



# UPAN Newsletter

Volume 8 Number 10 | OCTOBER 2021

*“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”*

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## JRI Listening Tour, Families Input Needed – Details Re: UPAN; Intro to BOPP, Part 4, Responding to Info Used by Board In Decision Making – US Dream Academy; Fresh Start Ventures Real Transition – Recommended Reading

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**Next Meetings:** October 11, 2021 6:30 p.m. **Topic:** Family meeting. Free/open to public. **Meeting Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting – link <https://bit.ly/2UJ2RA3> **Following meeting, November 8<sup>th</sup>** (last meeting of year) Zoom Registration link <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlocUrrigtGNA3koOUi21CaBonvix-1q00>

**UPAN continues virtual meetings at this time. Also available, as usual, on our Facebook page afterwards. All UPAN Meetings and those posted on this page are free and open to the public.**

<b>In This Issue:</b> Meeting Announcements, UPAN N/L contents in this issue and UPAN Disclaimer	Page 1
» <b>CCJJ Justice Reinvestment Initiative Listening Tour – NOTICE! (below)</b>	Page 1
» <b>What Is UPAN? What Does UPAN Do? What Can UPAN Not Do?</b> By Molly Prince	Pgs. 2-4
» <b>Introduction to the Utah BOPP – Part 4 Responding to Info Used in Decision Making</b>	Pgs. 5-6
<i>Timely Timpanogos Topics</i> Only a couple of jokes this month	Page 6
» <b>Fresh Start Ventures &amp; Real Transitions</b> by Kim Rusgrove	Pgs. 7-8
» <b>US Dream Academy</b> in Utah for Children of Inmates by Amber Hesleph & Deon Corkins	Page 8
» <b>Recommended Self-Help Books</b> for Inmates and Families by Molly Prince LCSW	Pgs. 9-10
Couple of Smiles & Laugh & List of UPAN Directors/Officers & Contact Info (also our Facebook page)	Page 10

**NOTICE! Families and close friends of incarcerated, and concerned citizens (that’s you and me!!). Help! Your input NEEDED!** State leaders, dedicated to reforms in Utah’s Criminal Justice system, seek your experiences, concerns, and thoughts in open, in-person, **and virtual** forums. Locations, dates, and times are posted on <https://www.ulct.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/310/52> in the left column (white lettering on black background). A couple of locations, dates, and times are in a personal-op article on pg.10 of this issue. **This is the greatest opportunity we’ve had in years to let the State leaders (UDC, legislators, governor’s office, and THE NEWS MEDIA (who influence the public) of our opinions about Utah’s current Criminal Justice System. The State leaders, thru their desperate search for answers, need to hear you (say in your mind, that’s ME).** If you can’t attend in person, register at [mmarlowe@utah.gov](mailto:mmarlowe@utah.gov) Let’s be **a thousand strong** (or more) and jolt those who can effect a complete overhaul of this antiquated and failed system, into immediate and in-depth action. For more info, see the op-ed article on page 10. Thanks for your help in this **Listening Tour** sponsored by the CCJJ for the **Justice Reinvestment Initiative**. Ed.

*“Let the choices you make today be the choices you can live with tomorrow.” Miguel Rivera*

**“Don’t judge me by my past, I don’t live there anymore!” Miguel Rivera (formerly incarcerated person)**

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

## What is UPAN? What does UPAN do? What can UPAN not do?

By Molly Prince

UPAN receives a lot of mail from inmates and calls and emails from families of inmates assuming UPAN can intervene in and solve all problems related to the court process, legal system, board issues, etc. We cannot. This article clarifies what UPAN actually is and does.

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network is a non-profit organization that is made up of all volunteers. We are a group of concerned friends and family members of individuals incarcerated as inmates in the custody of the State of Utah's Department of Corrections, as well as formerly incarcerated and interested citizens. UPAN does not have an office. Our work for UPAN happens out of our homes, our cars, and via computer, email, phone, and mail. We do our UPAN work in addition to our regular jobs, families, our own incarcerated loved ones, and in what used to be our "spare" time.

### We do our best to accomplish the following goals and objectives:

1. Provide a safe and understanding place for families and friends of incarcerated individuals to connect with each other and share their challenges and receive support and information to help them more effectively cope on their prison journey. We hold meetings the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month with the exception of July and December. These meetings used to be in person meetings held in Salt Lake City. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UPAN meetings are now held on Zoom until further notice. The link to the Zoom meeting is <https://bit.ly/2UJ2RA3> and can be found on page one of each newsletter. You need to register for the meeting and will be admitted in when you connect with the link.

2. Offer support and assistance to incarcerated individuals by identifying challenges and problems faced by inmates as they serve their sentences, and to communicate with prison officials and the Utah Department of Corrections (DOC) administration to address and resolve these problems.

3. Provide education and information to family and friends of inmates as well as the general public, including our lawmakers, for the purpose of improving the level of understanding of what happens in the prison system and how things work which ultimately impact prisoners, their families and support systems, as well as the community at large. This is accomplished through our newsletters, our monthly meetings, as well as via our website, Facebook page, and Twitter account. Various UPAN directors and coordinators also interview with news reporters when contacted to share perspectives of families and incarcerated persons.

### Ways we accomplish these objectives:

**Monthly meetings** are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month (except July and December). Sometimes these

are family meetings where we simply discuss the situations and frustrations prison families experience, and other times we invite guest speakers, hold panel discussions, or hold open forums where we discuss criminal justice issues with legislators and other policy makers. These meetings are free (we accept donations), open to the public, and we welcome anyone who needs support or is interested in helping our cause.

**Monthly Newsletter** is written and sent out discussing current issues and developments concerning anything related to the Utah Criminal Justice System (CJS) as it pertains to Utah State Prison issues. We send this out via our email list. Families on the list print out and mail to their loved one behind bars. We have volunteers that print and mail in newsletters to inmates who have no family or friends on the outside to do this for them.

**UPAN email** [utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com](mailto:utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com) is used to disseminate newsletters and information or notices to our **email list** about issues and upcoming events related to prison and Utah's CJS in Utah. Family members can also email questions to this address.

**UPAN Facebook** page posts current events in the criminal justice system in Utah and nationwide, as well as reminders about our meetings and upcoming events. Access: [Facebook.com/UtahPrisoner](https://www.facebook.com/UtahPrisoner)

Utah Prisoner Advocate Facebook Family Group is open to families and friends of incarcerated persons. We also have some partnering agencies that post there periodically, as well as requests from news reporters to gather info from families of prisoners on various issues.

**Listening ear and guidance for family and friends of inmates** is accomplished through meetings as well as via email and the Facebook Family Group to help provide guidance on how families can find answers or address issues that they and their inmate encounter in their prison journey. We attempt to guide them on who to contact in the prison system to address their specific concerns.

**Address prisoner concerns.** Incarcerated people write to UPAN with concerns, ideas, or information. We will research and attempt to answer concerns through newsletters whenever possible. We cannot guarantee personal response to each and every letter. We receive a high volume of mail from the incarcerated, and we read every piece. When possible, we will respond directly to the writer. More often, we either contact Corrections about the generalized problem when we receive multiple letters about the same issue or gather information and include an article about it in the monthly newsletter.

When our incarcerated have issues that need to be addressed with the prison directly, we do not typically

get involved unless there is no family or outside support to help the inmate. The exception: when there is a serious medical situation that is not being addressed and family has been unable to successfully advocate for their loved ones.

We cannot always intervene or help with many of the issues that prisoners write us about. We encourage family members to help advocate for their own incarcerated loved ones. If in doubt or unsure of who to contact in UDC, please reach out to UPAN to find out who to contact in UDC about the problem.

**Provide a forum for UPAN participants / families** to share problems and concerns with elected officials and policy makers, as part of educating the public about prison issues.

**UPAN can work with other agencies to further its goals.** Over the years, UPAN has partnered with a variety of community agencies to promote changes in Utah's criminal justice system. UPAN was involved in People Not Prisons when it was functioning. UPAN helped to sponsor the Faith in Reform conferences for two years of the three it was held. UPAN shares information about services offered by other organizations to inmates, families, or children of incarcerated such as PrisonEd Foundation, Project Avery, Flourish Bakery, UPEP, US Dream Academy, and others.

**Legislative Audits.** UPAN has forwarded information from inmates, and prison families have provided information, to Utah Legislators about conditions in our prison system. UPAN worked to provide information for and provide an avenue for inmates to share their information to three Legislative Audits to date:

- 1) Provided information to the Legislative Audit Committee that then ordered the Legislative Audit of the Board of Pardons and Parole in 2015. UPAN then provided hundreds of surveys from incarcerated persons to the Auditors. The Auditors presented their findings at a UPAN meeting when it was complete.
- 2) Compiled and tallied surveys and provided information to the Legislative Audit of the Sex Offender Treatment Program in 2016. They also presented their report to UPAN.
- 3) Currently, UPAN directors provided historical information about the challenges inmates have experienced in accessing and receiving adequate and necessary medical care. UPAN shared names with the Legislative Auditors of UDC Medical Service of prisoners to interview.

**Collaboration with other agencies.** UPAN often shares information with other agencies, such as the Disability Law Center (DLC) or the ACLU of Utah when appropriate, regarding issues in our prisons that those agencies can look into.

**BOPP Outreach Committee.** Currently UPAN has four representatives that meet monthly with Administrative

Director Mike Haddon of the Utah Board of Pardons & Parole. These include Molly Prince, Mike McAinch, Ernie Rogers, and Wendy Parmley. These outreach meetings began in 2016 subsequent to the results of the Legislative Audit of the BOPP, organized by then director Greg Johnson. At that time, the DLC and ACLU were also involved monthly. Currently, UPAN has met with Mr. Haddon on its own until the August meeting, when a representative from the ACLU and from the DLC were also present.

The primary focus of UPAN, ACLU, and DLC is to resume and finish the revision/ expansion of the Compassionate Release Policy Rule #R671-314-1. The work on this was started over three years ago. It was stalled when Greg Johnson left his position to take a position as a board member. The interim director did not hold meetings or follow up on our projects. In 2019 a new director, Dennis Moxon, took that position for a few months, but he was not there long enough to dive back into that rule revision. Mike Haddon moved into the position in January 2021. These meetings were on hold from February 2020 until June 2021 when we resumed with Mr. Haddon chairing them.

**UDC Stakeholder Group.** This group was started in April 2021 and is an online meeting. It is hosted and organized by Steve Gehrke who is the Director of Administrative Services & Quality and Process Improvement for the UDC. Gehrke has a mandate to collaborate and serve as a liaison for implementation of the Governor's SUCCESS Initiative aimed at measurably increasing UDC's effectiveness. He is working to streamline Transition/Re-entry efforts to improve the difficult process for people leaving the prison system and merging back into the community in a more constructive, successful, law-abiding manner that bolsters society and reduces recidivism. This also breaks the inter-generational cycle of incarceration and prevents new crimes and re-victimization or new victimization.

Molly Prince represents UPAN on this committee, and Faye Jenkins has attended regarding re-entry issues affecting people who have offended sexually. Ernie Rogers, who is also with UPAN, is representing individuals formerly incarcerated. There are close to 30 different organizations who have participated in this group over the past 5 months. Several representatives of agencies have lived experience in Utah's criminal justice system.

Organizations represented range from UPAN, the DLC and ACLU, to the LDS Church, to recovery and rehabilitation programs, mental health providers, the U of U Healthcare, UPEP, Journey of Hope, Fresh Start Ventures, NAACP of Utah, and many, many others. It is focusing on re-entry issues and is currently creating a housing sub-group to focus on locating resources throughout Utah for decent, affordable housing that is

available to those with criminal histories or on the sex offense registry.

**What UPAN cannot do. UPAN does not have legal counsel.** UPAN has no attorneys as directors. UPAN has no agreements with attorneys to offer advice or guidance for UPAN. We do not have a list of pro-bono attorneys. UPAN cannot help with anything that involves legal issues, such as appeals, problems with what happened in court cases, problems with public defenders or bad legal counsel, etc. Please DO NOT SEND US YOUR LEGAL PAPERWORK. Please do not expect us to look up legal cases and provide you with copies of case law or legal forms. We do not have any attorneys or paralegals who are volunteering to help us in this area.

**UPAN cannot influence the Board to review or revise a decision.** We receive a lot of letters assuming that somehow UPAN has some sort of influence over the Board. To clarify, UPAN is involved on a Community Outreach Committee that meets with the BOPP Administrative Director monthly to discuss issues related to the Board. We cannot bring specific cases to these meetings.

**UPAN cannot help anyone get into treatment.** While we can explore the reasons people may not be getting into substance abuse or sex offender treatment in a timely manner, UPAN has no power over how the system works in the prison in terms of getting into treatment or being re-admitted after a discharge.

**UPAN Directors cannot become your power of attorney.** Please find individuals in your own support system to do this if you need a power of attorney.

**We cannot personally answer every letter that we receive.** However, please be assured that each and every letter is read and considered. When we get multiple letters from different inmates about the same types of concerns, we prioritize that issue as something that we need to contact Corrections about and work toward a resolution or an answer.

**What inmates can do to help us help you: Make sure you learn and follow the rules in the institution you are in.** Every prison facility, housing area, and jail seems to have their own variation on policies and rules. As an incarcerated person, you can do your best to make sure you know the policies. You can go through the grievance steps and levels when a problem is encountered. If you, as a prisoner, do everything on your end to try to resolve your problem, and you have followed the rules and complied with the policies, it then makes it easier for your family members or in some rare cases, UPAN directors, to follow up on the problems that are not able to be resolved in the prison processes. It also gives those advocating for you

help in building a legitimate case when talking to administration about issues that need to be looked at, or policies that are not working and may need changing, etc. The biggest challenge we encounter when trying to resolve issues with the UDC is their insistence that the inmates are not following policy and procedure in resolving the problem before it escalates to a point that either their family members or UPAN step in.

**Please write letters legibly and in dark pencil or pen.** Sometimes it is very difficult to read people's writing. This includes very fancy or flowery writing as well as sloppy writing. Since we cannot talk to you to ask questions, it is important that we are very clear on what we are reading. Also, there are times that we need to scan or copy a letter to send it to the correct UPAN director or forward to the proper agency that can more effectively respond or address the issue. If the writing is too light, such as with pencil, it will not copy or scan.

**Be completely honest and detailed** when sending us complaints or concerns you want looked at. We cannot always take a lot of time to write you back with a list of questions to clarify. So if you give us ALL the details in a simple straight forward fashion and stay to the point, plus be completely honest about it, then it helps us as we look into it. We cannot work with what we don't know. Half of a story doesn't help us to help you. We certainly cannot work with what may not be completely true. UDC tends to point out every detail of a situation that we may not have all the information, or where an inmate may have broken a rule we don't know about. This distracts from being able to actually come to a solution because it means the focus can be shifted from what may be a policy or staff problem back onto the inmate as the problem. So help us help you!

**Notify us when you move to a new prison facility or IPP jail if you are on our inmate mailing list.** Newsletters returned to UPAN as undeliverable are increasing with the early releases and frequent moves between prison and the jails. If you do not notify us as soon as you are moved to a new facility then the postage is wasted if it is sent to the old facility and then if we are able to mail it out again, that duplicates the postage costs. **For those in IPP:** please notify us of your jail number and the mailing rules or how we send to your jail. Some jails do not allow letters. Kane County has recently contracted with an out-of-state agency to receive, open, scan and forward mail. UPAN does not have any volunteers in charge of tracking what is happening with mail in county jails. You need to keep us informed, please!

In closing, all of us UPAN volunteers do our best to try to help inmates and their families help themselves. We try to empower UPAN families to help their incarcerated loved ones. We hope to help everyone navigate their prison experiences in the best way possible.

***“Life can only be understood backwards: but it must be lived forward.” Soren Kierkegaard***

## **Introduction to the Utah Board of Pardons & Parole –Part 4** **RESPONDING TO INFORMATION THE BOARD USES IN DECISION MAKING**

Adapted by Molly Prince from an unpublished document created by the Community Outreach Committee for the Board of Pardons and Parole & information directly from the BOPP website [www.bop.utah.gov](http://www.bop.utah.gov)

*UPAN has been an original member of the Outreach Committee for the Utah Board of Pardons & Parole since Legislative Audit of the BOPP was released in February 2016. Other organizations consistently been involved in this committee designed to address issues that are related to Utah's BOPP include the ACLU of Utah and the Disability Law Center.*

Beginning in July 2021, UPAN has been sharing information about the Utah Board of Pardons & Parole in separate parts. This article focuses on the process that is supposed to happen to provide you with a copy of the information the BOPP uses to make a decision and how to attempt to correct any inaccurate or missing info. It also focuses on what information the Board uses to make decisions.

**You will receive a Blue Packet.** This document packet is called a “Blue Packet” because it has historically been printed on blue paper. You should receive this prior to the hearing.

The Blue Packet is a written disclosure of all information contained in the Board files except in cases where direct disclosure may compromise the safety and security of the institution or the person disclosing the information. In those cases, you will be provided a statement regarding the nature of such information.

You should receive the packet with disclosure of materials from the Board at least three days in advance of your personal appearance hearing. There is some concern by inmates and their families that this is not enough time to allow you time to review the material and prepare for the hearing, or submit missing information or corrections to inaccurate information.

Information received after the initial disclosure will be provided to you at the hearing. This can be challenging because you won't have time to fully review it then.

**You can submit written comments** to the Board before the hearing if they were not already included in the packet that you filled out previously. (Filling this out was discussed in the September UPAN Newsletter). These may include release plans, restitution payment information, or mitigating circumstances.

You may also correct information that is factually wrong in a PSI in writing. When doing this, you should present clear, specific concerns, along with any documentation you have about the correction. *For example, “The Board is missing my credit for time served on case 173145 from March 1, 2013, to June 1, 2013. I don't have the booking sheet from Weber County Jail but the court order from July 13, 2013 shows the credit.”*

**Correcting information verbally at the hearing.** You can present information and respond to missing or incorrect information verbally at the personal appearance hearing. If needed, you can ask for more

time to prepare your response to the things the victim may have said. This would postpone the hearing. Each separate document you submit to correct or provide information is limited to five pages in length.

**Postponing or Continuing.** The Board may postpone a hearing to allow additional documents to be submitted. If the Board agrees to a continuation hearing, or a postponement of the hearing, all additional documents need to be in the Board's office within 14 days following the hearing where the continuation or postponement was granted. This means you need to be organized, prepared and have immediate follow through.

If a continuation hearing is granted, and new, relevant documents are submitted to the Board, the Board must provide you with copies of those documents three days prior to the personal appearance.

If documents are provided to the Board after the 14 days but before the hearing, those documents will be shown to you at the hearing.

If new documents are presented to you at the hearing, you will be given time to review them. At that point, you can request that more time be given to review, or you can tell the hearing officer to proceed as scheduled.

Depending on the situation, you may agree with the hearing official to proceed with the hearing but allowing two to four weeks for you to respond before the Board makes a decision. If you need more time than two to four weeks, then setting a re-hearing will likely be necessary.

### **WHAT THE BOARD MUST CONSIDER**

The Board is charged with making decisions that affect you, your families, victims, and the public. The Board must balance information from many sources and decide what timing and conditions will protect the community and the victim, provide you the best chance at success, and serve justice. In addition to everything already discussed in this series on the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole, there are other considerations and special circumstances that are considered when applicable.

**Interstate Compacts.** The Interstate Compact provides a way to serve parole in another state. There is a much better likelihood of acceptance if there is an immediate family member to move in with and a good plan for treatment, employment, and long-term stability in the other state.

Interstate compact paperwork can take several months and is reviewed by both Utah and the state you want to move to. There is a \$50 application fee. Work with your caseworker a few months prior to your hearing or release date to initiate the interstate compact paperwork. Be prepared to explain what you will do if your interstate compact is denied. Do you have a plan B? If you get an interstate compact, you will be following the parole rules of both Utah and the state you parole to.

**Credit for Time Served.** Credit for time served is granted according to Board rules. These rules give credit for time spent in custody pending adjudication of charges. Regardless of any court order, the Board will not grant credit for time served if the time was served as a condition of probation before October 1st, 2015. The Board may grant credit for time served if the time served as a condition of probation occurred after this date.

No credit is allowed if the confinement or time served is pursuant to any warrant or detainer from a sentence of any other state, tribal court of the United States, or if the confinement or time served will be granted as credit against any sentence not under the Board's jurisdiction. See Board Rule R671-205.

**Sentencing Matrix.** Utah has an indeterminate sentencing system. The court imposes a sentence range, according to statute. The Board decides the timing and conditions of release within that range. For example, the sentence for a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree felony is 0 – 5 years; 2nd degree felony is 1-15 years.

In Utah, if a criminal defendant is sentenced to an "indeterminate sentence"— for example, if you are sentenced to 0 to 5 years in the Utah State Prison — you are technically sentenced to the full length of that sentence UNLESS the Board finds a reason to release you prior to the expiration of your sentence of five years.

In the case of a first-degree felony, whether sentenced to 3 to life, 5 to life, 15 to life, or 25 to life, the entire length of such a sentence is natural life unless action is taken by the Board to alter that sentence. The Board, then, depends on records of your behavior and accomplishments (including education, treatment, and therapy) while incarcerated to help decide if you are ready to release to the community with a low risk of potential re-offense.

**BOPP's use of the Matrix.** The Board is not required by law to follow the sentencing matrix recommendation, it is used as a guideline. Adult Probation and Parole calculates a guideline before sentencing, usually as part of the Presentence Investigation Report. At sentencing, the judge may impose sentences consecutively or concurrently which changes that original guideline. Also other pending cases may be adjudicated and that changes the guideline. Think of it as the matrix score calculated prior to sentencing is basically only useful as a guide for sentencing, rather than the time you will do.

The Board will re-calculate your guideline matrix prior to your hearing. Since it is after sentencing, it will include any consecutive / concurrent information that was not available before sentencing.

It is an informal way for the Board to determine your length of stay. Matrix guidelines are just that – guidelines. They are non-binding recommendations developed by the Utah Sentencing Commission.

You can use the Board's matrix score to estimate how long you might be incarcerated. The matrix score is not an actual sentence. Do not invest yourself too much in believing that you will get out within the time frame calculated in your matrix score at sentencing. It may set you up for disappointment because the matrix may change once you are sentenced due to a variety of factors.

**To summarize:** The Board uses a wide range of other information in their decisions. Along with your guideline/matrix score, the Board will look at your criminal record, supervision history, the nature and severity of the offense, behavior in prison, accomplishment of Case Action Plan goals, involvement in classes and treatment, job or volunteer work while incarcerated, recommendations of the prosecutor or sentencing judge, results of mental health or psychological evaluations, risk assessments, letters from victim and family, release plans, and other facts.

Even with all of these factors, the Board has wide discretion in making determinations. The Board may find aggravating or mitigating factors to go above or below the guideline. There is no legal obligation or requirement that the Board has to follow the matrix.

*Next month will cover Case Action Plans, Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances.*

*Timely Timpanogos Topics* ~ UPAN sends our thoughts, prayers, and best wishes to all women impacted by the current outbreak of COVID-19 sweeping through Timpanogos!

Just a couple of jokes this month (from a *Timp* source) ~~The older I get, the earlier it gets late ~~When I ask for directions, please don't use words like "east." Where do bad rainbows go? Prism!

**"One thoughtless word will negate a dozen words of kindness." Poet Monica Brett-Serle**

## **Fresh Start Ventures Real Transitions**

By Kim Rusgrove

Hi, my name is Kimberly Rusgrove. I am the new LGBTQ Outreach Coordinator for Fresh Start Ventures. Not long ago I was right where you are today reading this. I was released from the Utah State Prison on April 6th, 2021 after being incarcerated for the last ten and a half years. I am also on the sex offender registry. I want you to know that anything is possible if you want it and are ready to make the positive changes in your life. With the right tools and positive support, you truly can succeed.

I am here to tell you that those tools and that support are readily available to you. A lot of you have heard of Real Transitions inside the prison and may have attended the classes. I am here to tell you about what they can do for you outside of those walls. I am living proof that the program works. What we offer is more than just classes. It's a chance to be a part of a family, with acceptance, no judgements, and an amazing group of people that are there for you. "Connection is the opposite of addiction."

Dave and Linda Donaldson are the co-founders of Fresh Start Ventures. They too have been where you are. Because of that, they developed a non-profit organization to help people that would not otherwise have the love and support they need to succeed. Since starting this, they have grown it and it's expanding more every single day.

Fresh Start Ventures is based in Utah County and we meet once a week for dinner and a lesson out of the Real Transitions Book. Dinner is like a family getting together for a Sunday dinner. We all talk and catch up on the week. Afterwards we are taught a lesson by our dear brother Patrick, who has also been where you are. The lessons are based on real life and how to balance the things we all face every single day. Emotional, financial, physical, spiritual, and social well-being. It's applied to real life and helps us relearn the skills needed to successfully transition back into society. All of this is also available via Zoom if you are unable to attend in person. Which makes our reach anywhere you may be located.

We also have many other resources to assist in your transition. We can set you up with a bus pass, a bike, access to mentors, help to find housing, help to find jobs, assist in getting you back into school, etc. Fresh Start Ventures has a firm belief that everyone deserves a chance. We have served our time for our crimes and do not deserve the judgements or ridicule we face on a daily basis because we were incarcerated. (Amen! Ed.)

Fresh Start Ventures is diversifying and is always looking for ways to reach more people. That resulted in my position as the LGBTQ Outreach Coordinator for this wonderful organization. I have the opportunity to teach diversity to the people that are coming into the prison as

volunteers and mentors. These men and women are amazing and very non-judgmental; just a bit naive to pronouns and how to relate to some people. Please have patience with them and understanding as they are making efforts to learn. Remember that not everyone has been exposed to different cultures and have been a bit more sheltered than others.

Here is what the Fresh Start Ventures Real Transitions program has done for me and a few others that have had the opportunity to take full advantage of their resources, as well as a couple of the mentors.

I'll start with myself. When I was getting out of prison, I knew nobody out here except those that I met while incarcerated. Although I did meet a lot of amazing people, there are also quite a few that I don't care to associate with. I was blessed to have gotten the opportunity to meet Dave and Linda upon my release. Because of their help, love, and support I was able to have a place to live, a job, met amazing people through Fresh Start Ventures, and was given the opportunity to be a part of their non-profit. I am succeeding and working towards a future I can be proud of.

I get to help those getting released from prison every Tuesday. I run the Fresh Start release table for those leaving. I also get to help people by connecting them with resources. I love what I do. I'm going to college next term and I truly believe that if it wasn't for Fresh Start, I'd have been lost.

Patrick McMillan, who was also incarcerated and made use of the program upon release, had to say this about Real Transitions: "I was introduced to FSV Real Transition in August of 2017. This program has helped me to discover more about who I am, what I want to become, and how to achieve my goals. It has provided me with tools to accomplish many things, but only as I have chosen to use those tools. One example of how this program has helped me grow is through my love for connection. I have been blessed to connect with many individuals whom I love and care for deeply. I'm learning to connect on various levels, which helps me throughout other aspects of my life — be it personal or professional. This is a program that I'm dedicated to because I know it can provide the tools to help change lives when we choose to do so. I'm grateful to those who have created it and who continue to improve it."

John Whitaker, a mentor of Fresh Start and dear friend, had this to say about FSV REAL Transition Program: "Inmates experience low levels of educational or vocational skills, and many health-related issues when they leave incarceration. These challenges remain and affect neighborhoods, families, and society. Fresh Start Venture's Real Transition Program was designed to help past inmates successfully reenter society following their

incarceration while improving lifestyle, health, education, social skills, physical, emotional, and spiritual skills. I've had the opportunity to serve as a mentor for Fresh Start Ventures for the past 4 years helping past inmates succeed. Nothing has made me more excited than to be a part of their journey."

As you can see from these comments from those who have had the opportunity to benefit from FSV Real Transitions, the program is designed with helping people succeed in mind. I am very fortunate to be one that has

*Fresh Start Ventures has volunteers that send letters of hope. These are not pen pals. These are simple kind letters with messages of hope or uplifting stories. If you would like to receive one of these letters; you can have your family email [linda@freshstartventures.org](mailto:linda@freshstartventures.org). Their website is [www.freshstartventures.org](http://www.freshstartventures.org) or you write to them at 560 S. 100 W., Suite 13, Provo, UT 84601*

**"Experience is the hardest kind of teacher. It gives you the test first and the lesson afterward." Oscar Wilde**

***"The past is a place of reference, not of residence. The past is a place of learning, not a place of living."***  
**Buddhist saying**

### **After School Program for Youth Experiencing Family Incarceration**

by Amber Hesleph, U.S. Dream Academy Center Director and Deon Corkins

The U.S. Dream Academy is a local non-profit after school organization located in West Valley, Utah. We are dedicated to serving under-supported youth who come from families with a history of incarceration, who are struggling academically, or who live in communities with high rates of crime. As part of our after-school program, we also offer virtual classes and activities! These include: - Dance, cooking, yoga, & art classes, - Virtual Field Trips, - In person meet-ups, and - Kahoot competitions. We also offer Flixshop\* credits for students who qualify. Our registration is open.

benefitted from Fresh Start Ventures, and now I get to give back.

I'm excited to see each and every one of you pass by our release table and be able to talk to you when you are on your way to a better life. One free of the shackles and burden of those cement walls. One where you'll get to experience the love and support of people that have been where you are now. Of people that, although they haven't been where you are, accept you without judgements or hesitation.

Register at: <https://forms.gle/jtRqwKEbHvJK3wT5A>

The 3 pillars of the U.S. Dream Academy are: 1) Dream building, 2) Skill building (academic, social and emotional learning), and 3) Character building (mindfulness, resilience and patience) are These goals are pursued through after-school care, activities for the family, help with school learning, and much more.

*\*Flixshop send photos delivered as postcards to any person in prison instantly.*

If you have questions, please reach out to the director Amber Hesleph at [ahesleph@usdreamacademy.org](mailto:ahesleph@usdreamacademy.org)

### **Recommended Self-Help Books for Incarcerated and their Families**

Some Choices of UPAN Directors & Inmates, compiled by Molly Prince

Here is a new list of books to help incarcerated persons and families on the prison journey. These are recommendations compiled by UPAN directors, as well as currently and formerly incarcerated people.

***Man's Search for Meaning*** by Viktor E. Frankl. Internationally renowned psychiatrist, Viktor E. Frankl, endured years of unspeakable horror in Nazi death camps. During, and partly because of, his suffering, Dr. Frankl developed a revolutionary approach to psychotherapy known as logotherapy. At the core of his theory is the belief that man's primary motivational force is his search for meaning.

*Man's Search for Meaning* is more than a story of Viktor E. Frankl's triumph, it is a remarkable blend of science and humanism and an introduction to the most significant psychological movement of our day. Many prisoners have read this book and started their own journey of discovering the meaning in their life,

regardless of their surroundings. ISBN: 13-9780807014271.

***Workbook for Man's Search for Meaning*** by Max Help Workbooks, Jan 2021. ISBN # 3-9781518401886. Vickor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, gives us invaluable lessons that we must all learn and follow. Many have considered *Man's Search for Meaning* to be one of the most important books of their lives, as this book is able to change the way we see the world and our life as such in a remarkable way.

Do you want to apply the major lessons to your daily life? The goal of this workbook is to help any reader apply what may be the most critical lessons found in *Workbook for Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl and find immediate help in applying its major lessons.

Results have shown that learning is retained best through repeated hands-on applications. With Max Help

Workbooks, readers will be able to find distilled information with applicable engaging exercise worksheets to maximize learning.

**Daring Greatly:** How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brené Brown. ISBN 13-978-1-592-40841-2. Every day we experience the uncertainty, risks, and emotional exposure that define what it means to be vulnerable or to dare greatly. Based on twelve years of pioneering research, Brené Brown PhD, LMSW, considers that rather than a weakness, vulnerability is, in truth, our most accurate measure of courage.

Brown explains how vulnerability is both the core of difficult emotions like fear, grief, and disappointment, and the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, empathy, innovation, and creativity. She writes: “When we shut ourselves off from vulnerability, we distance ourselves from the experiences that bring purpose and meaning to our lives.”

Daring Greatly is not about winning or losing. It’s about courage. In a world where “never enough” dominates and feeling afraid has become second nature, vulnerability is subversive. Uncomfortable. It’s even a little dangerous at times. And, without question, putting ourselves out there means there’s a far greater risk of getting criticized or feeling hurt. But when we step back and examine our lives, we will find that nothing is as uncomfortable, dangerous, and hurtful as standing on the outside of our lives looking in and wondering what it would be like if we had the courage to step into the arena—whether it’s a new relationship, an important meeting, the creative process, or a difficult family conversation. Daring Greatly is a practice and a powerful new vision for letting ourselves be seen.

**Women in Prison** by Coach Mara Leigh Taylor, founder and executive director of Getting Out by Going In (GOGI).

Published by Lightning Source Inc. ISBN #13-978-0-9786721-5-7. This book asks: Who is more imprisoned, the “free” woman who suffers from a life of crime and addiction or the internally free woman who is behind bars? In this book you will learn simple yet powerful tools to help you on your journey toward Internal Freedom. This includes the GOGI Tools that will help you to Let Go, Forgive, and Claim Responsibility for your life. The chapters include: Belly Breathing; becoming the Boss of Your Brain; the Five Second Lightswitch; mastering What If and Positive Thoughts, Words, Actions (TWA); keeping it real with Reality Check.

**Power Up Your Life the GOGI Way** by Coach Mara Leigh Taylor. ISBN# 13-978-1732110250 Changing your life is not as difficult as previously believed. Using proven strategies for success, it is time to Power Up you and your community with the GOGI Tools for Positive Decision Making. This comprehensive manual unlocks the key to positive community collaboration focused on change. This book covers various tools of the GOGI way: Tools of the Body, Tools of Choice, Tools of Moving Forward, and Tools of Creation.

**Do it Afraid** by Joyce Meyer, published by Faith Words, August, 2021. ISBN# 13-978-1546026297 In *Do It Afraid*, Bible based spiritual teacher Joyce Meyer explains that fear is everywhere and affects everyone. It rules many people, but it doesn't have to rule you any longer. She will teach you how to: Understand fear and recognize how it works in your life; Confront those fears that are holding you back; Change your mindset for lasting freedom from some of the most common fears people face.

Remember, courage isn't the absence of fear; it's learning how to move forward in the presence of fear. Courageous people do what they believe in their hearts they should do, no matter how they feel or what doubts fill their minds.

### **Notice of BOPP Meeting – regarding proposed changes in the Administrative Rules of the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP)**

On Thursday, October 28, 2021, 3:00PM – 5:00 PM, at the BOPP offices, 448 Winchester Ave., Suite 300, Murray UT, 84107, a meeting will be held as announced on the Utah Public Notice website (shown below for your review):

#### **Description/Agenda:**

This public hearing is to receive feedback and comments related to proposed Administrative Rules amendments of the Board of Pardons and Parole. Six of the Board's Administrative rules have proposed amendments that will be on the agenda for this meeting. These include the following:

R671-301 Personal Appearance  
R671-303 Info Received, Maintained or Used by Board  
R671-304 Hearing Record

R671-305 Board Decisions and Orders  
R671-310 Rescission Hearings  
R671-316 Redetermination

For details regarding the proposed changes for each item shown above, go to the website (below) and click on any or all of the items in the column on the right. These links will provide you with the detailed changes. A brief review of all six items by two UPAN directors did not reveal any dramatic or significant changes. However, we are not lawyers, so you may find something of interest that we overlooked. Also, on the link below, note that anyone can access the meeting via electronic means (computer or telephone) by accessing the “Webex” link on that page.

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/703235.html> (Enjoy! It's a blast! – if you love that kind of stuff. Ed.)

# **NOTICE of CCJJ Meetings Throughout the State – Personal-Opinion Article**

## **Continued from page 1**

By Warren Rosenbaum (aka Ed.)

Let's show up at these meetings, called Listening Tours, either in-person or as a virtual participant, to show the State leaders that this is a priority one subject that continues to need a drastic overhaul, and we acknowledge that they are the ones to do it. With our suggestions and examples of experiences we or our loved ones have endured, we can make a dramatic impact on influencing the changes that are so sorely needed. But we need a lot of people to show up. Volume speaks volumes!

My suggestions on some topics (if you can't think of any. Ha ha!) include understanding and following the inmate's matrix. I received a letter from one inmate that spelled out the difference between what was on paper (the matrix) and reality. The difference between the two was night and day. Medical problems, where our loved ones are subjected physical and mental torture due to illness, pain, and suffering with minimal to no help from those in the medical staff who are supposed to help. Also, the unreasonable requirement to renew, every 90 days, the Authorization to Verbally Discuss Health Information Form. That's just a pain in the neck (or further south) but is one thing that could easily be cured by someone who really cares about the people over whom UDC has medical control.

Another rehabilitation benefit is contact visits. In both the two major prisons, and especially in the county jails. One incarcerated person wrote to me saying he has been in IPP and hasn't had a contact visit in 10 years. Video visits, yes. But no contact, no real person, just a TV screen.

Finally, isn't it about time the Utah Department of Corrections exercised the leadership they have the power to use and insist on more uniform treatment and conditions between all the IPP participants and in as close conformance as possible with Utah's two major prisons? Uniformity in treatment, classes, food, medical, recreation, employment, visiting, property matrix, and on and on. If they don't want to comply or to meet minimum uniform standards, do not renew contracts. We don't and won't need their services (IOW, we won't do business with counties – it is a business to them) as we reduce the prison population with a plan of accelerated release, based on behavior modification, therapy, a fresh start second chance, and accurate risk assessments. Plan ahead, see you there, Ed.

Two (of the remaining six) meeting times and locations:

- Tuesday, October. 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM -12 Noon, Utah State Hospital Chapel, 1300 East Center Street, Provo, UT
- Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM - 12 Noon, Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, 3365 South 900 West, SLC, UT

## **Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh**

Moses tells an assembled group, "Basically, it's a 10-step program--If you're an insomniac, an agnostic, and a dyslectic, you'll lay awake at night wondering if there is a dog -- As I became bald I kept my comb, I just couldn't part with it-- The Oakland "A's" baseball team has a player named Bolt, first name is Skye. Even if he's slow running the bases, do you think they might call him "Lightning?"

Everyone gets knocked down sometimes; only people like you get back up again and keep going. That's cool. Ed.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Utah Prisoner Advocate Network.**

- Director, Co-Founder & Treasurer: Molly Prince
- Director of Communications: Shane Severson
- Director of Sex Offender Policy Issues: Faye Jenkins
- Director of Women's Issues: Gayle Dawes
- Director, Medical/Mental Health Issues: Wendy Parmley
- Director, Board of Pardons Issues: Ernie Rogers
- Director, Newsletter Editor: Warren Rosenbaum
- UPAN Volunteer Coordinator: An Bradshaw
- Inmate Newsletter Volunteer Coord; Deon Corkins
- Holiday Card Program Coordinator: Audrae Rogers

- Our Contact Information:**
- Utah Prisoner Advocate Network
- P. O. Box 464, Draper, UT 84020
- Website: [UtahPrisonerAdvocate.org](http://UtahPrisonerAdvocate.org)
- Email: [Utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com](mailto:Utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com)
- Facebook: [Facebook.com/UtahPrisoner](https://www.facebook.com/UtahPrisoner)

**"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**