



UPAN Newsletter Volume 6 Number 8 | AUGUST 2019

“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

* * * * *

New Mailroom Policies – Avoid Scams on Parole Recidivism Info – Xmas Card Design Contest Meet Your Legislators – Mailing Volunteers Needed

NEXT UPAN MEETING: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2019 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Kafeneio Coffee House 258 West 3300 South, Salt Lake City

TOPIC: – Offenders of Minor Crimes are directed to help/assistance therapy, not prison!

GUEST SPEAKER: David Leavitt, Criminal Justice Reform – Diversion Program
All UPAN Meetings are free and open to the public.

OCTOBER UPAN MEETING: Meet Your Legislators. Mon., Oct. 14, 2019 6:00 – 8:15 p.m.
SPECIAL LOCATION: Marmalade Branch, SLC Public Library, 280 W 500 N.

The Multi-Purpose Room has been reserved to “Meet Your Legislators” Parking is adequate but also use the complimentary parking lot behind the LDS Church located across the street to the south of the library.

In This Issue:

Meeting Announcements, UPAN Newsletter Contents in this issue and UPAN Disclaimer	Page 1
» <u>New Prison Mail Restrictions</u> Recommended Reading and Study for Permissible Mailings	Pages 2-3
» <u>Meet Your Legislators – October Meeting</u> Speakers Needed	Page 3
» <u>New Changes for Families On Release Day</u> by Deon Corkins	Pages 3-4
» <u>How to Identify & Avoid Scams upon Re-Entry to Society</u> by Molly Prince	Page 4-5
» <u>Recidivism – Research Collaboration Needed</u> by L. Hansen & Utah Justice Coalition Details	Pages 5-6
» <u>Recidivism and Utah’s Prison Population Growth</u> by Ernest Rogers	Pages 7-8
» <u>Self-Forgiveness: a Key to Recovery</u> by Blake Marshall	Pages 8-9
» <u>Newsletter Mailing Volunteers Needed</u> – Help us help others	Page 9
» <u>Christmas Card Design Contest</u> – Details and Deadline Data	Page 10
» <u>UPAN Writing Exercise</u> – Thank you statement and “What’s Next”	Page 10
» <u>Seeking Articles on Gratitude from Incarcerated Individuals</u>	Page 10
List of UPAN Directors/Officers and UPAN Addresses/Contact Info (also our Facebook page)	Page 10

“Empathy... we must understand before we judge.” #Cut50

“Never look down on anybody unless you’re helping him up.” – Jesse Jackson

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

New Prison Mail Restrictions Implemented by Utah Department of Corrections

by Molly Prince and including the UDC announcement

In July, an announcement was posted on the UDC website regarding additional restrictions for mail sent to prison inmates. They became effective August 1, 2019.

Only single layer white envelopes and single layer white paper or stationery will be allowed. Ruled white writing paper with lines as a guide for handwriting will also be allowed. There is no limit to the number of pages in an envelope but the additional postage cost over the 5 or 6 pages that fits in a standard white #10 envelope will be required.

What is no longer allowed: The following types of envelopes, paper, stationery, and cards are now prohibited and being refused or denied and returned to sender:

- Color envelopes (including manila and multi-layer envelopes)
- Color paper or stationery
- Greeting cards, card stock or other multi-layered paper or stationery
- Any mail with paint, chalk, crayons, markers or high-lighters on contents or envelope will be denied.

SOURCE: UPAN directors contacted Sgt. Roberts regarding the mail policy with questions for clarification. This article is based on information he has provided us.

Printer ink and pens. All ink used from printers should be black ink - not colored - on white paper. Ballpoint pens and pencil are allowed.

Gel-pen question. Several family members received differing answers from prison staff regarding the use of "gel pens." According to Sgt. Roberts, gel pens such as a Pilot G2, Uniball gel, Paper-mate gel, or similar styles will be admitted. Gel pens that produce thick, gooey lines or have glitter in the ink will NOT be accepted.

Return address and mailing labels are still allowed but they will be removed before the envelope is forwarded to the inmate.

Postcards are limited to only pre-stamped white postcards sold by the post office. Sgt. Roberts stated that postcards can be considered on a "case by case basis." As long as mail room staff can see completely through the white postcard and there is no obvious tampering, they will be allowed. If they cannot see through the post card or the edges have been tampered with, they will be denied.

Photographs are still accepted. Sgt. Roberts said photographs are still acceptable. UPAN recommends commercially produced photos that you can get at Walgreens, Walmart, or online at Freeprints.com or other outlets. The ink on these photos is not water

soluble like some home / personal printer ink is, so does not pose the risk that the prison is trying to avoid.

Ideas for what could be substituted for greeting cards or holidays cards. UPAN families have communicated with the mail room and come up with ideas of how to adapt to these new rules. Sgt. Roberts indicated that since photographs are still allowed, families can take a photo of a greeting or holiday card and send it in a white envelope rather than sending in a conventional greeting card and its colored envelope.

Also, a black and white copy of a holiday card on white paper placed in a white envelope will be accepted.

Drawings from children can still be accepted as long as they are either in pen on white paper (no markers, crayons, glitter, stickers, etc.). One UPAN mother takes color pictures of her children's drawings and has them developed commercially and sends them in as photographs, and they are accepted.

Manila or colored envelopes from government sources. In response to an inmate's concern about ability to continue to receive mailings from the Veterans Administration, which sends out its correspondence in manila (golden colored) envelopes, Sgt. Roberts said "currently we still will not allow those envelopes into the facility." The mailroom staff has been making photocopies and sending in the material to inmates in white envelopes. He wrote in an email, "this practice will not change and we will continue to photocopy the envelopes from government entities."

What UDC is trying to achieve by implementing the new policy. UPAN has been advised that the new policy is in an attempt to enhance the safety and security of all incarcerated individuals, staff, and the public. Sgt. Roberts let us know that illegal substances are found within incoming mail on a daily basis. He shared that when inmates are using illegal substances, it interferes with them being successful in programming and impedes their positive reintegration into society. In addition, the distribution and use of illegal drugs in the prison can contribute to violence in the facility, as well as deaths. Staff opening the mail is also exposed to these substances which can result in illness to them.

Sgt. Roberts stated that one of the most common substances the prison finds is the synthetic opioid, suboxone. Other illicit substances have been found as well. People have placed strips with drugs between the glued edges in colored envelopes and have even been known to slip them into card stock, or liquefy it and paint it onto colored greeting cards in order to send it in to prisoners. Thus, the new restrictions. In researching this, there are other prisons around the country who have been implementing more restrictive mail policies

to combat this same problem.

Timeline for adjusting to the new mail policies. As of August 1, the mail room has started to make photocopies of mail that violates these new restrictions. The black and white photocopies are sent to inmates and the originals are returned to sender with a notification explaining the new restrictions. Mail that

already violates current policy will not be copied or sent to inmates but will be refused or denied consistent with current policy and practices.

NOTE: Starting Sept. 1, the mail unit will refuse or deny and return to sender any mail items that violate these new additional restrictions for mail sent to inmates. No photocopies will be made.

“The opposite of anger is not calmness. It’s empathy.” – Mehmet Oz

Save the Date - Meet Your Legislator UPAN Meeting - Monday October 14, 2019

UPAN will host a Meet Your Legislator Meeting for our October meeting. **LOCATION:** Marmalade Library, 280 West 500 North in Salt Lake City from **6:00 – 8:15 p.m.**

While UPAN is inviting all of Utah’s legislators, we are asking you to also contact your local elected officials, representatives, and senators and invite them to our October 2019 meeting. You can find out who your representative and senator are by going to: le.utah.gov. E-mail them, call them, or send them a written invitation. Let them know you are one of their constituents and that you are not only inviting them, but it is important to you that they attend. This will only be successful if we all do our part to invite them!

This Meeting Will Have Three Objectives:

First: This will put a face to the names we hear about up on Utah’s Hill. And they will get to put a face to the constituents they represent.

Second: UPAN families, formerly incarcerated, and supporters will provide them firsthand stories about the

real people being affected by the prison system, the criminal justice system, and the laws they are passing.

Third: We can give them an opportunity to share their views and plans for criminal justice reform in Utah. This will be accomplished with a list of participants (you) to sign up to speak. **PLEASE**, email UPAN at utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com by mid-September to get on the speakers’ list. Tell us your name and topic.

Each speaker will get up to 3 - 4 minutes to express their views. This should be a positive experience for all involved, so be careful how you present your issues. Our representatives should come away with an appreciation of everything we as families, and our incarcerated loved ones, are going through. We hope to share ideas that continue to facilitate positive change. We need their help, they need our experience, and we need them to be on the side of truth, fairness, reform and healing.

We hope to come away with an idea of where our elected officials stand on various issues as well.

New Changes for Families on Release Day by Deon Corkins

The Re-Entry team at Utah Department of Corrections recently developed a presentation for families of inmates being released that same day. UDC invited the UPAN team to make comments on the list of topics to be covered and to view a presentation on July 9th and provide feedback. The meeting was presented by Eric Barker, Assistant Regional Administrator and Katie Bennett, Supervisor of the Release and Reentry Team. The UPAN representatives made several suggestions on topic content both by email and in person.

The Loved Ones Release Day Meeting for families picking up released inmates will be held each Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. at the Fred House Training Academy located at 14727 S. Minuteman Drive, in Draper, UT. The academy is located across the freeway from the prison on the east side of I-15. Signs will be posted at the academy with directions to parking and to the classroom behind the main building. Family members may be notified ahead of time by email, if possible. UPAN encourages family members to plan on attending

this meeting if they are arranging to pick up their releasing loved ones.

Inmates process out in the mornings on Tuesdays. Families from distant locations may have to leave very early in the morning to arrive on time, or plan to stay in the Salt Lake Valley the night before. Eventually the UDC website may contain information and directions for the Release Day Meeting.

The instructors use a power point presentation to inform families about how to understand certain benefits available to parolees, to understand the parole supervision process, support the released inmate, and be aware of the individualized packet the parolee will receive. For example, if the released inmate is a veteran, information about help from the Veteran’s Administration is included. Questions from family members are encouraged.

The first live presentation of Loved Ones Release Day Meeting was conducted on July 16, 2019. Typically, thirty to sixty inmates will be released on a release day. **Helpful benefits for parolees.** There are many helpful benefits that are available upon release, such as how to

acquire work boots provided by the Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and signing up for Targeted Medicaid (known as TAMS). TAMS is available for parolees for the first year after release.

Inmates: sign up for EVERYTHING. On release day, inmates are taken to a room where they can sign up for a variety of services. It is wise to take the time to sign up for everything, even if you are understandably eager to just walk out into freedom. Many of these benefits are more easily and more quickly accessed if the inmate signs up prior to the day of release. The sooner the better. For example, if you don't sign up for Targeted Medicaid (TAMS) at this time, you (he or she) may not be able to access Medicaid once you are out, particularly if you end up in a halfway house.

With vocational benefits, it is best to sign up sixty days before release. Applications for Medicare and

Social Security Benefits for retirees also should be done with the Re-entry Team long before release day.

Inmate Placement Program. Inmates in IPP who are scattered across the state in various county jails and arrive at Draper a few days prior to release may not have had the opportunity to work with the re-entry team prior to release day. They may experience some delays in accessing vocational benefits following release. IPP inmates anticipating release should try requesting vocational aid applications in advance from the caseworker or officer in the jail.

The Release and Reentry Team continues to evolve, hoping to provide family members and their paroled loved ones the information and resources necessary for them to transition back into the community from prison. Contact information: Katie Bennett: 801-576-7140 kabennett@utah.gov Eric Barker: 801-633-9331 ericbarker@utah.gov

ALERT for People Re-entering Society – How to Identify & Avoid Scams

by Molly Prince based on information from Bank of America Security Center (online)

Curiosity pulls people into scams. Individuals who have been away for more than a couple of years on their prison journeys often are released and are amazed at all the changes in the world – including the use of technology in every area of our lives out here in the community. We use cell phones that are no longer the cell phones of 15, 10, or even 5 years ago. Today the standard personal phone is an Android Smart Phone or an iPhone. These phones are actually personal mini-computers that we carry with us at all times. They keep us connected to everything from our loved ones, friends, and employers to our bank accounts, credit card accounts, shopping, gaming, and entertainment options. The same connections are available with tiny wrist phone devices, tablets, as well as personal computers such as laptops or desktops.

It seems we are all connected in a huge web of electronic technology. Along with all this technology and convenience at our fingertips comes one facet of the dark side of this technology... Scammers.

Over the past several years, the art of scamming has stepped up several notches. With the wonders of technology now, scammers can use phone numbers for caller ID that are not their own and even phone numbers that belong to people or agencies you may think you know, in order to scam you.

One example is when people who are on parole are contacted on the phone or via a fake phone number and told their supervision fees or fines are delinquent and they need to pay the person immediately with a credit card or a pre-paid card. Another example is when people who are on the sex offender registry are contacted via phone or email the same as described above and told that they will be arrested if they do not

pay a certain amount of money in a certain method to a certain address by a certain deadline. Some individuals who have suffered this type of scam report the person on the other end identifies himself as an officer of the law but has an accent that is not local to Utah.

A third example is a so-called "grant" for felons that can be applied for online. The individual supplies their social security number and other identifying information. Then the scammer does some research and credit check, finds out how much money they have in their bank account and contacts them by phone saying that they have been awarded the "grant" but that they first need to pay some processing fees that seem to be just about the same amount of the funds in the individual's bank account. They give a very short deadline for it to be transferred and they ask for transfers to be authorized - not checks in the mail that can have payments stopped. Once the money is out of the account there is nothing that the person who has been scammed can do to recoup the funds. Many more examples are included at the end of this article.

Watch for Scams: Two Things to Keep in Mind

First – if it sounds too good to be true – IT IS! Scammers depend on reaching people who are looking for a miracle or "good luck" or something else that is too good to be true.

Second – if A P & P or the IRS or the Social Security office is trying to collect past due fees, fines, or taxes you will receive notices in the mail, they will not be trying to collect by phone.

Some Ideas on Protecting Yourself From Scams

•Protect ALL of your devices. Install antivirus software, keep your operating systems, applications and web browser current on mobile phone, tablet and computer.

- Stay alert to online threats. Don't click on suspicious links or respond to emails or texts urging quick action.
- Do not provide personal information like your account numbers, PIN or Social Security number to anyone who has contacted you first.
- If you contact your bank, credit union, or credit card company with the number on your statement or on your credit card, and know for sure you are talking to them, you can likely safely share your information. Most banks and credit card companies have personal questions for verifying your identity that they will ask you as well, to verify you are the actual owner of the account.
- Only share your passwords and IDs to trusted persons in your life. Never share your Social Security number with anyone you are not absolutely sure you can trust.

Know how to identify and avoid scams by being aware of the following:

- Never trust caller ID: Always validate a person's organization by calling them back through an official phone number.
- Scammers may pose as government officials, law enforcement or even your credit card company employees to steal your personal information. Never give out information to anyone you are not sure is with your financial institution.
- Companies like Zelle® should only be used to send money to friends, family or others you trust and not to buy goods or services from people you don't know.

Know how to identify red flags. In many of the most common types of scams, you may be:

- Pressured to send money
- Threatened with law enforcement action
- Told to purchase gift cards and provide codes as a form of payment
- Asked to cash a check for a stranger
- Instructed to make a cash deposit for sweepstakes or processing fees for "winnings" or "grants"
- Offered more than you are asking for something with a request to send the overpayment elsewhere

Help your financial institutions be able to get in touch with you if they detect any suspicious activity on your accounts:

- Keep your contact information up-to-date, especially your mobile number.

- If you choose to use Mobile Banking apps for any financial institution you do business with, then turn on mobile app alerts. When they detect unusual activity, the financial institution should notify you; be sure to respond quickly to their security and fraud alerts.
- Review your account activity regularly and report suspicious activity promptly.
- Create strong, unique passwords for each online account sign-in – and use additional security features when available.

The best ways to avoid getting scammed

- Don't respond:** If you're not 100% certain of the source of the call, email or text, then hang up the phone, don't click on the link in the email and don't reply to the text message.
- Don't trust caller ID or answer phone calls from unknown numbers:** If you recognize the caller ID but the call seems suspicious, hang up the phone. Phone numbers can be easily spoofed to appear to be from a legitimate caller.
- Don't give out your information:** Do not give out any personal identifiable information unless you're absolutely certain the person and reason are legitimate. Remember: your bank or credit card company will never ask you to send personal information such as an account number, Social Security or Tax ID over text, email or online.
- Research and validate:** If the individual or organization seems suspicious, make sure the request being made is legitimate by calling the organization through an official number from their website or consulting with a trusted family member or friend.

If you have received an email or phone call from a scammer claiming to be your financial institution, you can report it to that institution's fraud department. Share the phone number and what was said. If you have received a call from a scammer claiming to be the IRS or Social Security office, you can call and report that to their fraud department. REMEMBER: If you provide your information or send money to a scammer, there is very little the financial institution can do to help get your money back.

Recidivism, a Call for Collaboration in Research by Layne D. Hansen

*The following was published in the Utah Justice Coalition April 2019 monthly newsletter.
It is reprinted with permission from author and UJC.*

Great strides have been made in Utah's criminal justice system in the past five years or so. Through rhetoric and legislation, we've seen the beginnings of a pivot from punishment to rehabilitation. This is a positive development, but it is time to look at the next level of the stated goals, i.e. returning criminals into mainstream society. This requires a look at recidivism rates in our state.

Essentially this article is a call for further research, for which we will gladly take part. This research should ask whether recidivism rates are at, below, or above the national and regional averages; review the scholarly literature for traditional causes of recidivism, posit an explanation that may be unique to Utah, if applicable; determine whether the current reforms will alleviate recidivism, or if further legislation is needed.

First, a look at the recent reforms. According to the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's (hereon CCJJ) 2017 report, the state's criminal justice system is moving in the right direction. "Right direction" is based on the stated goals of HB248 which was passed and signed into law in 2015.

CCJJ's report found that drug possession charges are down, offenders are receiving more treatment for substance abuse and mental health issues. Furthermore, supervised releases from prison have increased and the reforms seemed to have caused no increase in crime, or as they put it, a threat to public safety. Another positive outcome has been the decrease in prison growth, which skyrocketed during the decade preceding the passing of HB384. Pew had similar findings, noting that the state government projected a savings of nearly \$500 million over the next 15 years.

While the overall numbers seem to show the reform efforts are bearing fruit it begs the question of whether recidivism will be affected. In a recent post, the Utah Foundation claimed that drug treatment programs can reduce costs and recidivism. While I am not arguing this point, I would also ask what the mechanism for these reductions are. The connection between savings, costs, and the state's reform package are clearer than that of recidivism, because as the more recent scholarly literature has shown, employment is a strong determining factor of whether a person will return to crime once they've exited the criminal justice system.

In his 2017 article in *The Economic Journal*, Kevin Schnepel found that employment in construction and manufacturing – jobs that typically bring higher wages – help to reduce a return to crime. Other, less compensated jobs do not affect recidivism. In other words the better the job, the less likely the return to prison or jail.

With this direct connection between employment and recidivism, another research question could be whether businesses in Utah are opening their doors to those exiting the criminal justice system, especially felons, and if not, why? Granted we understand there are risks associated with employing someone with a criminal history; however, businesses could be surveyed about

which measures could be taken that increase the likelihood of their hiring former offenders.

Of course, businesses should not be expected to bring in unskilled workers. This will require the additional step of helping this population gain the skills they need to obtain better employment. The most logical solution is to utilize the local trade colleges like Davis Technical College, Ogden-Weber technical College, or Salt Lake Community College. There are a number of trades that one could be trained to enter – jobs that don't require years of training and that pay well.

(UPAN note: Currently the Vocational Trade programs offered in Utah State Prison are very limited in terms of how many and which inmates can access and participate in them. Utah's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is also not funded at a sufficient level to meet the demand for assistance to pay tuition for these programs).

How this population would be able to gain access to this job training is another question. Perhaps scholarships could be established or the state could follow the LDS Church's Perpetual Education Fund where those who receive funds to attend these schools repay these funds once they've gained employment. These are just a couple of suggestions but this could all be worked out at another time.

Another barrier to full integration into society is Utah's recent surge in cost of living, especially the cost of housing. The main driver of this increase is that demand is outpacing supply. This puts former offenders and parolees, especially with families, at a huge disadvantage. Perhaps the housing market will ebb, but this doesn't seem to be on the horizon. The best hope for this population is to obtain better employment and ride out the current rising tide of living costs.

That said, the main purpose of this article is to call for a collaborative effort to research the causes of recidivism that are unique to our state and current economic and cultural situations. We at the Utah Justice Coalition continue to push our state, particularly our lawmakers, further in the direction of rehabilitation instead of punishment. We know that evidence-based research is the best way to bring about this result.

About the Utah Justice Coalition

The Utah Justice Coalition's core mission is to reduce incarceration and recidivism in Utah.

The criminal justice system in Utah, like much of the nation, has many issues that need to be fixed. The Utah Justice Coalition's vision is for Utah to embrace a criminal justice system in the future that truly promotes justice while also protecting the liberties of the citizens of this state. They have identified **6 key areas of reform** that they focus on as they move forward to support the mission: 1. Sentencing reforms: working to reform mandatory minimum sentences. 2. Ending over-criminalization by reevaluating and updating felony and high-level misdemeanor crimes. 3. Promoting rehabilitation over incarceration. 4. Promoting proper funding of indigent defense. 5. Ending the death penalty. 6. Helping former inmates reintegrate back into society. For more information go to Utah Justice Coalition at www.utjc.org Mailing address is 90 W. 500 S. #354 Bountiful, UT 84010

Why Recidivism Matters—What We Should Do About It

Facts, Opinions, Ideas, and Suggestions by Ernest Rogers

Utah's prison population is rising rapidly. If the trend continues, Utah could have 8,000 people in prison by the latter part of 2023 at a huge expense to taxpayers - if there was enough room to house them all - there simply isn't! People are beginning to realize we have a crisis. At the heart of the problem is Utah's recidivism rate and how we are trying to manage addiction. First, let's review Utah's recidivism rate and the impact it has on prison population. Prison population grows because there are too many going in and too few coming out. In 2017, 79% going into prison were returning as a result of parole or probation violations, not re-offenses.

Of people going to prison that year, 53% had been released to parole, failed and were sent back to prison. Offenders sentenced to probation by the courts and later sent to prison for failing their probation were the additional 26%. The majority of those entering prison in 2017 were not being sent there for committing a crime, but instead for breaking parole or probation rules. The picture is clear, "recidivism" is why the Utah justice system is groaning under the weight of people cycling in and out, and back again. Almost all of the people that return to prison are going back for the same reason - addictions. (Addiction contributes to many different crimes.)

On average, in Utah a person with an addiction ends up in prison five times before he or she will finally get control of it (or die). There are hundreds of people with addictions who have returned to prison more than fifteen times. This group has given Utah the distinction of having the highest rate of recidivism among all 50 states at somewhere close to 70%. Currently, Utah has 6,741 people in prison (Aug. 2, 2019). If recidivism were even moderately under control—say, at 50% - we would have only 4,044 people in the prison system. The difference, in practical terms, is the waste of hundreds of millions of dollars. Obviously, in Utah today, recidivism is not under control—a principal underlying cause is a failure to properly manage and effectively treat addictions.

One simple, unfortunate failure is the false expectation that everyone in prison has an addiction, and must be watched and controlled. An example is sex offenders are uniformly treated as if they have sexual addictions but the vast majority do not—millions of dollars spent there are wasted. Every inmate is monitored, strip-searched, and restricted in communication with family members as if he/she is a desperate addict that must be controlled. EVERY piece of incoming mail is carefully regulated and inspected. What a waste! Repeat drug offenders obviously need these efforts—most of the rest do not, and the burdensome, one-size-fits-all prison regulations hurt everyone equally. Restrictions and "programming" education should be only for those that need them.

Simple advice for the Governor, Courts, Legislature, UDC and Board of Pardons and Parole.

1. Admit that you don't always know what's best. Be open and willing to listen to suggestions.
2. Give up the false notion that "only hardened criminals are in prison." Everybody makes mistakes.
3. Truly understand—people in the justice system have worth. They need caring and respect—this is the only way you can be successful at causing change.
4. Regularly review the risk of ALL individuals using actuarial instruments such as the LS/RNR. Fully embrace the RNR Principle, which says you should only fix things that are broken.
5. Continue to dismantle an abusive, old-fashioned justice system still using "one size fits all."
6. More must be done to help people change direction before they go to prison.

Ideas for steps to lower recidivism by building healthier, more resilient people.

1. **Improve communication and transparency at all levels.** Provide full mail privileges and internet and smart phone privileges to inmates who will not abuse them. Allow limited internet purchases and internet educational opportunities.
2. **Overhaul the prison grievance system** so that it will drive improvement in Corrections rather than being managed to hide abuses by staff. Recognize and reward helpful suggestions.
3. **Adopt the Fresh Start Ventures/REAL Transition-Mentor Program** to reintegrate parolees into the community. They have helped more than 1,000 people stay out of prison with a current recidivism rate of 6%. REAL Transition was developed by Utah prisoners and UDC staff, then refined and implemented by Fresh Start Ventures. They say, "The REAL Transition community helps individuals to improve themselves by establishing healthy connections and supporting them in developing a personal vision for success. We believe connections are the basis for a meaningful life within any community. When we say connections, we do not just mean a healthy connection with others, we are talking about a very in-depth connection to self. The self-awareness that happens through REAL Transition writing and groups is life changing and helps to address trauma. All of our mentors are trained in evidence-based trauma, gender responsive, and numerous safety practices for both men and women by the National Institute of Corrections and other nationally recognized institutions." They also help people leaving prison to find good, safe housing.
4. **Partner with Journey of Hope on their program for women.** They are achieving 17% recidivism in 5 years, saving millions of dollars of taxpayer money and shutting down over 200 prison beds for women. The Director said, "Most of the women we have worked with do not recidivate. We use the best evidence-based

principles and practices called the Women's Case Management Model, created by Dr. Marily Vandieten with Orbis Partners for the National Institute of Corrections. Gender Responsive practices and principles reduce recidivism for women and precludes girls aging out from ending up in adult services. They have lowered recidivism in every State that has used them." Utah DOC has considered implementing some aspects of the program, called FOSI in their policy (Female Offender Success Initiative).

5. **Allow people to thrive in prison**, with greater opportunities for social, spiritual, and vocational development.

6. **Further the development of mentoring with artificial intelligence.** Real Transition, Journey of Hope, and other successful rehabilitation programs such as AA all rely on mentoring volunteers. Every person on parole should have a mentor to help smooth the bumps of re-entry into the community; also mentors for probationers. Electronic technology is now emerging that can share in the mentoring function. Utah can be a leader in this new technology by teaming up with "Silicon Slopes" companies to develop AM (Artificial Mentoring) technology.

Lowering recidivism will lower costs and lift human lives—this is an exalting goal we can achieve by working together. Let's do it.

Men simply copied the realities of their hearts when they built prisons. Richard Wright

Self-Forgiveness by Blake Marshall

When Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive his neighbor, Jesus said, "Seventy-times seven."

Now, before I lose you guys, let me be clear. This is not a religious article. I repeat. THIS IS NOT A RELIGIOUS ARTICLE. There, now that that is out of the way, we can get into the meat of what this short quote is talking about: Forgiveness.

We are all taught early on in life about forgiving people and the importance of forgiveness. What we don't spend a lot of time learning is how to forgive the hardest person to forgive, and that person is ourselves. I remember sitting in a therapy session, talking about self-forgiveness and asking, flat out, "How do I do that?" We are all our toughest critics, and we judge ourselves much more harshly than others do. Those of us involved in the corrections system face extra challenges of self-forgiveness when placed in an environment designed to punish us for our crimes.

In her book *Self-Forgiveness: The Heart of the Restorative Process*, author Robin Casarjian writes that in the system, prisoners learn a profound sense of shame and guilt, and that "it is a pervading sense of unhealthy guilt and shame that fuels violence and ensures a poor self-concept and low self-esteem." Essentially, Casarjian is saying that poor self-image is a link to recidivism in those who have committed a crime. With the idea that one is inherently bad, the motivation to do good fades quickly.

Casarjian's remedy is self-forgiveness.

Self-Forgiveness is a tool to boost positive self-esteem and boost the desire to move forward in a healthy positive way. Casarjian states that self-forgiveness, like forgiving others, is a process and not simply a one-time event. She outlines six steps as part of the process of self-forgiveness but qualifies that they are not steps that have to be done in order, and many are gone through more than once in the process of forgiving.

Step 1: Acknowledging the Truth - Like most programs involving steps, step one of self-forgiveness is to acknowledge the truth, and the whole truth, of what has happened. It is not just about the facts of the case, but how we felt, how others involved felt, and how what has happened has affected not only our lives but the lives of all parties involved.

Step 2: Taking responsibility for what you have done - Once we have acknowledged the whole truth of our actions, now we have to accept that we are responsible, regardless of outside influences, of making the choice to do whatever we did. It is easy to justify things away or blame others or circumstances for our choices. Only when we have taken responsibility can we begin to heal.

Step 3: Learning from experience by acknowledging deeper feelings that motivated behaviors- This step, at first glance, seemed like a step backward for me. I have taken responsibility, but now I need to look at things that may have contributed to what I did? In reality, this step is not about justifying behavior, but learning to take a look at the bigger picture and understanding that there are a variety of needs we have had in our lives that for whatever reason were unmet. This step also includes learning healthy ways of meeting those basic human needs.

Step 4: Opening your heart to yourself- Casarjian says that this step requires "ruthless compassion" which means we are willing to be honest with ourselves even when it is painful to do so. Opening our hearts to ourselves means we are gentle with our criticism of ourselves without allowing that gentleness to take away from acknowledging the truth or holding ourselves responsible for all of our choices and actions.

Step 5: Healing emotional wounds by heeding the inner calls for love in healthy and responsible ways- Our crimes, or any self-destructive act, can be viewed

as a call for help. Healing our wounds and learning to love means to take care of ourselves physically, emotionally, and mentally and talking to those we trust, associating with people who are positive influences, learning new things, meditating, praying, and taking care of our physical needs including exercise.

Step 6: Aligning with the Self and affirming our fundamental goodness- We often project many "false-selves" in our day-to-day lives. Tapping into who we truly are each day helps us to avoid those knee jerk reactions that will bring our false selves and bring us down. Casarjian suggests tapping into our true Self

"The real difficulty is to overcome how you think about yourself." Maya Angelou

Volunteers Needed to Print & Mail Newsletters to Inmates

by Molly Prince

UPAN again needs to ask for more volunteers to print out and mail our monthly newsletters to inmates in the Utah State Prison system. UPAN is all volunteer. We rely on the kindness and generosity of prison families and community members to help us print and mail newsletters to inmates who have no one else to do so. We have been publishing a monthly newsletter since June 2014. We email it to over 1006 individuals that include family members and friends of incarcerated persons, interested community members, various community agencies, legislators and other elected and appointed government officials, corrections officials, and news reporters.

We have approximately 50 volunteers that currently print and mail monthly newsletters to 408 state inmates who do not have family or friends to do this for them. *Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.*

If you want to help, please email us at:

utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com and let us know how many individuals you wish to send newsletters to.

How it works. The 10-page newsletter can be printed front and back on lightweight (20-lb.) printer or copy paper for a total of 5 printed pages that will fit into one white #10 envelope for the cost of one Forever stamp. The newsletters need to be printed in black and white to comply with the new mail room policies and mailed in a standard white envelope. Heavy stationary type envelopes or colored envelopes will not be accepted by the prisons. You will use UPAN's return address of UPAN, PO Box 464, Draper, UT 84020 on newsletters that you mail in.

through the practice of daily meditation. When we connect to our true Self, we can see that we have innate goodness and that we are worthy of the love of others, but more importantly, the love of ourselves.

I do not believe I have reached self-forgiveness in my life yet. I feel like with any major trauma, it takes time and energy. I have days where forgiveness is in my heart for my actions, and at times I can go long stretches feeling this way. Then life happens and I tend to slide like a baby deer on an ice pond. Giving a name to these steps of self-forgiveness has helped when these slides occur.

When addressing the envelope, it will be important to list not only the prisoner's name but also the offender number for the facility he / she is housed in. The prisons will return any mail that does not contain offender numbers, or if the offender number does not match the name.

You will be assigned prisoners to mail to. If you volunteer to do this, our Inmate Newsletter Volunteer Coordinator, Deon Corkins, will assign you the number of inmates you have requested. She will contact you via email with the name, offender number, and housing address of the inmates you are assigned.

Double checking addresses. We ask that each month, before doing your mailing, that you check the Offender Search on www.corrections.utah.gov to confirm the housing location of your assigned inmates has not changed. Inmates are moved frequently, therefore this will reduce the amount of returned mail UPAN receives and eliminate directors having to look up and re-send to inmates who have been moved to the various locations that house state inmates around the state. Volunteer mailers can check the locations of ten inmates in less than 5 minutes. Please do this, thanks.

UPAN has provided timely information to thousands of inmates via the newsletter over the past 5 years and we hope to be able to continue to provide newsletters to prisoners who have no one out here to print and mail to them. The tireless efforts of our newsletter mailing volunteers over the years has been the key to its success!

August UPAN Meeting Summary

Mike McAinsh gave a brief, in-depth presentation about the coming October UPAN meeting where we invite our legislators with the intent of them becoming more aware of the issues in our criminal justice system. See page 3. A request for volunteers was emphasized with a brief explanation of how so many inmates receive the UPAN Newsletter due to the generosity and efforts of newsletter mailers. See details on page 9 and seriously consider helping us help those inmates who have no other source for receiving the UPAN Newsletter. Lastly, our featured speaker, Stephanie Puffer, president of Utah Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, presented on the subject of final care. A detailed article on this urgent, necessary, humanitarian approach to aiding the dying in USP will be in the Sept. UPAN issue. Ed.

CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN CONTEST - FOR INMATES - UPAN 2019

CLOSING DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2019

Inmate artists are encouraged to join UPAN in celebrating the 2019 Holiday Season. Share your talents in designing a Christmas Card in any the following four categories: Religious, Traditional, Contemporary, or Humorous. (Or one in each of the four categories – for a total of four submissions per inmate). Winners in each category will be posted on the UPAN website. People will be able to download, print, and mail the cards as holiday greetings to inmates and friends. Entries cannot be returned due to colors and new mail room rules. They will be retained and preserved with appreciation, respect and care and kept

in a binder on display at UPAN meetings for viewing and enjoyment of attendees.

Important Notice For Artists: Choose the size of the card to fit your design, 5½ x 8½ inches or 3²/₃ x 8½ inches (a 1/3 fold of an 8½ x 11 inch paper). The original artwork can be any size (like 8½ x 11 paper) and we will resize it to the size you specify. Please sign your entry on the bottom right of your design. Mail entries to: UPAN Christmas Card Design Contest, P.O. Box 1018, Pleasant Grove, UT 84062

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.” Audrey Hepburn

A Special “Thank You” To Participants In UPAN’s Writing Exercise

Recently, due to some health issues I won’t get into, I’ve not been able to personally thank each participant and acknowledge my appreciation for their writing efforts. Those who submitted one or more written pieces often showed interesting creativity or bravely bared their soul and inner feelings. I will attempt to follow up with a general thank-you letter before rereading all entries and issuing certificates to all. The submissions have often been heartwarming in their

content and often, heart-wrenching and disturbing in reading the injustice, unfairness, and trials our inmates have received and endured. They have shown courage and abilities to cope and endure that would surely surpass my abilities and those of the general public. Inmates have proven they can handle the toughest parts of life and survive with dignity, honor, and a sense of overcoming challenges that will aid them during the balance of their lives. Thanks guys and gals. Ed.

Seeking Short Articles from Inmates on Gratitude

Thanksgiving will be upon us in 2 ½ short months. The focus of the November newsletter has traditionally been thankfulness and gratitude. Once again, UPAN is seeking poems and articles from incarcerated individuals about their experiences with gratitude despite being in prison. Please submit to PO Box 464 Draper, UT 84020. Please specify if you give permission for your name to be published with the article. **Submission deadline is October 20, 2019.**

A Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh

TV commercial: A little girl in a hardware store, holding a roll of tape, asks, “Why would anyone wanna tape a duck?!” Good question! Next: This may not be funny to some: “Knock, knock. Who’s there? Dishes. Dishes who? Dishes da police, open up!” Last one: I joined a gym and asked the trainer, “What machine should I use to impress beautiful girls?” He said, “The ATM machine.”

Shorter prison sentences – instead of 1-5 years, how about 1-5 months, change years to months. Now that’s cool! Ed.

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network

President: Shauna Denos
Past-President & Treasurer: Molly Prince
Vice-president: Unfilled
Secretary: Unfilled
Director of Communications: Shane Severson
Inmate Newsletter Volunteer Coord: Deon Corkins
Director of Sex Offender Policy Issues: Faye Jenkins
Director of Women’s Issues: Britnee Webb
Volunteer Coordinator: An Bradshaw
Newsletter Editor: Warren Rosenbaum

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network
P.O. Box 464, Draper, UT 84020
Website: UtahPrisonerAdvocate.org
Email: Utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com
Facebook: Facebook.com/UtahPrisoner
(Note: go there to view recent UPAN meetings)

“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