



UPAN Newsletter Volume 4 Number 1 | **JANUARY 2017**

“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

* * * * *

Entering The New Year With Hope...

NEXT UPAN MEETING: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2017 6:30-8:30 PM

TOPIC: Higher Education Programs in Utah State Prison System
SPEAKERS: Kurt Guner, Prison Education Program Manager of SLCC and Don Wright PhD of PrisonEd

LOCATION: Ruth Vine Tyler Library, 8041 Wood Street, Midvale, UT 84047

3rd Annual Faith In Reform Mini-Summit Meeting, Saturday, January 28, 2017

Free to everyone but tickets required for planning. Tickets: www.eventbrite.com

Time: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, Light breakfast and free lunch provided.

Location: First Unitarian Church 569 South 1300 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84102

In This Issue:

Meeting Announcements, UPAN Newsletter Contents in this issue and UPAN Disclaimer	Page 1
Comments from UPAN’s Incoming President	Page 2
UPAN Meeting Summary, January 9 th , Holladay Library by Warren Rosenbaum	Page 2
Housing Barriers Facing Ex-Felons - “Not For Rent” Documentary Film Premier - Metamora Films	Page 2
Restrictive Housing (Solitary Confinement) A Partnership Study On Safe Alternatives	Page 3
Fears About New Prison Building Addressed by ACLU by Molly Prince & ACLU	Pages 3-4
<u>FEATURED ARTICLE:</u> CUCF’s Guest Forum: A Visit by Utah’s Lt. Governor Spencer Cox by Jeff Kitchen	Pages 5-7
No Matter How Bad It Seems, You Do Have Some Control By Michael J. McAinsh	Pages 7-8
Striving for a Healthy Diet While Incarcerated – <u>Inmate Article By S.F.</u>	Page 9
Hope and Perseverance (Maintain Your Balance and Sanity in Prison) <u>Inmate Article</u> By M.S.	Page 10
PrisonEd Report, Note: Please <u>don’t confuse</u> PrisonEd with UPAN’s contact information	Page 10
UPAN Contact Information and List of UPAN Directors/Officers	Page 10

* * * * *

Disclaimer: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented. This information is presented for the reader’s enlightenment and evaluation.

“Everything that is done in the world is done by HOPE” Martin Luther King Jr.

Comments From UPAN's Incoming President – Shauna Denos (Pronounced d'Nos)

A Thank You To Our Past President

Wow, 2016 – what a great year for UPAN. I know Molly has thanked everyone who has diligently and faithfully chipped in to make UPAN a success. It only goes to show that it truly takes a village. I personally want to thank Molly for the heart and soul she has so willingly given to the cause. Her vast wealth of knowledge and her professionalism has helped solidify UPAN in the Criminal Justice World.

Molly, along with her husband Lacey Harris, have gone above and beyond in their service to UPAN. They are

truly two of the finest people I know. Rusty (my husband) and I are very thankful we have been blessed with their friendship. I am looking forward to stepping into this new position as President. Speaking for myself and the UPAN team, we are looking forward to another great year as 2017 gets underway.

Looking Forward To A Productive Year – 2017

To be honest, this is a big leap for me but I have great support from a wonderful board of directors, my husband and family. I look forward to making this a productive year for UPAN and all our families. Shauna

UPAN Meeting, Monday, January 9, 2017 Holladay Library by Warren Rosenbaum

New Year, New President, And Excellent Speaker

The meeting was opened by our new UPAN President, Shauna Denos at 6:30 PM. After introducing the directors to the attendees and wishing a Happy New Year to all, she introduced our guest speaker, Miriam Greenland. Miriam spoke about her efforts on behalf of criminal justice reform. It all began, she said, with a few phone calls that developed into a letter campaign to legislators. The point of her presentation being that if she, an ordinary citizen/wife/mother, can impact the system by motivating legislators to take action, you can, anyone can, AND SHOULD! Miriam pointed out that with dedication and persistence, the movers-and-shakers take notice and respond.

She stated that she was surprised at how courteous and interested her State Representative was in her explanation of facts and the logic in her purpose. As a result, he joined her enthusiasm, surely inspired by her

dedication to reform and the vision of benefits to be realized by so many people. Her presentation was motivational and dealt with several specifics such as who she met with, the results of those meetings, and the feeling of accomplishment when doing the right thing. See it at our Facebook page here:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10211713064010672&id=1490001619

New Committees And Open Discussion

Shauna then discussed committees being formed to help with the many tasks, both routine and new developments, our growing organization is involved in. The final hour of the meeting covered discussions on several topics that attendees wanted to bring to everyone's attention. This was informative and an open opportunity for everyone to speak of problems that are common to most people having a loved one in prison.

NOT FOR RENT! Documentary Film Premier Wednesday, April 5, 2017 (12:30pm-2:30pm)

Information received from Matt Duhamel of Metamora Films

Former Inmates Face Barriers In Finding Housing

NOT FOR RENT! Metamora Films' latest documentary film is being released and screened at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah on April 5, 2017. The feature length documentary film looks at rental housing barriers ex-felons face as they attempt to rebuild their lives in our communities. With over 95% of the American prison population being released at some point in the future, millions of ex-inmates struggle with strict criminal history rental requirements that property managers and landlords enforce. In this unique and powerful film, you will meet several people who have been personally affected by housing restrictions due to felony convictions. This includes UPAN's own Michael McAinsh.

Premier Showing At Weber State University Theater

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Monica Williams, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Weber State

University, the film release is part of the Engaged Learning Series, which is a university-wide series of events designed to engage students, faculty, staff, and community in discussion, debate, dialogue, learning, and action around an issue of public concern.

Guest Speakers, Q&A Session, Meet Film Director

In addition to the screening of *NOT FOR RENT!*, there will be guest speakers, a Q&A with the film's director, Matt Duhamel, and a social hour with free lunch catered by Sodexo. UPAN will have a booth at the event with literature for the public about various relevant issues.

Free Admission But Limited Seating

Tickets are free, but because there are only 100 seats available at the Wildcat Theater, we ask you to only register if you are fairly confident that you can attend. For more information: <https://www.notforrentfilm.com/>

“Like the moon, we go through phases.” Dulce Ruby

Utah DOC Joins The Safe Alternatives To Segregation Initiative (Solitary Confinement)

Source: December 19, 2016 press release by Maria Peterson PIO for UDOC

Utah, One Of Five States Chosen For Guidance And Assistance In Reducing Solitary Confinement

On December 19, 2016, it was announced that the Utah DOC is one of five states chosen by the Vera Institute of Justice to join the Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative. This program assists correctional agencies in efforts to reduce the use of solitary confinement, also known as restricted housing.

Progress Made By UDOC But Assistance Offered

The UDOC has reported that they have made significant policy changes over the past 18 months to reduce the overall number of inmates in restricted housing. Vera will assess the policy changes UDC has made and will provide strategies and assistance to implement additional improvements.

According to the press release, Executive Director Rollin Cook stated, "We are proud to be among the states selected for technical assistance from Vera to advance our efforts to safely transition offenders into less restrictive housing through a structured program. "Housing inmates in the least restrictive setting necessary helps ensure their safety and that of our staff and the public."

Why Restrictive Housing Is Considered Necessary

Restrictive housing is used for managing inmates whose presence in the general population would pose a threat to staff, other inmates, themselves or to the orderly operations of the facility.

Notable Reduction Achieved With Three Steps

Beginning in April 2015, UDC's Division of Prison Operations introduced many changes to its restrictive housing policy, which reduced the number of inmates in restrictive housing from 14 percent of the prison population to six percent today. The UDC achieved this reduction through a number of strategies including 1) an individualized review of placement criteria for inmates, 2) providing structured levels to progress out of restrictive housing as an incentive for participating in programs, and 3) providing initial and ongoing mental health assessments.

Cook is quoted in the release as reporting, "We have significantly reduced our percentage of inmates in restricted housing and have provided inmates with opportunities for education, mental health treatment, and other programs in a safe and secure setting." "We are dedicated to improving these efforts and look forward to working with Vera to enhance our practices and learn from their expertise."

Vera Assistance Financed By U S Dept. Of Justice

The 21-month partnership will begin in early 2017 and is supported by a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded to Vera. Five other jurisdictions have been participating in the initiative since April 2015. Now Utah, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, and Virginia have been selected through a competitive process and were added to the initiative in December.

ACLU ADDRESSES FEARS ABOUT THE NEW PRISON UTAH WILL BE BUILDING

by Molly Prince with information in this article reprinted, with permission, from "Remember That Prison Utah Is Building?" in the ACLU's Liberty Reporter, Fall, 2016

Questions Abound About Building The New Prison

I am asked rather frequently, "Are they really building a new prison by the airport on swampland and an old dump?" I have to answer, "It looks like it. But not on the old dump." There are a variety of concerns and fears about the prison move reality, not to mention the location chosen by the Prison Development Commission.

Planners Might Get Tips From The Future Residents

UPAN has received letters over the past year from inmates who have a variety of opinions, questions and fears about the prison relocation scheme and what they will end up living in when it actually happens. There is still denial in many inmates that it will really happen. After all – not one decision maker asked the opinions, input, or ideas from the actual residents of the Draper prison about this whole matter. UPAN has tried to represent their concerns and questions throughout the entire years-long process our legislators went through to decide on a prison move. People Not Prisons

coalition has also tried to stay on top of the discussions and decisions over the past two years.

Bi-Monthly Meetings For Updates On Progress

The New Utah State Correctional Facility Team has created a stakeholder roundtable group to meet every other month for the duration of the construction of the prison to receive updates on the progress of the site preparation, design, and construction of the new Utah State Correctional Facility in Salt Lake City. This includes representatives of local environmental groups, correctional staff and volunteers, the ACLU of Utah, UPAN, Magna Metro Township Council, and the Salt Lake City Westpointe Community Council. The UPAN directors will do our best to keep everyone informed on the process.

Site Narrowed To West Side Of Land Selected

In July, 2016, the Division of Facilities Construction and Management stated that they had eliminated the east portion of the land by the airport. It was ruled out because of concerns relating to the environment as well

as site costs and considerations regarding a nearby abandoned landfill. The Prison Development Commission is now focusing solely on the west parcel, which was within the site selected by the Prison Relocation Committee last summer.

A Fox 13 report on July 29, 2016 states, “The elimination of the east parcel represents our commitment to constructing the new prison in a manner that balances community and environmental interests while meeting the needs of the Department of Corrections’ staff, volunteers and inmates,” stated Eric Tholen, DFCM Division Director. “The focus on the west parcel ensures the best use of state resources for this critical project.”

The ACLU of Utah’s Perspective

Utah’s ACLU published an article in its fall newsletter about the fears and questions people have about the process of building the new prison. I have permission from Anna Brower Thomas to reprint that article in UPAN news. For the sake of space, slightly edited. Here it is:

There is going to be a NEW prison, to REPLACE the Draper prison. Not an additional prison. State leaders must never forget that hundreds of people work and volunteer at the Utah State Prison and thousands more actually LIVE there. These people – as well as their families, loved ones, and advocates – have concerns about their future quality of life. Even mundane conversations about mosquito abatement, seasonal problems with terrible odors, and soil quality are of pressing importance to those who will spend many - or all – of the hours in each day at the new facility. And some folks will live the rest of their lives in that facility.

The September 19 public meeting of the Prison Development Commission (PDC) assuaged [to calm] pressing fears (for the moment). Here are 5 of those fears, and a bit of the new information that eased them.

FEAR #1: The new prison isn’t really going to happen. There is a persistent concern among those who work on behalf of inmates and advocate for their humane treatment that the prison relocation / development process will somehow fall apart. It would be a massive disappointment to see inmates end up living in the same old deplorable conditions at the current Utah State Prison after all the talk of a new, state of the art prison. **RELIEF: The new prison is happening.** The design and planning process is proceeding. The various public servants involved seem committed to the idea that Utah will open this new correctional facility sometime between 2020 and 2021. The ACLU recommended that the PDC meets at least quarterly to assure the public that this project is indeed progressing.

FEAR #2: the new prison design will be as bad, or worse, than what we have now. After all the promises

of something new, innovative, and more humane, what if the new correctional facility is just a nasty block of windowless solitary confinement cells, or a big warehouse with no recidivism-reducing programs? **RELIEF: GSBS Architects seem genuinely committed to something different and better.** Their designs so far spring from the concept of “normalization” – making life inside the facility as similar to life outside as possible to reduce recidivism and ease re-entry. GSBS Architects along with the DOC staff, have met with several prisoner’s rights groups to collect feedback and develop this vision. (Including UPAN).

FEAR #3: Even if a great design is proposed, the state will run out of money, momentum, or political will... and end up building something terrible (see above.) **RELIEF: According to reports at the PDC meeting, there are no cash flow problems at this time.** The project is operating within budget. The contractors are aware of budgetary constraints and current design proposals appear to fall within those constraints.

FEAR #4: There will be endless delays, forcing current USP inmates to languish in facilities that are in desperate need of improvement. Currently USP prisoners – as well as visitors, volunteers and staff! struggle with inadequate heating and cooling systems, extremely limited space for religious and educational programming, therapeutic areas that provide insufficient privacy, and other serious facilities – related challenges. **RELIEF: Complicated land selection and parcel purchasing processes have shifted projections toward a 2021 deadline but that’s not too much later than predicted.** However, every delay in new prison construction means more days suffered in existing prison conditions for thousands of people. There should be some urgency here.

FEAR #5: Criminal justice reform efforts will stall, and Utah will continue this era of mass incarceration with an enormous new prison, full of beds we’ll feel obligated to fill. The prison relocation was sold to the general public (and advocacy groups) as part and parcel of a larger criminal justice [reform] effort. Our hope is that investing in a new, smaller prison will commit the state to ongoing reform efforts to keep the prison population down. **RELIEF: For the moment, the plan is still to design and build a correctional facility with slightly fewer than 4,000 beds.** That is smaller – though not by much – than the current facility in Draper. The current plans do leave room for future expansion. However, based on comments made by legislators on the PDC, they are committed to not having to conduct another site selection process for additional prisons. That may be where the political will for reform comes from in the end.

More information on ACLU’s criminal justice and prison reform work at: www.acluutah.org/criminal-justice

CUCF's Guest Forum: a Visit by Lt. Governor Spencer Cox

by Jeff Kitchen

What is Guest Forum and Who Supports It?

Guest Forum is a program at Central Utah Correctional Facility (CUCF), which invites former prisoners, reform activists, community businessmen, and public figures to speak in an open forum with prisoners. CUCF prisoners may sign up for Guest Forum at programming registration. Guest Forum is possible because of the support from CUCF administration and staff: Warden Bigelow, Deputy Warden Blood, Deputy Warden Nelson, Captain Barney, Lt. Eddleman, Sergeants Noblett, McNeil, Warnock, Mumford & Arnoldson, the other officers who've worked on a Saturday as a Guest-Forum chaperone, the programming security officers, the secretaries and other staff, and all those who do unsung work behind the scenes. To all these officers at Gunnison prison, we say thank you.

Prominent Community Figures

Lead Inspirational Forums

Guest Forum has had great speakers, to whom we also give thanks. Some of our most inspirational forums have come from speakers who were former inmates or former prisoner volunteers. We've also been educated and enlightened by listening to prominent community figures, leaders or reform activists in the community including Covey Group partner Jim Ritchie, businessman Terry Pitts, SLCC Professor Norm Zurn, Utah's ACLU Legal Director John Mejia, several directors at UPAN, lobbyist and prison reform activist for the Catholic Diocese Jean Hill, Assessments.com president Sean Hossman, Representative Eric Hutchings, renown psychologist Lynn Scoresby, and our most recent guest Utah's Lt. Governor Spencer Cox.

Some Background On Lt. Governor Spencer Cox

I never really knew of Lt. Governor Spencer Cox until I read a 2014 Deseret News article entitled, "Spencer Cox: The lieutenant governor who almost said no." The article reported Lt. Governor Cox worked as a lawyer, but in 2003, he and his wife questioned whether his work as an attorney was making the world a better place. They decided to leave the law firm and move back to Fairview where they'd run the family business (with a big pay cut) and raise their children on a farm. In Fairview, Cox entered local politics before becoming a local state representative. After just a few months as a state representative, the call came: Governor Herbert asked him to be Lt. Governor. The Coxes were shocked; they didn't want to give up the life they had built in Fairview. Cox almost said no, but after a lot of prayer and family counsel, Cox accepted the job as long as he could keep his home and family in Fairview—even though this would mean a 100-mile commute to Salt Lake City. The Governor agreed, and Cox has been making the commute ever since.

Two years later (in 2016), Lt. Gov. Cox gave a speech at a Utah vigil held to honor the victims and survivors of the mass shooting in the Orlando Pulse Night Club shooting. When I read the speech, it touched me deeply. Others were also moved, including Dan Rather, Time.com, NPR, Washington Post, Vox, Esquire Magazine, Medium, The Washington Times and more.

Here Are A Few Portions Of The Speech on Orlando Shooting:

I grew up in a small town and went to a small rural high school. There were some kids in my class that were different. Sometimes I wasn't kind to them. I didn't know it at the time, but I know now that they were gay. I will forever regret not treating them with the kindness, dignity and respect – the love – that they deserved. For that, I sincerely apologize ... my heart has changed. It has changed because of you...

How did you feel when you heard that 49 people had been gunned down by a self-proclaimed terrorist? That's the easy question. Here is the hard one: Did that feeling change when you found out the shooting was at a gay bar at 2 a.m. in the morning? If that feeling changed, then we are doing something wrong.

So now we find ourselves at a crossroads. A crossroads of hate and terror. How do we respond? How do you respond? Do we lash out with anger, hate and mistrust? Or do we, as Lincoln begged, appeal to the "better angels of our nature?" ... I can assure you this – that calling people idiots, communists, fascists or bigots on Facebook is not going to change any hearts or minds ...

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "You will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another." Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

And so may we leave today with a resolve to be a little kinder. May we try to listen more and talk less. May we forgive someone that has wronged us? And perhaps, most importantly, try to love someone that is different than us. For my straight friends, might I suggest starting with someone who is gay... On behalf of the 3 million people of the state of Utah, We Are Orlando. We love you. And I love you.

Want To Schedule Lt. Gov. Cox? Call Your Mom!

After reading the Orlando vigil speech, I felt the strong impression that we needed to reach out to Lt. Governor Cox and invite him to the Guest Forum, so I did what I normally did and called Mom and asked her to call the governor's office. She said, "You want me to do what?!?! Are you insane?!?! Who do you think I am,

anyhow?!?!" With a little pleading, however, she agreed and called one of the nicest people ever: Lt. Gov. Cox's secretary, Ms. Erickson. She told Mom to have the prison contact her and she'd see what she could do, so the Guest Forum started calling the governor's office over about a two-month period. Eventually Lt. Gov. Cox found a time that would work and the rest was history.

Lt. Governor Cox's Guest Forum Visit

On November 19, 2016, Lt. Governor Cox visited the Gunnison prison and spoke with prisoners in the Guest Forum. In addition to the inmates, attendance included Deputy Warden Blood, Deputy Warden Nelson, Sergeants Noblett & McNeil, security staff, Principal Mark Hugentobler and a representative from Salt Lake Community College.

On the day of the forum, I met Lt. Gov. Cox in a pre-forum conference. When he spoke to me, he gave me his undivided attention, just like he did with every person he spoke with. As inmates came into the forum, Lt. Governor Cox greeted every prisoner, looked them in the eyes and addressed them by their first name as shown on their shirt ID tag (instead of by an inmate number).

He began his Guest Forum address by talking a lot about the Orlando vigil. He said he prepared the Orlando vigil speech by isolating himself in a Marriot Hotel room just a little more than an hour before the vigil. In that single hour, without speech editors or writers, he wrote the speech that received national and even global attention.

Lt. Gov. Cox Says Statistics Are Not Individuals

After speaking about the Orlando vigil, he spoke about being a prisoner. He told us the statistics for our success were not good, that Utah's recidivism rates were around 70%, but that he didn't believe in statistics when it came to individuals. Looking at us in our eyes, he told us we were individuals and we could beat the statistics if we willingly followed four guiding principles.

Beating Recidivism Statistics – Four Principles

First, we have to focus on our spiritual self. During his commutes to and from the capitol, he listened to six hours of lecture on the power of vulnerability by Dr. Brene Brown. According to Brown, he said, those who were the most successful in life had a belief that the universe was conspiring in their favor – that everything that happened to them (even stuff that others might label as bad) was actually a lesson or an opportunity given by the universe for them to grow and learn. They also learned the power of being vulnerable – they opened up with others by sharing their greatest fears, weaknesses, shames, mistakes, and vulnerabilities.

Second, we have to focus on our mental self. We get educated through books and education, but we should also never forget to learn by associating with people

different than ourselves. He told us that had he refused to associate with people different than himself, he would have never spoken at the Orlando vigil, he would have never connected or united with the LGBTQ community like that and his speech would have never touched people around the world with over 10 million views.

Third, we have to focus on our physical bodies. Our spirit, mind and body are all tied together and produce one unified being. He said the book Spark reported about kids at an elementary school who were scoring scholastically in the bottom 20 of the nation on average. A teacher persuaded the principal to try one simple thing: implement a school-wide cardiovascular program. The principal agreed – soon the test scores improved from the bottom 20 to the top 20 in the nation.

Fourth, we have to focus on serving other people. Looking directly at us, he said, "I've been thinking about saying this for a while now, and I'm just going to say it: "You guys are screwed up ... but guess what? So am I and so is everyone else. We are all flawed individuals, and it's our flaws that make us human. I shouldn't love you any less because of your flaws." Then he spoke to us about giving to others and being selfless. He said, "At its root, the reason you got in prison is selfishness. Being selfish is easy. Don't be selfish. Do the hard thing." He referred back to Brene Brown who said that whole, happy people learn to give back – to do service. The way they overcome adversity, abuse, suffering, trials or any other ordeal is by serving others. He paraphrased Winston Churchill as saying, "There comes a time in all our lives when we're tapped on the shoulder and asked to do a great thing." What are you going to do when that tap comes on your shoulder? Is someone tapping on your shoulder right now?

He concluded his speech by inviting us to share our stories with him.

Question and Answer Period

Then he turned to question & answer. Prior to the forum, inmates had sent us topics or questions they wanted to ask Lt. Governor Cox. The ten most asked questions/ topics were sent to him at his office:

1. **Self Improvement.** Other than flipping calendar pages in prison, what can we do to right ourselves with society?
2. **Governor Herbert's Call for Criminal Justice Reform.** How do you think Governor Herbert's call for criminal justice reform has been going and what do you think still needs to be done?
3. **Supporting Positive Criminal Justice Reform.** How can we best help you help us?
4. **A Lop-Sided Board of Pardons (BOPP).** What is the Governor's Office stance on creating a Board of Pardons more representative of the community?
5. **Leadership.** What is your stance on politicians taking on issues that are unpopular, but nevertheless the right thing to do?

6. **Growing Population of Prisoners with Sex Offenses.** What, if any, efforts does the Office of the Governor support to reform the ever-growing sex-offender population problem?
7. **Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) Underfunding & overcrowding.** What can the Office of the Governor do to address the underfunding and overcrowding of SOTP?
8. **County Jails Housing State Inmates** [The Inmate Placement Program (IPP)]: What is the Office of the Governor's stance on the continued use of county jails to house state inmates?
9. **Board Oversight, Non-Reviewable Decisions, & BOPP Natural-Life Sentences.** What is the governor's office's position on supporting reform to make reviewable or appealable Board decisions, especially those for natural life or ones that go drastically over the sentencing-commission's recommendations?
10. **Expanding Criminal-Justice Reform.** What plans, if any, does the Governor's Office have to expand criminal justice reform to crime areas besides drugs?

To our surprise, he had thoroughly gone over, studied, researched and even talked of the governor about our questions. At the forum, he took out his smart phone and looked at the notes he had taken for the topics.

His Answers Were Well Informed And Insightful

The following were two examples:

1.) He said he talked with the governor about appointing a broad mix on the board and he and the governor both agreed with the idea of appointing board members who were from a variety of backgrounds (as opposed to picking only those who have been in criminal justice as prosecutors, law enforcement, etc.). He said the Office of the Governor was, however, also somewhat

restrained on who they could appoint because board members needed to have a broad list of qualifications (which he researched and read to us), including having a knowledge of both federal and state law, as well as a knowledge in the behavioral sciences.

2.) In regards to doing what was right even when it was politically unpopular to do so, he told us of a story when he was in a meeting with the governor and several staff members. They were discussing a delicate issue, and a staff member suggested discarding one of their ideas because it wasn't politically popular. Cox told us

Governor Herbert rose from his chair, looked sternly at the staff member, pounded his hands flat on the table and said, "I don't care if it's politically popular or not! It's the right thing to do, and that's what matters most!" That vision stuck in Cox's head. He too believed in doing the right thing even when it was politically unpopular. Our country, he said, would be a lot better off if everyone held to what was right, even when it was unpopular.

Lt. Gov. Cox Thanks Us For The Opportunity

After the forum, Lt. Governor Cox again shook hands with each prisoner, wishing all of us the best. I was one of the last inmates to leave, and as I did, Lt. Governor Cox looked me straight in the eyes, warmly shook my hand, smiled, and thanked me for the opportunity and let me know how much it meant to him. Then he left me with some positive encouragement and as a result, some sadness and depression related to being in prison with the coming holidays, that I had been fighting lately, seemed to fade away.

To Lt. Governor Cox and to his secretary Ms. Erickson who helped make it happen, we give our warmest gratitude ... thank you!

I am not what I was, I am not where I am, I am where I'm going. Bishop T.D. Jakes

No Matter How Bad It Seems, You Do Have Some Control

Michael J. McAinsh, UPAN Secretary

Comments On The Two Articles That Follow

In this month's issue of The UPAN Newsletter, we have two articles on health and wellbeing of incarcerated individuals. Both have a lot to say about maintaining equilibrium of body and mind while in prison.

First, the article by SF makes an important point about a healthy diet. He writes, "[A] poor diet leads to poor health and an increased chance of developing a debilitating disease such as diabetes or cancer." Obesity, which can lead to diabetes and heart disease, an immune system unable to fight infections, poor mental health; these are just some of the consequences of a poor diet.

SF talks about the blessed who can afford commissary to fill in for the paucity of food on the meal trays. How

well I remember those spreads! I have to give my companions credit for the culinary masterpieces they could concoct from ramen noodles, cheese sauce, bean dip and a few items saved from food trays! However, as filling and tasty as these gourmet spreads were, they too often lacked the essential nutrients needed for a healthy body and mind.

Comments On Special Diets, Nutrition, and Health

Special diets are a real can of worms. (Now that I think about it, a can of worms might even be better for your overall health than some of the special diets!) Diabetic diets are not tailored to the specific needs of the diabetic inmate. Even on the so-called diabetic diet that the prison offers, the diabetic inmate has trouble controlling his blood sugar.

Although I don't have data to back this up, I believe that a lot of inmates become type two diabetics while in prison due to calorie-rich but nutritionally poor regular diet trays.

Barter And Trade – Healthy Better Than Tasty

So, what is an inmate to do, in order to get a balanced diet? One of the things I tried to do is trade my high-caloric “junk food” from the trays for healthier fare. Cakes and cookies could be traded for fresh apples and oranges. I could trade my bagels and cream cheese for yogurt and granola bars. On days when overcooked vegetables or limp salads were served, I could get tons of these items for the asking. The trick is to set your priorities to healthy over tasty. Granted, the vegetables often had the vitamins cooked out of them, but there was still some food value in them that I couldn't get otherwise. Some of the vegetables from the trays could easily be added to spreads in order to make them more nutritious without affecting the flavor.

Working Past Hopelessness by M.S.

The second article, finely-written by MS, addresses some of the coping mechanisms that he uses to keep his mind and body healthy. He packs a lot of wisdom into a few short paragraphs.

There are five themes in his article that are worth repeating. “Develop trusted friends. Find a cause, and do service. Exercise and get some sunlight. Find something to believe in. Make plans for the future.” Many books have been written about finding meaning in life. MS covers the subject in five short paragraphs.

First, MS emphasizes the importance of finding a friend, “...who you can trust...[and] who will have your best interests in mind.” Anyone who has found himself behind bars has met the ‘lone wolf,’ who confides in no one, and is sullen and angry. It is not healthy to go through life without friendships.

Find that individual who supports you when you are hurting, who gives good advice, and accepts you for who you are, not for what he can get from you. This can be difficult when you live in a place where you are moved around at the whim, or for the convenience of the institution. I was fortunate in finding many good friends almost everywhere I went in the prison system, and I am a better person today because of those friendships.

“The time is always ripe to do right.” Martin Luther King Jr.

“Do not lose heart. We were made for these times.” Clarissa Pinkola Estes, PhD

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Martin Luther King Jr.

“Change only happens when ordinary people get involved...and demand it.” Barack Obama

And to those of you who'll be getting out of prison before your friends do—don't forget them once you have your freedom! Keep in touch with your friends and help them maintain a positive attitude toward life.

M.S. Walks His Talk

I don't know when MS woke up to the fact that he could change the narrative of his life by the simple changes he lists in this essay, but when I first met him, some four or five years ago, he seemed like a happy, well-balanced individual. That was around the time that I was just waking up to the fact that I had a gift that many in prison don't have—I knew exactly when my sentence would end. I figured that this man must also have that gift. Now I have learned from reading his essay that he is at the mercy of the Board! Or maybe he isn't at its mercy, as he seems to have found inner peace in spite of his circumstances.

Contact With Families That Have Hurting Inmates

These two inmates who wanted to share their knowledge have contributed their experiences to the discussions that those of us out here frequently have. I have been in a protracted email discussion with a worried wife of an inmate who suffers from depression and other mental health issues. Another couple in our UPAN community has a loved one who cannot eat the diet offered by the prison, due to allergies, but Clinical Services and the dietitian refuse to acknowledge that there is a problem.

Write Your Solution To Problems Or Your Pet Peeve

Those of you in the UPAN community who are incarcerated, and have a talent for writing can also contribute to our knowledge of current conditions within the prison. This is not a forum for inmates who have an ax to grind, but a way in which your knowledge can help spotlight the good, as well as the not-so-good side of prison life. I encourage you, send your essays to UPAN.

Please note that we cannot acknowledge every article that is sent in, and it might be a while before we have the space to publish your article. Also, we reserve the right to edit your article for clarity or length. Heck, no sooner do I press “SEND” on the email carrying one of my (ahem) masterpieces than I get a return email from Molly or the newsletter editor “suggesting” changes!

To a Healthy Diet, I Salute You

By S.F.

Nutritious And Healthy Diet Only On The Outside

To a healthy diet, I salute you. However, it has been a long time now since I've seen one, and it will be much longer still before I am allowed to eat in any fashionably healthy manner. I find myself, like so many others, a ward of the state. Imagine, if you will, all the stories you've heard about public school meals. You know, the ones that consider ketchup and mustard as vegetables. Now multiply that by 3 and then by 365 days. Now imagine that this is primary sustenance for 15 years. Is it any wonder there is so much resentment and ill will toward the system when it comes to prison nutrition?

Poor Diet Equals Poor Physical And Mental Health

As has finally been recognized in public media, a good diet is one of the keystones to healthy living and a happy life. More importantly, a poor diet leads to poor health and an increased chance of developing a debilitating disease such as diabetes or cancer. It leads to a lowered immune system, making it harder to fight illness and disease. A poor diet leads to obesity and all of the problems obesity brings. A poor diet can lead to mental health problems, something rarely, if ever, talked about.

Prison Commissary A Substandard Substitute

Due to the diet we incarcerated are graced with, many inmates turn to the prison's commissary system to make up for what we don't get on our trays. That's if we have a healthy mind after years or decades of the monotony of unchanging processed foods on our trays. We become inventive to get enough calories to fend off hunger cramps. You know, the kind of cramps known usually by the homeless or undernourished in third world countries. Ramen noodle menus with healthy add ins are just one of many of the things we create. In fact, Ramen menus are so popular, there's a book about it, *Prison Ramen: Recipes and Stores from Behind Bars*. Google it! Inmates can become delicatessens if we so desire.

Back To Basics – Bartering

This leads to an interesting sidebar—the inmate trade system. The rumors are true. In fact, the Commissary Exchange, much like the Stock Exchange and the bartering system, is alive and well. Want two Ramen and a shot of coffee? That's one stamped envelope and a tray (1 meal), or three trays.

Special Diets?

Of course the trading expands much further than that. Especially because special diets are often a one-size fits all with only a few of the many special diets people need recognized. If you have problems eating hard egg yolks, the major morning protein for most breakfasts, tough beans, since there is no alternative for you. How about individuals with onion sensitivity or allergies?

Those folks just have to pick them out to avoid eating them, even though they are diced into 1/8 inch fragments or smaller. Gluten intolerance? Meet Uncle Ben; you will be microwaving his rice every meal. Then there's lunch. So much highly processed meat – you know, the stuff that even flies won't land on? I cannot eat the stuff, otherwise I suffer the results, which last all day, and are not pleasant.

So what do we do to maintain any semblance of health?

Our food should be labeled grade D, deemed inedible and unfit for human consumption outside of institutions. The stuff we eat, no one should eat. Just Google it. I dare you.

Commissary Requires Money – A Limited Resource

So how do we cope? Again, you guessed it. Commissary. Commissary requires money in our accounts or barter. Money is scarce. There are two ways to get money. For the lucky few, there is outside support, those who will deposit funds on our books. Bless the souls that support us. For others, we have the Utah Correctional Industries/Division of Institution Operations (UCI/DIO) and unit prison jobs. These jobs are scarce, and often not available to all inmates. And most start at 40 cents an hour. [An interesting minimum wage! Ed.]

Living Expenses Paid? Guess Again!

Right now you might be thinking, "But your room, board, clothing, and toiletries are taken care of!" Sure, you are right – to a point. Only the most basic items are taken care of, like soap, razors, and clothes; the rest we have to buy, like razors that cut properly, or underwear that actually fits. We have to purchase our own winter clothes so we can work in the winter time (sweats, thermals). We have to purchase shoes if we don't want them to fall off after three weeks. If we need any over-the-counter medication – aspirin, antacids, vitamins – we must buy it on commissary.

Complications in The Use Of Inmate Funds

Before we can get to our dietary needs on commissary, we pay our medical costs, & child support. If someone owes both, they are left with 10 to 20% of the once-per-month paycheck. For instance, I am an employee of the unit as a disabled assistant. I make \$1.60 per day, no matter how hard I work, nor how many hours I work. After paying child support I am often left with barely enough to purchase my probiotics, vitamins & minerals needed to maintain my health. But I'm one of the lucky ones. There are many others who are not so lucky.

Medical Debt For Some = Permanently Indigent

The worst off are the individuals who have racked up thousands of dollars in medical debt to the prison over

the years. They end up almost permanently indigent and unable to legally take care of their health needs.

There Can Be Huge Benefits From A Healthy Diet...

At the end of the day, it starts and stops with a healthy meal. With just that one single change, much of the hardship for those in the prison system would be alleviated. Many of the long term medical costs would go down, since a healthy diet helps prevent illness.

Tensions would lower, thus lowering resentment and aggression. All of which leads back to...a healthy diet, how I miss you, and salute you! ##

***"All things are difficult before they are easy."
John Norley***

Hope and Perseverance

By M.S.

Working Past Hopelessness

My intention in this article is to talk about hope and perseverance. First, let me disclose some things about myself. I was sentenced to six years-to-life for a sex offense in 2006. I have been down for ten years. Often times, I have wanted to give up, start a habit—or even do the unthinkable. I'm not here to blow sunshine [into your awareness], but to share what I've learned about working past hopelessness.

1) Friends – For me, having others to confide in has been a blessing. You may not have family or friends on the outside, but there are those on the inside who you can trust to talk to, who will have your best interests in mind. Find a friend. You don't have to do time alone.

2) Serve Others – Find a cause, and do service. You can crochet for community service, or help someone who's indigent with a noodle. Being of service will make you feel useful, and that can bring peace.

3) Physical Fitness/Health – Exercise and get some sunlight. These little things will elevate your mood.

4) Belief/Purpose – Find something to believe in. You don't have to make it God. Believing in a purpose will give your life meaning.

5) Plans For Future – Make plans for the future. Start with short-term goals, then to long term. Accomplishments will help give you purpose. I don't pretend to have all the answers. These are things that have worked for me.

Wise Counsel – Wisdom Prevails

In closing, I just want to say that your life is worth living, regardless of what other people say. You may be on life without, or you may be on a nickel. Don't give up! You can still contribute to the world. ##

PrisonEd Summary Report December 31, 2016

Email: prisonedfoundation@gmail.com; Address: P.O. Box 900693 Sandy, UT 84090

NEW STUDENTS DURING DECEMBER: 17

CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS AND PREVIOUSLY ENROLLED STUDENTS

	<u>Currently Enrolled</u>	<u>Previously Enrolled</u>	<u>Total Ever Enrolled</u>
DRAPER	119	81	200
GUNNISON	9	46	55
JAILS	<u>101</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>229</u>
TOTALS	229	255	484

Note: We have refined the report by (1) simplifying, (2) transferring students we have not worked with in 2016 to "Previously Enrolled," and (3) eliminating duplicates. **THANK YOU.** At this new year, the PrisonEd staff gives sincere thanks for your interest and support of prison inmates. This is especially true for the PrisonEd tutors!

Remember: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network
P.O. Box 464, Draper, UT 84020
Website: UtahPrisonerAdvocate.org
Email: Utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com

President: Shauna Denos
Past-President Molly Prince
Vice-president: Unfilled
Secretary: Mike McAinsh
Director of Communications: Shane Severson
Newsletter Editor: Warren Rosenbaum