. She loves to knit, crochet, and help women better themselves.

National Poetry Month

Inmates Voices

How can you yell and scream at me, without knowing my name;
Glaring into my eyes, daring me, treating me like I am a total shame.
Do you think you are that different from me?
Or are you so blinded, when you look into the mirror, you cannot see
I have a heart. Can't you hear it beat, or are you deaf?
I have lungs just like you, to take my breath.
But you are of authority, so you go to the extreme.
Well now, I am the criminal...But I ain't that mean.
Always having a hateful look, I wonder how you sleep at night.
You act like I am stupid, like I do nothing right.
Treating us like animals, locked up in a cage,
But look in the mirror, you're the one with the rage.
When it's time to eat, you're always yelling 'chow'
Forcing us to eat it, within minutes somehow.
You wear a uniform, but look again because I do too,
Here is our difference, I don't think I am better than you!
Saying mean things and using so much force,
When all they have to do is ask and lower their voice.
I won't be like you, so keep your rage.
I ain't no animal, so you can't keep me in this cage!



by Wendy Kinyoun

Omnipresent God!

Someone, somewhere is calling out your name...
Someone, somewhere is giving God the praise!
Someone, somewhere is giving up on everything. Lord give them faith.
Someone, somewhere is getting saved!
Through the lens a message of truth transcends.
We all need Jesus in everyplace that there is.
Omnipresent God, you fill here, there everywhere.
There is nothing that you miss.
Someone, somewhere is on their knees.
As we pray to you, you hear our cries and put us at ease.
All glory and power belong to you. None but you are worthy of all our love, oh God!
Someone, somewhere is changed, transformed and their mind is renewed for the better.
Someone, somewhere is hearing from the holy spirit that you
Lord will meet them wherever and forsake us not ever.
I'm someone who you have embraced and have shown mercy, love, and grace.
Because of you, I will reach out and spread the love of God to someone,
somewhere in need.
Making sure that they never forget you.
We all need Jesus, whom the father God has sent to die for us and be risen again.
Covering all our sins.
Now Jesus reigns in everyplace that there is!

By Tamara Brown

QuickSands

Quicksand's how this poem starts
And its how it will end
But between I'll tell you
How this story began

From out of the womb
Before you learned to speak
Just because you're a girl
You were meant to be meek

Heavy is the head
That must wear a bright crown
Called you princess right?
So your bound to it now

Sit up straight
Comb your hair
Shut your mouth
Don't you stare

Don't be rude
Never mock
Throw a kiss
Not a rock

He hurt you
What'd you do
Better yet, it's not true

Don't look now, it's too late
That man's hungry, fix his plate
You can't leave this house no more
Don't you dare look at that door

As life goes on
Now on the street
Where past and present finally meet

Your current prospects looking bleak
When you were deemed
So obsolete

Reached out for help
But no one cared
Your burdens left, alone to bear

As you sink and you sink
Last to go is your hand
Cause the life you were dealt
Drug you down like quicksand.

by Jennifer Jean

National Poetry Month

Driven To Give

We are not just symbols on a map
Or chart, we are women giving
Straight from the heart. Giving.
Giving of oneself is more valued
Than any kind of wealth.

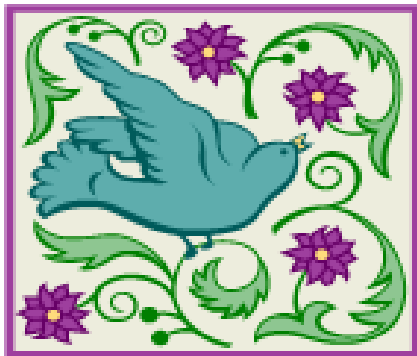
To see a happy smile,
Makes life's journey worth every
Mile. Never been one who felt
Worthy and good enough, until
Anson Alliance let us show we
Are made of the right stuff.

We tear down walls of guilt
And shame, without pointing fingers
Or looking for whom to blame.

When asked to this I began to
Doubt such a big opportunity for
Me to take on, but ahhh suddenly
I realized I wouldn't stand here alone.
Encouragement looking at me, all
Anxiety had to flee.

We stand united day by day, and
Week by week finding joy as we fulfill
The things we meet. We may not quote just the right verse,
But I promise this happiness here
Today was not rehearsed.

by Crystal Owens



Tears of Defense

Have you ever cried yourself to sleep?
Have you ever been stuck in a place you can't leave?
Surrounded by people you don't even know,
Every day you have to decipher who's a friend or foe?
My thoughts consume me of going home.
I'm trapped in a place where I feel all alone,
Stressed because I don't know if my kids are okay;
I can't even talk to my daughter because of what the judge said.
I am a survivor of domestic violence,
For so long I chose to be silent,
In result I temporarily lost my freedom and my kids.
I was convicted of 2nd degree murder, even though it was self-defense.
If you read my trial transcript it doesn't make sense.
I try my best to not think about what happened back then.
One thing I refuse to do is dwell on the past,
I hate having the label of I killed my daughter's dad.

by Valencia McLean

Mountain Song

I dream
of high, dark pines;
wild wind, honey-scented,
thrumming sky.

I breathe
her endless soul-sigh
of indigo night pierced
by ancient fires.

I feel
her marrow-call
stone-boned, moss-banked,
mist- hallowed hall.

I sing
her earth-song drummed
thunder waters, rattle-snaked,
bee-nectar hum.

I drink
her waiting spirit, still;
owl-shouted, sun-hushed,
age-patient will.

by Cynthia Rupel

Look Here!

Announcements

We want your story!
Tell us your story!



Free Legal Research

Service: The Prison Letters Pro Bono Project, in partnership with the Wake Forest Law Library can provide you with essential legal resources.

They believe that knowledge is power and are there to help you access legal information you need.

They offer copies of cases, statutes (check your tablets first), sample motions, and other secondary resources like The Jailhouse Lawyers Manual and the Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook.

If you have questions about laws and statutes or how they apply to your case, they can answer questions like, "I am looking for cases related to defamation by a newspaper."

They are not a pen pal program and do not provide legal advice or opinions. Write to them at:

Prison Letters Project
Wake Forest School of Law
PO Box 7206
Winston-Salem, NC 27109

Did You Serve in the US Armed Forces? Then

We Want You! The military veteran residents of Anson are forming a new group. We want to ensure all are included. Send Social Worker Green on the Moore unit a Request for Information with your name and Branch of Service and we will get back to you.

If You Would Like to Send a Thank You, let the volunteers know how you were impacted by the Grace It Up event, or follow up with prayer requests you can write them at the following address:

Pastor Deon Lewis
Evangel Assembly of God
625 Neal Hawkins Road
Gastonia, NC 28056



Law Library: If you need assistance from the Law Library Clerk, put a request in the white box next to the sign-in sheet in the Library and you will be sent an appointment slip. The Law library time has been moved to Sunday afternoons to accommodate those who work and go to school. The clerk can assist you in obtaining

and filling out forms, access the legal books, explain how to use the law library on the tablet, etc.

Mothers Day is coming up! Our next issue will feature a section for tributes to the mother figures in your lives. If you have a poem, short story, spoken word piece, or artwork send it as soon as possible for inclusion in the next issue. Drop all submissions off at the library



In May

- ♦ **6th Teachers Day**
- ♦ **11th Mothers Day**
- ♦ **12th International Nurses Day**
- ♦ **15th Chocolate Chip Cookie Day**
- ♦ **20th World Bee Day**
- ♦ **31st Smile Day**

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