



**UPAN Newsletter** Volume 4 Number 11 | **NOVEMBER 2017**

*“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”*

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**New Chair for BOPP – Parole Success – Gratitude**

**NEXT UPAN MEETING: MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2018 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Kafeneio Coffee House 258 West 3300 South, Salt Lake City**

**TOPIC: Sex Offender Parole presented by Molly Prince LCSW Free and open to the public.**

**\* \* NO UPAN MEETING IN DECEMBER \* \***

**The Following UPAN Meeting, Monday, February 12, 2018 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Kafeneio Coffee House 258 West 3300 South, Salt Lake City**

**TOPIC: TBA Free and open to the public.**

**FOCUS MEETING: Date: December 4, 2017 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**LOCATION: Region 3 A P & P Office, 36 W. Fremont Ave (Just West of State St.) SLC**

**TOPIC: More on Transition and introducing the Tablets in Pilot Program**

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

***“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” - John Fitzgerald Kennedy***

# GUIDELINES FOR MAILING HOLIDAY CARDS AND LETTERS

by Molly Prince

## For Draper and Gunnison; for Jails: Go To Website

It is that time of year again! Here are the guidelines for sending in holiday cards. These apply to both Draper and Gunnison prisons. For county jails, this information may be a guideline, but if you are sending holiday cards to them, please make sure you know their rules by going to the jail website and seeing if they have any information about the forms of mail accepted. Some jails only accept postcards. Guidelines to make your own holiday postcards, using the postcards that are sold at the US Post Office that will be accepted by jails, is featured in October 2017's video of our UPAN meeting, available on UPAN's Facebook page.

## Mail Early For Timely Delivery

During December, it is anticipated that the mail room in Draper will sort and screen up to 10,000 pieces of mail. In order to make this process go more smoothly for the mail room staff, which results in our inmates receiving their letters and cards more quickly, it will be helpful to be aware of and comply with the following restrictions and recommendations.

### Restrictions:

- Only plain bi-fold cards are accepted. No layers, including clear plastic cover layer, and no cards that have two pieces glued together. Sometimes the best place to find this type of card is at dollar stores. Hallmark is mostly layers and glitter these days.
- No musical cards or cards with anything sealed within them.
- No glitter, and no cards with things glued on them. This includes glitter pens / ink.
- No stickers can be affixed to either the card or the envelope.
- Do not use crayon, markers, sharpies. Ball point pen is preferred and recommended.
- Seal the envelope the way it is intended to be sealed. Do not use scotch tape or decorative tape on the envelope or card.
- Do not include any blank envelopes or blank paper in the correspondence or it will be returned to you. The prison requires that any envelopes used by the inmates must be purchased through commissary.
- Do not use mailing envelopes with the plastic bubbles inside for padding. (IOW, stop with the bubbles already! Ed.)

- Sign the card. Cards without signatures will be returned.

### Recommendations:

The prison mail room staff are required to examine underneath anything that is adhered to the envelope. That is because contraband can be underneath it. This includes stamps and any address labels.

- Write or type the return name and address on the upper left corner of the envelope rather than using adhesive return address labels. If address labels are used, they may be pulled back resulting in tearing.
- The mail room may tear the stamp off the corner of the envelope. This means they will tear the right hand upper corner of the envelope off. To reduce the damage to the envelope, please place your stamp in the far-right top corner. Metered stamps (printed on the envelope) will not be torn off.
- White envelopes are preferred. While there is not an official restriction on colored envelopes, it is recommended we use white envelopes to cut down on processing time. The reason is that colored envelopes are supposed to be taken apart at the glued seams to make sure there is nothing hidden there. They can often see through white envelopes to make sure there is no discoloration or contraband. They cannot with colors. We were advised several years ago that the prison examines for drugs that may be dissolved and hidden in the seams of colored envelopes.
- If sending large envelopes, the prison recommends that rather than using the gold manila envelopes, use large white envelopes without a clasp. Clasps are glued onto the envelope so the mail staff will have to tear it off. This delays processing.
- If you are sending holiday cards in to inmates other than your own as part of the card program, you can sign your first name or you can sign UPAN or both, whichever you prefer. Use the UPAN return address.
- **MAIL EARLY.** In past years, holiday cards delivery has been delayed way past Christmas or New Years due to the challenges for the mail staff to sort and screen. Each year it seems they have more tasks to do in order to screen the mail.

Following these rules and recommendations will add to our incarcerated loved ones receiving their mail in a timely manner during the very busy holiday season.

## Gratitude Article: A brief Gratitude entry from the UPAN Newsletter Editor (and UPAN director)

This year I'm especially grateful for several things, but the highest priorities are my health at my age (this month, November, I hit the halfway mark in my 84<sup>th</sup> year), a loving family and friends, and my opportunity to serve others via my volunteer work as UPAN's

Newsletter editor. I'm wishing all who read this gratitude entry, "A Happy Thanksgiving" with acceptable (or at least "tolerable") living circumstances, and much healing hope for a bright future. Ed. (aka Warren)

## **Following Up on Social Security Administration and UDC Pre-Release Agreement**

**This information provided to UPAN by Maria Peterson, Public Information Officer for the UDC**

Maria Peterson shared an update on the Pre-release agreement processes between the Utah DOC and the Social Security Administration. We are pleased to share it with you.

### **Responsibilities of the Institution (Prison) Under a Pre-release Agreement (PRA)**

- Provide the local SSA office with a contact person (e.g., social worker or re-entry coordinator) at the institution who will communicate with the local Social Security Administration (SSA) office's pre-release contact person to efficiently coordinate release of the individual who is leaving the institution;
- Identify individuals released within 30 days after they establish potential eligibility.

**REMINDER:** The processing time of the servicing State Disability Determination Service (DDS) is critical to this referral. For example, if the DDS average processing time is about 90 days, the institution should refer a disability claim to the local office about 90 days before the scheduled release date;

- Refer individuals to SSA who appear to meet the SSI or Social Security retirement eligibility requirements;
- Provide non-medical information necessary for development of potential SSI eligibility;
- If the claimant may qualify for SSI on the basis of blindness or disability (in addition to financial need), the institution will provide current medical evidence consistent with the guidelines in SSA's policy and the local DDS procedures. This should include a statement of the claimant's ability to handle funds;
- Provide the local SSA office with the scheduled release date;

- Report any subsequent changes to the scheduled release date, including a change that could extend the release date over 30 days, after notice of an approved claim; and
- Notify the local SSA office as soon as the claimant is released and provide the claimant's new address.

### **SSA Will Process an Application Under the PRA**

- If it appears likely the claimant will meet the criteria for SSI eligibility when they are released from the institution; and
- The claimant may potentially be released within 30 days after notification of potential SSI eligibility.

### **SSA's Responsibilities Under a PRA**

- Provide guidelines for the information requested from the institution using SSA's policy;
- Help institutional and social services staff learn how to use the prerelease procedure;
- Provide a local office contact person to assist the institution in applying prerelease procedures;
- Process claims and reinstatements promptly at the local office;
- Identify prerelease cases for the DDS to ensure prompt handling; and
- With the individual's authorization, promptly notify the institution of the claim determination.

## **Former A P & P Officer Keith Shared From His Experiences At UPAN October Meeting**

As promised in last month's UPAN Newsletter, here's the article on parole success. Ed.

### **Some Sound Info From A Success-Oriented PO**

A former employee of the Department of Corrections named Keith who retired after 20+ years was the second guest speaker of the evening. Keith spent time as an officer in the prison, then as an officer in a halfway house, and finally with Adult Probation and Parole as a probation / parole agent. He shared how he ended up in the field of corrections. He identified a big reason for his decision to become involved as a probation officer was to "help guide people to be successful."

### **Detailed Tips On The Path To A Successful Parole**

He discussed that over the years, he supervised as few as 30 parolees on a high-risk caseload and up to 200 on a low-risk caseload. He also discussed some of the things it takes for a person to be successful on parole or probation. First and foremost, he said individuals on supervision need to communicate with their PO. They

need to check in as scheduled, stay in contact, update their PO as things come up or change in their life. He then explained that the supervising agent can always work with honesty, what they know. They cannot work with what they don't know, or deception. He stated that once a person loses the trust of their PO, it is difficult to earn it back, and can take a long time.

Keith looked back on his years supervising individuals on probation and parole and shared that there are always people who are compliant with their probation / parole agreements, and those who do not comply. He feels he had about a 60-70% success rate. He discussed the need as an agent to be "tough but fair," and stated he always remembered that those he supervised were "all human beings." He went on to acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes and he believes in the ability of people to change and move forward in their lives.

### **Reports From Former Parolees On Success**

He reported that he often got calls or emails from former supervisees about how they were doing as they moved forward after rebuilding their lives on probation or parole. He told a couple of success stories related to how he was able to help certain people who later became people who helped others to succeed.

### **More Important Steps On The Path To Success**

Another area he emphasized that contributes to the success of an ex-offender is to sever from old friends who are still living an unhealthy or criminal lifestyle. He encouraged the attendees to be supportive of their paroling loved ones to get into whatever programming will help them, both inside prison and in the community.

### **Now Comes The Q and A Period Of High Value**

There were a variety of questions posed by those in the audience that generated discussion and opened up more questions as the night progressed. A lot of questions centered around trying to learn how parole

works and what the parole stipulations might be for certain classes of offenders. Standard parole agreements as well as the special conditions required for substance abuse offenders, gang related offenses, and sex offenders can be found on the UDC website at [www.corrections.utah.gov](http://www.corrections.utah.gov) and click on Probation and Parolees tab. In the dropdown box, go to Probation/ Parole Conditions, click on whichever document you are interested in. There is other info about Probation and Parole in this area of the website as well.

**Finally:** As noted in the FOCUS meeting, the DOC will be creating a video for families to watch on the website prior to their loved one being released that will answer frequently asked questions and help them prepare more as an informed and supportive group for their loved one who will be on parole.

We deeply appreciate that Keith took the time and effort to come share information, experience and perspective with us, as well as answer a variety of questions.

## **CLARIFYING INMATE ACCOUNTING REGARDING DEDUCTIONS FOR MEDICAL SERVICES**

### **Problem: Funds Taken From Inmates' Accounts**

The following information was shared with UPAN by Maria Peterson, Public Information Officer for Corrections. We have been getting more letters about the loss of TVs because there are not enough funds in an inmate account after Medical charges are deducted. We have contacted Maria to help us understand the process better.

For families and people in the community, Maria suggests reviewing the YouTube video prepared by Inmate Accounting as it explains their general practices and procedures. **Here is the link to this video:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/UtahCorrections/videos> - Family & Friends Orientation Video: Inmate Accounting

### **Inmate Accounting (IA) Process**

Regarding the specific questions of inmates losing their TVs because of Medical charges, here is the process that Inmate Accounting (IA) goes through. They receive the following information from the Medical Bureau:

1. Weekly Doctor Visits – Once a week, usually on Wednesdays, the Medical Bureau sends Inmate Accounting an electronic file of the charges for inmates visiting the doctor with their \$5.00 co-pay.
2. Monthly Prescription Charges – the 7th of each month the Medical Bureau sends IA an electronic file for all prescription charges for all inmates for the prior month.
3. Files containing other charges for Medical procedures and Medical supplies are sent to IA at various times throughout the month. These charges include items such as the rental of crutches, medical supplies, CPAP machines, medical procedures provided outside

the Prison Medical unit, etc. This random billing by Medical to Inmate Accounting is similar to what happens in the community - as we never know specifically the date when we will get a bill from the doctor's office or a hospital visit.

These charges are posted to the inmate's accounts within 3 working days once IA receives it. When it is posted is when the money to pay Medical is taken out of the inmate's account. This can make budgeting a bit challenging for inmates if they do not know when the charges are sent to IA. However, inmates do need to be aware if they went to the doctor, the charge will be posted and payment deducted from their account within a week, and prescription charges will be deducted once a month, after the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month when IA receives the charges from Medical.

To help regulate when these charges are deducted and to limit the amount deducted from an inmate's account, Inmate Accounting has set up these two safeguards:

1. IA can only post one medical file containing charges per inmate per day. For example, the week they receive the prescription file and the doctor visit file for the same inmate, they will post the one file one day, the next file the next day. If they receive a file containing charges for Medical Supplies and Procedures, that will be processed on a different day. IA explained that this is programmed into their computer system so that multiple charges for multiple medical services are not deducted all at once.
2. IA is legally authorized to take up to 60% of money in the account to pay for medical charges. However, they have implemented a policy that once the inmate's balance hits a low of \$15.00, the accounting system is

programmed to not take any more money from an inmate's account until the balance is above \$15.

### **Tips For Better Account Balance Management**

There have been problems in the past where Medical charges were taking from an inmate's account balance down to \$5. Early in 2017, the Department made a policy change and a programming change to the accounting system that now stops the accounting program from taking money from an inmate's account for Medical charges when the inmate's balance hits \$15. If the inmate's balance, for any reason, drops below \$15, it is not because additional Medical charges are deducted, it's because the inmate has "spent" that money. The accounting system stops at \$15. Typically what takes the balance below \$15 are expenditures for postage, phone calls, or commissary. In UPAN's opinion it is a bit more challenging to prisoners who cannot look online or

call the bank to see how much they have in their account at any given time like folks in the community can. However, this system does provide inmates an opportunity to learn how to budget their funds to assure they have at least \$11.00 in their account the last day of the month to pay their TV rent.

Inmate Accounting reports that they are providing an inmate-statement every two weeks. It is recommended that as the end of the month approaches, it would be wise for the inmate that wants to keep their TV to be cautious with discretionary purchases for commissary or phone call time.

This info about when and how the Medical charges are submitted to IA and deducted might help inmates figure how to keep a record of all doctor visits and prescription renewals so they have an idea of approximately when (at least the week) the deductions will be taken off their books. Other Medical costs are less predictable.

## **New US Passports Will Now Identify Convicted Child Sex Offenders**

From [www.westernjournalism.com](http://www.westernjournalism.com) 11/3/17 by reporter Jack Davis

Convicted child sex offenders who travel to foreign countries will soon be doing so with passports that advertise their convictions. The State Department announced that it is beginning the process of implementing *International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders*, which was passed last year. The law requires that passports of registered child sex offenders have a "unique identifier."

Step one of the law will come in a notice from the State Department, which will be given names of convicted child sex offenders from the Department of Homeland Security. Offenders with passports will be notified that their passports are revoked. Child sex offenders will then have to apply for new passports. Offenders who have passports can use them until they are notified that their passports are being revoked. New passports issued to those offenders will carry a notice inside the back cover that reads, "The bearer was convicted of a sex offense against a minor, and is a covered sex offender pursuant to 22 United States Code Section 212b(c)(1)," according to CNN.

The new legislation is being opposed by the Alliance for Constitutional Sex Offense Laws, which argued that the bill violates the constitutional rights of registered sex offenders. "We do believe that this is a very slippery slope," Janice Bellucci, the group's founder and executive director, told The New York Times. "Today, it's people convicted of sex offenses involving minors, but given the current political environment, perhaps

next it will be Muslims," she said. "Or maybe it will be people who are gay." The group lost its initial attempt to block implementation of the law. Bellucci said they'd try again.

The State Department said the language in the passports "will not prevent covered sex offenders from departing the United States, nor will it affect the validity of their passports." However, it said that the notice could impact travelers due to potential foreign laws that might restrict the travel of individuals convicted of felonies or sex offenses.

Republican Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey, who sponsored the legislation in Congress, said its purpose was "to protect children in the U.S. and around the world from convicted pedophiles who travel in or out of the United States unbeknownst to law enforcement officials." On the House floor before the 2016 vote to approve the law Smith said, "It is imperative that we take the lessons we have learned on how to protect our children from known child sex predators within our borders and expand those to children globally."

He said in a statement, "Signed into law in 2016, the law capped an eight-year effort in Congress to enact international notification legislation that draws on current federal and state Megan's Laws that require public notice when a sex offender moves into a U.S. neighborhood." He further stated, "Megan's Law — with its emphasis on notification — must go global, to protect America's children and children worldwide."

<https://www.westernjournalism.com/new-us-passports-will-now-identify-convicted-child-sex-offenders/>

***Wise persons do not grieve for things which they have not, but rejoice for which they have. Epictetus***

**UPAN Commentary by Editor Warren Rosenbaum:**

This is legislation enacted before adequate research and thoughtful analysis of facts, was done. The action taken (legislation) lacked the resultant wisdom the aforementioned steps would have provided. This emotional feel-good action is totally contrary to evidence-based facts and again assumes that one size fits all. This is punishment-for-life. It not only derogatorily affects the former offenders but also their families.

The Utah Legislative Performance Audit of SOTP, #2017-4 (page 44), states that 37% of Sex Offenders have a low-risk assessment (graph), and depending on the assessment criteria, "Other states have found their low-risk sex offenders represent up to 75% of all their incarcerated sex offenders." Assuming low-risk includes many below the general public population risk, if we include others with a slightly higher (but still low) risk, that will likely surpass the 37% cited above. We might safely consider about 50% of the current SO population could be assessed as low-to-general-public-population risk and they should NOT be singled out for a lifetime of international identification as sex offenders.

Former SOs who have a risk level of "very low" will likely never reoffend;so their risk is equal to someone who has never offended. Penalizing this low-risk group

\* \* \* \* \*

**Additional Research Produced The Following:**

"Given that the level of sexual recidivism is lower than commonly believed, discussions of the risk posed by sexual offenders should clearly differentiate between the high public concern about these offenses and the relatively low probability of sexual re-offense." Molly has advised us that there are currently risk assessments that are used in a variety of states that

with a lifelong stigma that will impact their opportunities (including their families) unconscionable!

Using some technical therapy terms: public notifications such as this MUST DISTINGUISH between high risk sex offenders such as serial rapists and fixated pedophiles with a history of offending and choosing to not use interventions, versus the lowest risk SOs whose offense was not driven by a primary sexual deviancy but instead driven by psychological needs that detoured them down a darker path.

More technical therapy terms: Examples are the "young and dumb" (no disrespect intended) type of offender who are 19 or 20 years old, emotionally immature and have a 15-year-old girlfriend that everyone is okay with them dating until she gets pregnant, then the SHTF\* (slightly less technical terms, Molly objects but allows me my fun), he is charged, convicted, and labeled a sex offender for life, regardless of successful SOTP and low-risk assessment.

Needless to say: UPAN's position on this ill-conceived legislation is that it needs to be rescinded immediately or seriously modified to focus on high risk, and adding cautions to prevent further legislative abuse. \*Translation: Organic waste impacts rapidly-rotating mechanical breeze-maker. Ed.

indicate the level of risk of an offender after treatment is completed, from Level 1 (very low risk, similar to individuals who have never offended sexually) to Level 5 (virtually certain to re-offend). These should be considered in all decisions concerning sex offender legislation. End of UPAN Commentary, Ed.

Reference: [www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/sx-ffndr-rcdvsm/index-en.aspx](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/sx-ffndr-rcdvsm/index-en.aspx)

***Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow – Melody Beattie***

**Governor Appoints New Chair Of Utah Board Of Pardons And Parole**

Greg Johnson, Exec Director of the BOPP sent this press release to UPAN

SALT LAKE CITY (Nov. 3, 2017) – Gov. Gary R. Herbert has appointed Chyleen Arbon as chair of the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole. Arbon succeeds Angela Micklos, who has served as chair since 2014. Since Gov. Herbert began making appointments to the board in 2009, he has chosen to rotate the leadership role between members every three to four years. Micklos will continue as a member of the board.

"I appreciate all that Angela Micklos has done as chair of the board for the last three years. She led during a time in Utah's history that saw significant reforms to the criminal justice system in Utah, and I applaud her for a job well done," said Gov. Herbert. "I am confident that Chyleen will transition well into this challenging and important role. She will serve the people of Utah with distinction."

Chyleen Arbon was appointed to the Board of Pardons and Parole in 2012. She previously worked as a policy analyst for the Utah Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel and as a professor at both Brigham Young University and the University of Utah. Arbon currently serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Utah. Arbon holds a B.A. in English and an MPA from Brigham Young University and a PhD in Political Science, emphasizing in public administration and American government and politics, from the University of Utah.

Chyleen Arbon said, "I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity, and to be a part of the progressive criminal justice initiatives that are being implemented in Utah."

Angela Micklos said, "It has been an honor to serve as Chair of the Board of Pardons and Parole for the past three years. As I move forward in my membership on the board, I will continue to put forth my best effort to support our mission, vision, and values." The governor's appointment is effective Nov. 1, 2017.

**UPAN Comment:** On behalf of many UPAN families, we would like to say that this is a step forward and the first time in many years (at least a decade?) the Chair is NOT a former prosecutor! Past President Molly Prince

## THOUGHTS ON THANKSGIVING

by Molly Prince

### Getting Acquainted With Incarceration

As I sit down to write about Thanksgiving or the UPAN newsletter this year, I look back over our family's prison journey. The first couple of years it didn't feel like there was anything to be thankful for as it pertained to prison - or the incarcerated loved ones stuck there for the holidays. I was still trying to sort out and deal with how I felt about the situation that resulted in someone I care so deeply about ending up in prison.

### New Insight Reveals Some Happiness and Gratitude

It occurred to me one year when we were actually visiting on Thanksgiving Day, how deeply grateful I was to have the opportunity to visit on the actual holiday while the rest of the country was at home eating traditional dinners. We were sipping sodas and spending quality time with our incarcerated loved one. We got to catch up on each other's lives (his inside and ours out here). We got to hold hands and hug goodbye. As I left that visit, I tried to make sure I thanked each of the visiting officers for working on their Thanksgiving so we had the opportunity to visit. The next year, I wrote a letter to the officers in our visiting area expressing my profound gratitude for their being there, on the job, so we could share the holiday with our loved one.

### Gratitude = Seeing Changes In Our Loved One

One Thanksgiving, after a particularly difficult year dealing with the Utah Prison System, I found myself trying very hard to identify something to be thankful for pertaining to our prison journey. I realized that as time passed, our inmate had made significant changes within himself for the better. He had been taking classes, programming and working a job that seemed to make a difference in how he viewed himself and his place in the world. I was very thankful for the compassionate and authentic person he was becoming. He started to reveal more of his true self to us. That was the man we loved.

### Challenges Difficult, But Are Blessings In Disguise

This past year has been both a wonderful and difficult year in our prison journey. Without getting into specifics, I want to say that it has been wonderful to watch our loved one grow as he has taken on new challenges and become even more of a better man, revealing more and more of the truly good soul that he is. He also faced very sad losses of loved ones and deep disappointments on various levels. I realize that every single challenge presented to us as a family has been a gift. These challenges are certainly not easy at

all and in the midst of them I often resent or even despise them. However, when we finally get through them, we are stronger, closer and more solid in our own identities as well as in our relationships with each other.

### Importance of Contact Visits, Mail, Phone Calls

I still appreciate the ability to visit our loved one in person, in contact visits where we can hug and hold hands, without glass or a video monitor between us. This is how we get through this prison journey. Visits, phone calls, and letters. I appreciate the mail room staff more than I can say. It is true that the phones often leave a lot to be desired, many are in poor repair and do not always work. I am thankful every time we get a full ½ hour call without being cut off in the middle, and it is especially great when we can hear each other clearly throughout the call without static. I keep in mind that the inmate phone providers continue to financially gouge us consumers of their services, but I'm thankful there is that option to hear each other's voice when we are so far apart. Sometimes that is all we need to get through a difficult day.

### Thankful For Progress In The Dept of Corrections

While there are many, many things still wrong with Utah's prison system, I am very thankful that there are administrators, officers, and staff that believe in making things better for the incarcerated population of Utah. I am thankful for **Rollin Cook's** mandate to improve the Utah Department of Corrections one step at a time, one employee at a time. It may take years, but I see many improvements today over practices of 10 years ago.

### Thanks To UPAN Volunteers and Family Helpers

I want to share my appreciation for everyone who does anything to help UPAN further its purpose. This includes the UPAN Directors as well as the many Newsletter Volunteers who send out several hundred newsletters to inmates who have no one to do so. This includes UPAN family members who work behind the scenes to talk to lawmakers about what needs to be done to improve the chances of their loved ones getting the programming and rehabilitation they need. Those who have worked to try to improve access to communication about inmates' unmet medical and mental health needs. To those who are paying attention to what is happening in IPP.

### Thanks To DLC, ACLU of Utah, Media People

There are other organizations dedicated to assisting prisoners in being treated appropriately such as the

Disability Law Center and the ACLU of Utah. I have deep respect for the people involved with those organizations that I see working to better the conditions in Utah's criminal justice and prison systems. There are news reporters who pay attention and write articles and air news reports about what is happening in Utah's system. They all deserve recognition and appreciation.

### **Thanks To Inmates Who Communicate With UPAN**

## **A PATH TO HIGHER ED**

*Reprinted with permission of University Marketing & Communications.*  
By Brooke Adams, communications specialist, University Communications  
November 6, 2017 The University of Utah @THEU

Assistant professor Erin L. Castro is the driving force behind a new project that seeks to bring equity and access to a college education to a critical yet challenging space: Utah's prisons. The University of Utah Prison Education Project, gaining momentum last year in an Honors College Praxis lab, is now offering two non-credit classes at the Utah State Correctional Facility in Draper.

Six women are taking *Intro to Gender and Culture*, with 10 men in *Philosophical and Historical Perspectives on Education*. The project also provides tutoring help and a lecture series. Professor Suresh Venkatasubramanian recently presented a lecture titled "How to do Math (and Computer Science!) while Cutting a Cake." It's a modest start to what Castro hopes will grow into a program that offers incarcerated individuals the opportunity to earn credits toward, or complete, a bachelor's degree in University Studies.

"Access to higher education can change lives," said Castro, director/co-founder of the Utah Prison Education Project and a faculty member in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. "If we care about issues of equity and access, we have to ask ourselves why we wouldn't consider incarcerated people as college students. "It aligns with our mission as a public institution, which is to serve our community, and incarcerated persons are part of our community," she said. "It is important for me that this become an academic program and that students are enrolled as U students, earning college credit, so they have those transcripts."

### **Education Makes A Difference**

In Utah, approximately 97 percent of the people currently incarcerated will be released back to the community and there is evidence that educational services may be key in helping them not return.

A 2014 Rand Corp. report shows inmates who participate in educational programming have a 43 percent lower chance of reoffending. Studies also indicate educational services increase odds of finding a job. There is an economic argument as well: the Rand study found that every dollar invested in correctional

Finally, I want to thank those who are incarcerated who write to let us know how things are going – both bad and good. We need to hear about improvements as much as problems. Thanks to those who send in articles to be reviewed for potential publication. Also those who send in letters sharing appreciation for what UPAN is working toward.

Wishing everyone a blessed Thanksgiving, Molly

education saves nearly \$5 in costs given reductions in recidivism.

A majority of the people incarcerated have less than a high school education. The Canyons and South Sanpete school districts provide secondary education programs at Utah's state prisons in Draper and Gunnison. Inmates also have access to vocational training programs through Davis Applied Technology College, Snow College and the Uintah Basin Applied Technology College. And inmates can take college-level correspondence courses.

Now, providing in-prison access to higher education offerings is making a comeback in Utah after a nearly 10-year hiatus. In its 2017 session the Utah Legislature approved ongoing funds for Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) to provide for-credit, general education courses to inmates seeking an associate's degree. Castro is working with SLCC to create a pathway to four-year degrees.

### **A First-Time Experience**

Castro came to the U of U five years ago with a rich understanding of how prison education programs can make a difference. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where Castro received her doctorate, operates the Education Justice Project — a first-rate, comprehensive prison education program. She worked as a tutor, instructor and volunteer for the project. "I had a phenomenal opportunity to learn about university/prison partnerships," she said.

Castro also is a strategic organizing member of the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison, a coalition of college-in-prison programs in the U.S. Her research focuses on equity and access to quality postsecondary education, particularly for incarcerated and felony disenfranchised individuals.

Last year, Castro taught an Honors College praxis lab on Education, Incarceration and Justice. During the first half of the year, the 10 students in the lab took a deep dive into correctional education programs through readings and guest lectures. Speakers included Victor Kersey, Institutional Programming division director at the Utah Department of Corrections, and Mary Gould,

director of the St. Louis Prison Program and a U alumnus.

The students also attended the 6th Annual National Conference on Higher Education in Prison in Nashville. While in Tennessee, they toured the medium-security Turney Center Industrial Complex. During the semester, the class also visited Utah’s main prison facility in Draper and the Salt Lake County Metro Jail.

“The adventure to Tennessee and meeting the amazing people behind the prison reform projects was incredibly humbling,” Mekenzy Toner wrote, a sophomore majoring in Entertainment Arts and Engineering, in the class’s final report. “I realized that hyper-incarceration is not a clear-cut issue, but rather a series of layers and foundational blocks of patriarchy and racism that have been built for years, and have only recently begun to be broken down.” None of the students had ever been inside a prison before, Castro said.

“When we had the opportunity to speak to some of the women taking a course in the Timpanogos facility, it was easy to hear the desire to learn in each woman’s voice,” Erin Feeley wrote, a junior majoring in human development and family studies, in the lab’s final report. “Their questions probed us for descriptions of the courses we might offer and who might be able to take them. While we couldn’t provide answers to these questions that day, the questions stuck with me, motivating me to continue to contribute to the significant work load that lay before us.”

During the second semester, the students worked on an infrastructure for the Utah Prison Education Project, soliciting advice from successful program across the country. They created an admissions application formed a budget, wrote faculty/student manuals and a mission statement, etc. The class also successfully applied for a grant from the Newcomers Club of Salt Lake City. “I learned so much from this course,” said

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### UPAN November Meeting Summary

The meeting was opened by our President, Shauna Denos with a thank you to all attendees for being present to make the meeting more complete and interesting. Audrae Rogers was asked to cover some details about Christmas Card mailing volunteers and the Christmas Card Design Contest. Then Michael McAnish spoke about some events he is currently involved in and he introduced a new friend, Joel Winter, who had just been released on parole six days ago after being incarcerated for 12 years and 9 months. His sudden release was considered a minor miracle, and everyone showed appreciation of the event via applause.

Later, Joel was asked to describe his release. The story was suspenseful, just as he experienced it, with

Ludovica Farese, who is majoring in international studies with a chemistry minor, wrote in the lab’s final report. “It really opened my eyes to all the injustices that people face daily in the court system and in the carceral system.”

### Next? Finding Funds

The University of Utah Prison Education Project has enthusiastic support from the administration, faculty, students and staff, Castro said. The biggest obstacle at this point is funding.

“The only thing standing between us doing a non-credit program and enrolling students in for-credit programs is money,” Castro said. “We are applying for grants to cover costs of tuition, supplies and textbooks. There is tremendous interest but in terms of sustainability, we will definitely need to find funds.”

The project’s needs are unique. Most inmates don’t have financial resources or the means to earn enough while incarcerated to pay tuition. They don’t currently have access to computers or a closed-circuit server, which means students can’t access the online Marriott Library database and their research is limited to materials provided through the program or available in the prison library. Students must write research papers by hand; mistakes are corrected using whiteout tape. “We go through a lot of paper and a lot of pencils,” Castro said. “We want to work with people who are committed to participating in meaningful higher education and that’s not contingent on their ability to pay for it,” she added. “We want to say, ‘What is it you need to be successful?’ and then provide it.”

Interested in volunteering or donating supplies or time? Contact [utahpep@gmail.com](mailto:utahpep@gmail.com)

The original article with photos and links to how to donate or contribute needed supplies found online at: <https://attheu.utah.edu/facultystaff/a-path-to-higher-ed/>

several correctional officers unaware of his imminent release and he was doubtful and cautiously questioning about it actually happening. It did!

We were also treated to a once in a lifetime performance by the Mountain West Chorale, from West Jordan City directed by Richard Pierce, singing Christmas carols with varied musical instruments accompanying the singers. The group numbered 35 members, of which our UPAN President, Shauna Denos, is a member and singer. The performance included *Angels We Have Heard on High*, and the frequent refrain, Glor- ooooooh, ooooooh,oooooh ria, in excelsis De - o. It sent chills down our spines. In closing, the UPAN attendees sang *Silent Night* with the chorale. That brought a few tears to several eyes.

After the musical performance, several attendees at the front of our meeting room, turned their chairs around forming a crude circle enabling us to talk directly across and listen to each other. This part of the meeting was another highlight of the evening with attendees on parole telling us their experiences and methods of obtaining parole. Their comments covered letters to the BOPP and for the Hearing Officers, including some details to include and what to leave out. [Note: We may publish a detailed article on this subject in a near-future UPAN Newsletter. Ed.] Also included were some individual challenges that our attendees have

encountered and overcome or are in the process of solving. (Thanks for your input Maggie.)

I was "a bit unofficially" designated by Molly as the official UPAN "Greeter," and for the second month, enjoyed welcoming and meeting our attendees. The closeness we have as a group with so much in common and the warmth of gathering together, like a close-knit family, is a true blessing for which I'm thankful. We have a great group that has been increasing in size. We've had about 40 people attending during the last two meetings. The meeting adjourned with everyone feeling this was one of our best meetings. Warren Rosenbaum (aka Ed.)

**The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated. – William James**

### **A Comment on Gratitude from UPAN President Shauna Denos**

Hi everyone, as always, I'm grateful for my family. This year we welcomed a new granddaughter into our lives and all the kids are happy, healthy and strong. I'm grateful that our inmate loved one, Thomas, is doing well and that he is also healthy. And even though life has thrown us a few curveballs, we have been able to pull together as a family and stay strong. I am very

grateful for those experiences in life that have not killed us but have made us stronger and better people. Also, I'm very thankful for the opportunity to serve all the inmates and their families as UPAN's president.

Wishing a Happy Thanksgiving to all our inmates, UPAN directors, volunteers, and friends. Shauna

***Forget injuries, never forget kindnesses. – Confucius***

### **UPAN's Christmas Card Design Contest Winners**

UPAN wishes to thank all the Christmas Card Design contest entrants for their thoughtful and original (and quite professional) entries. The contest categories were: Traditional Christmas and Contemporary Christmas. Possibly we should add a Humorous Christmas category next year because our Honorable Mention award surely calls for a contest category portraying that part of Christmas.

Winner in the Traditional Christmas Card Design is: Adam Smuin located at Draper, with the entry being Child Hugging Teddy Bear in Traditional Christmas scene. Winner in the Contemporary Christmas Card Design is: Jeremy English located at Gunnison, with the entry being Happy Child with Happy Snowman,

gingerbread men and candy canes. Lastly, our Honorable Mention goes to: Robert Wolf located at Draper, the entry being a friendly pet dog with a halo over his head saying, "I'm a Perfect Angel" and to the right is a tipped-over Christmas tree.

These three entries will be reproduced in the December UPAN Newsletter for all to enjoy. Again, thank you to the entrants and all others who were considering an entry. Next year we will give you advanced notice so you will not be pressed for time and can practice a bit before finalizing your entry and submitting it. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Holidays and Kwanzaa to all Utah inmates and their families and friends from all of us at UPAN.

**"There is always something to be thankful for."**

*As winter approaches, let's put "cool" into hibernation and observe what's "hot." In this issue, Inmate Accounting and Medical Withdrawals, Parole Success Tips, and new BOPP Chairperson. That's what we've got that's hot. Ed.*

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Director of Communications: Shane Severson  
Newsletter Editor: Warren Rosenbaum

**"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**