



**UPAN Newsletter** Volume 11 Number 3 | **MARCH 2024**  
*“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”*

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**Visitors Breaking Rules Could Threaten Contact Visiting As We Know It –  
 Dental Care Tips – Captain Your Story Expands – IPP Overview – Importance of  
 Human Touch in Visiting – *Dell-Emerald Topics* Kourageous Vision Program**

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**Next Meeting:** Monday, March 11, 2024 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. **Speaker:** Dr. Michelle Leslie, Director of the new Sex Offense Management Board. Meetings are **FREE** and open to the public. **Join all meetings at** <https://bit.ly/3vqQjiA>

**Following Monthly Meetings:** Monday, April 8, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm. **Speaker:** Jennifer Springer, Managing Attorney, Rocky Mountain Innocence Center. Check their website at <https://rminnocence.org/about-us/>

**Presenter for May:** Pace Johnson, Managing Attorney with **Pace Johnson Law**

**Presenter for June:** Evan Done, Associate Director of **Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA)**

*UPAN continues virtual meetings the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month EXCEPT July & December. Zoom link <https://bit.ly/3vqQjiA> Available on UPAN Facebook Live and on UPAN’s Facebook page afterwards. Use link above or visit UPAN website for link (p. 10), or Utah Prisoner Advocate Facebook Page for link to current monthly meeting. Free to the public.*

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

**“What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.”  
 Ralph Waldo Emerson, author**

**Late Breaking News: Four Arrests in 8 Days in Prison Visiting  
How the actions of a few can threaten visiting as we know it for everyone.  
 By Molly Prince, LCSW**

A UDC press release was posted online on March 6 announcing the recent arrests resulting from intensified efforts of Utah prisons to crack down on the increasing amount of drugs coming into the prisons. While UPAN families understand that there is more than one source of contraband that makes its way into the residents of Utah’s prisons and jails, this announcement was disturbing to many families who follow the rules to visit in person. The press release states, “The Utah Department of Corrections is warning visitors not to bring contraband

to its facilities after four were arrested in eight days for attempting to pass drugs to inmates.” At least one incarcerated man and his visitor, as well as two other female visitors were arrested in a period of 8 days for bringing illegal drugs into the prison through visiting.

One of these visitors put drugs into a box of crayons that visiting children use, which could put any child who uses them at risk. It is of serious concern that someone would be so focused on getting illegal drugs into the prison that they would endanger children who could

have come into contact with the drugs and possibly become contaminated, particularly if it were a kind of drug that is easily absorbed through the skin.

Mike Schoenfeld, director of the Law Enforcement Bureau stated that individuals who bring in contraband into the facility will be prosecuted. It is reported that new investigative techniques are being employed to identify those who bring in contraband and those who accept it.

Director Schoenfeld noted the presence of drugs – and the trafficking of it in a correctional facility – is a safety issue. Some groups fight for control over distribution, and there can be retribution for those who incur drug debts. There are also concerns that families with incarcerated loved ones can be threatened and extorted.

“Narcotics in our prisons also lead to assaults on offenders and staff,” he said. “So, it’s not just harming those who use it, it’s a concern for everyone.”

The announcement states, “The UDC is highlighting these recent incidents to remind visitors the department will do whatever it takes to eliminate illegal drug use in its facilities. These incidents may also lead to greater restrictions on visits overall, which the department considers a vital link in keeping families with incarcerated members connected.”

Along with this focus on reducing the drug supply, the article states that the UDC is also dedicated to utilizing its resources to maximize treatment and rehabilitation opportunities for incarcerated individuals. We see this as a critical step in preparing them for a successful, drug-free reentry to our community.

The consensus of UPAN directors and most families is that the choices of a few are impacting so many. The people that bring drugs or any contraband in through visiting make it harder and more uncomfortable for the hundreds of family members who are not breaking any rules and simply want to visit their loved ones safely and without drama.

About 6 or 7 years ago, UPAN directors worked with the

UDC administration and visiting supervisors to get coloring pages and crayons approved in the visiting rooms. This was a big shift and it took a lot of discussion and willingness for UDC administrators to look past safety and security issues and see the value of providing coloring pages and crayons for children to be able to color with their incarcerated parent, and have something to do rather than just sit still at the table for 1 to 1 ½ hours at a time. This action of inserting drugs into a crayon container on one person’s part could jeopardize that for all child visitors and make the visiting less comfortable and friendly for families.

We should remember that Utah still has the valuable opportunity for in-person contact and barrier visits in our two prisons. While I have been assured they are not looking at restricting contact visits at this time, if trafficking drugs and violations of visiting rules continue, it could result in lasting harm for generations of prison families, as a price to keep contraband out.

Even visiting behind glass is preferable to video visits when it is offered. However one inmate drilled a hole through the plexiglass in a barrier visit to receive drugs. So that one act could potentially jeopardize in person barrier visits.

Contact visits with the ability to touch and feel the energy of our loved ones is important to health and mental health. It is priceless. We do not want that to be taken away, but anyone making a choice to take in illicit substances could jeopardize the valuable contact visits if they use visiting as the way smuggle in drugs.

Everyone knows in a correctional facility, measures will be taken to ensure the rules and policies are followed to reduce threats to safety and security within the institution.

We encourage all who visit loved ones to learn the rules, follow them, and refrain from crossing those lines that could result in criminal charges and more heartbreak impacting thousands of other visitors on their prison journey and thousands of those in the custody of the State of Utah for years to come.

***“Choices made, whether bad or good, follow you forever and affect everyone in their path one way or another.”  
— J.E.B. Spredemann.***

**“Make the best use of what is in your power, and take the rest as it happens. Epictetus, philosopher**

### **Dental Care & Emergencies in Correctional Facility**

by Heidi Franke, BSN, RN, retired

*Disclaimer: The following information is not meant to replace or provide advice for professional medical or dental care. This information is for educational and prevention purposes. The following information is credited to the American College of Correctional Physicians. Treatment for dental emergencies and dental diagnoses are not addressed in this article.*

**Your teeth are as important as your heart.** Who would have thought? We may take our teeth for

granted because they have done their job for most of our lives. We have approximately thirty-two teeth by

the time we are adults. Our teeth have chewed, mashed, and ground our food without a thought of their work crossing our minds. That is, until something goes wrong. That is when we take notice. We get the dreaded toothache.

Take your teeth seriously by paying attention to the signs and symptoms of dental decay and dental emergencies. In fact, pay particular attention to swelling and redness in your mouth, outside on your face, cheek and even your neck. It may be time to seek a higher level of care.

People have died from untreated dental emergencies. Anthony Shumake died from an abscess in 2004 after having his tooth pulled out at a California state prison. The state correctional system for dental and medical care was understaffed. Demonte Driver, 12 years old, died in 2007 from a tooth infection. He could not get to a dentist because his mother did not have insurance. In 2017 a husband, Vadim Kondratyuk, a truck driver, died in a Salt Lake City hospital from a tooth infection. These are facts. Let them be alerts so you pay attention to the information in this article. Mr. Shumake's family said their loved one had a prison sentence, not a death sentence.

**Fortunately, it is rare to die from infections related to teeth.** Our teeth have a good defense mechanism starting with the hard enamel shell that covers the more vulnerable layers below, which are the dentin and pulp.

**Layers that decay must get through and when to request care.** If caught early, tooth decay can be stopped and repaired before it gets to the pulp layer. Think of your tooth structure like an egg. The shell of the egg is the enamel of your tooth's surface. There are no nerve endings in the enamel.

It is not until decay has crept in to the next layer, dentin, which is like the white of the egg, and which does contain nerve endings, that we start to feel pain from the decay. The pain will come and go. Even so, this is the time to put in an inmate healthcare request (ICR) requesting to be seen by dental and for you to report that toothache to the facility's dental or healthcare staff.

You may think that because you had no pain in your tooth for 3 days after experiencing one day of pain, that there is nothing wrong and you don't report it. Bad idea. This is the time to report because once that tooth decay enters the final layer of the tooth with all its juicy blood vessels, the pulp, which is like the yolk of the egg, it then can become serious. The pain will stay and park itself like a challenging cellmate right in your mouth. It is imperative at this point you request emergency dental care. Put in those ICRs. Reporting to the med techs and nurse at pill line is of great importance as well.

If you have a toothache and you can't sleep because of the pain, or when you lay your head down to rest, the pain becomes worse, it's definitely time to report. You

may find that your tooth pain worsens when you lay down. There is throbbing or stabbing pain. That is because there is more pressure in your head by being horizontal vs being upright when standing.

**Cracked Tooth Syndrome is difficult to identify but take notice of these symptoms:** Trauma to the face, jaw, or mouth has most likely occurred. There is pain associated with chewing or eating. Teeth grinding. It's worth noting that a cracked tooth may be hard to spot but is important to treat.

**Let's get to the serious symptoms to report and submit an Inmate Care Request:**

1. Tooth pain that does not go away or intermittent tooth pain.
2. Difficulty chewing or opening your mouth
3. Tooth sensitivity
4. Swelling in the face, cheek or neck
5. Redness in the face, cheek, eye or neck
6. Chills or other signs of a fever.

Numbers 4,5,6, are true dental emergencies. Tooth infections can travel to your brain, your heart or circulatory system by way of the blood stream. Let's not go there. Park your toothbrush right here.

**Self-Care and Nutrition are keys to prevention.** Prevention is the key strategy. But you already know that. Brushing after every meal with toothpaste, mouthwash, or even a washcloth if necessary, is vitally important. Teeth - Treat them as your guardian angels. Flossing is beneficial but might not be practical if your facility does not allow floss.

As best you can, eat healthy, drink plenty of fluids and get good sleep. These are the good neighbors you want for your dental wellbeing. Seek preventive dental care in your facility if it is offered. This includes routine exams and cleanings. Don't wait for bad things to happen. No, machismo is not prevention. Tough guys and gals get major tooth infections too. Be super kind to your cellmate if they are suffering from a tooth infection.

Spread good karma.

**Your dental care goals should you choose to accept:**

- 1) Prevent a localized infection from becoming systemic and
- 2) Prevent a systemic infection from becoming life threatening.

Any dental infection can be serious. But you knew that by now. I just like to repeat myself.

**Keep a log for your dental and medical conditions.** Keep track of your reporting to the medical/dental staff, ICR submissions, and conversations with medical is useful for your own health record keeping and any advocacy efforts to help you access care.

**Time is important.** Keep track of your symptoms and any changes that occur. Are the symptoms increasing,

changing? Over what period of time, a day, two days?

**Other medical conditions.** If you have other medical conditions such as diabetes or are immune-compromised, it is very important to take your dental care seriously.

Note that if you have had treatment such as antibiotics,

a filling placed or a tooth extracted, you are not necessarily out of the woods. These are times when the infection may not have been fully treated and is just waiting for you to go back to taking your teeth for granted.

Stay grateful to every tooth. Ten years without brushing causes a horrible tooth decay. Smile!

### **Captain Your Story to Expand in Utah's Prisons**

By Amy Chandler, Executive Director & Founder, My Story Matters

We are thrilled to share some exciting news with you - thanks to the support and advocacy of many, we have successfully secured legislative funding for the *Captain Your Story* program in Utah's prisons! Your commitment to the cause has been instrumental in reaching this milestone, and we are immensely grateful for your dedication.

The *Captain Your Story* program, developed by My Story Matters, has been a beacon of hope and transformation for individuals within the criminal justice system, including those in Utah's prisons. Over the past two years, dedicated volunteers have offered this invaluable program at the Central Utah Correctional Facility (CUCF), and for the past six months, it has made a significant impact on the lives of men at the Utah State Correctional Facility (USCF).

**This funding will allow us to double our impact and provide the class to many more individuals. A *Captain Your Story* class will also begin in March for the women!**

This course is a valuable tool to empower individuals to initiate positive actions, irrespective of their circumstances. By guiding individuals in discovering their aspirations and fostering a resilient identity, it equips them to proactively address challenges. This transformative process enables individuals, even within the constraints of incarceration, to start taking meaningful steps towards personal growth and positive change TODAY.

**How the incarcerated request to participate.** Many have asked how their loved ones can participate in the class. If they are interested they can send a message via the tablets to be considered. They need to include their name, number, housing unit, and why they are interested in the course. They can also write a letter with the same and mail to My Story Matters PO Box 382, Springville, UT 84663. We are looking for individuals who are ready for change, ready for transformation.

**Families can participate.** We have also received resources from the State of Utah to provide scholarships to families to attend the course on the outside. These scholarships are currently limited to parents of children ages 5-18 and teens ages 13-18. If you are interested in getting one of these scholarships,

please fill out the form located at this link <https://wkf.ms/3ObK5xu>.

Classes are beginning both in person and online. They are held once a week for 90 minutes for 12 weeks. In the form you will see multiple days/times/locations offered. They are on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Three testimonials from individuals who have participated in and benefitted from this program.**

1) *"Captain Your Story has changed my life in so many ways. When I was first introduced to the program I was in a dark place, I was in jail for the 22nd time in 6 years. I had lost everything I loved to addiction including custody of my children. I was completely lost and hopeless. I did not know how to love myself or find any worth in the person I had become. I remember very distinctly Nat, Josh, and Amy coming in and looking at me like I was a person. They wanted to know about me as an individual and about my life. They showed me a glimpse of love and started a seed of hope inside of me. Then came the tools, the curriculum Captain Your Story offered; they were exciting for me! I couldn't wait to call my family members each day and tell them the things that I was learning. It made my life seem manageable again and gave me hope and excitement in what my vision was and how I could obtain it. I literally cannot put into words the difference this program has made in my life. I am now just shy of 3 years clean and sober. I manage a sober living home and am able to mentor others new to sobriety. I have relationships with my kids and family members I never knew possible. I am proud of the person I am today and can love myself fully. I have recently had the privilege of retaking the course and putting those tools back into action in my life. It has put my way of thinking on a whole new level. I am seeing my vision get closer and closer and sometimes even right there in front of my eyes there it is!! I'm living it!!! I have learned to control and influence the things that I can and give the rest to my higher power with some ease. This program has changed my life multiple times over and I am eternally grateful for the people I've met and the tools I've gained."*

2) *"When I first started this class I thought it was just going to be just another programming class and I could not have been more wrong. I was confronted by this super confident woman who knew who she was and*

where her vision was headed. This has never happened in the previous 18 years. No one had been involved in corrections that actually cared about me and my vision. This woman from the community that I used to be a part of was challenging me to figure out what I am and give direction to my vision. What a prayer answered invitation this was for me. This lifestyle class teaches you to live the life that you are to live, not the one that you are told to live by the walls that surround me. The people involved in this do not see us as a prisoner, they see us as a person, which is new to those of us who have been known as a number for years. When you're locked up, you're out of sight and out of mind. It makes you feel seen and able to achieve your dreams and aspirations. They are achievable and

attainable and the how is none of your business, things and people just show up.”

3) *“My Story Matters is the catalyst for effective positive change. I have seen the program change men. I have watched them become something more than they previously believed possible. I watch them live with intention every single day. The combination of hope, knowledge and confidence is the only thing that will break any previous negative behaviors. I am changed. I live with intention every day. I have written a curriculum for, and now hold a weekly class teaching creative writing to inmates.”*

**Summary: “Your past will come into perspective as you claim and create your future!”**

## **Inmate Placement Program (IPP) Overview**

by Molly Prince, LCSW

One of the areas of focus that UPAN is once again attempting to address is the Inmate Placement Program. IPP is a method that the UDC uses to contract with various counties to house state inmates in county jails around the state. A state inmate is one who has been sentenced to prison, not jail.

**State Inmates in County Jails.** For the purposes in this article, we are only addressing state inmates housed in county jails and are not addressing issues related to county inmates in the jails. A county inmate is someone who is in a county jail awaiting arraignment or going through the legal and trial process prior to adjudication who has not posted bail, or someone who has been sentenced by the judge to jail time rather than prison. A state inmate is a person who is under the jurisdiction of the Utah Department of Corrections who is referred to a contracted county jail for housing. The contracted county facility has the authority to approve or deny the referral. The UDC reimburses each contracted county jail for housing state inmates.

**The Beginning of IPP.** IPP was created in 1987 when the Draper facility was operating at maximum bed capacity. This was prior to the construction of Central Utah Correctional Facility (CUCF) in Gunnison. This resulted in what is described as originally “a small-scale operation using temporarily unoccupied beds in the counties.” In 2015, UDC’s website indicated that when IPP originated, prison officials also intended to offer housing locations to inmates in areas of the state close to their family and support system for purposes of ease of visiting and potential of parole to that area. That was back when in-person visiting could occur at jails. UPAN began focusing on IPP issues in 2015, when we had a director dedicated to IPP issues. She recognized that the original intent of IPP had transformed to become a mechanism whose primary purpose was to house inmates outside of the main Draper prison and maximize the contracts already in place with the county jails. At that time, we were informed by UDC administrators that it was due to the emerging shortage

of correctional staff in Draper and to utilize the bed space the State had already contracted with the county jails. At that time the UDC website stated the following,

*“The State’s prison system does not have adequate beds to house all inmates... Today, the State’s prison system continues to be unable to house all inmates. The Inmate Placement Program sends eligible inmates to counties that have contracted with the State to provide jail housing. The Utah Legislature approves counties’ participation in the program and also sets a daily incarceration fee rate.”*

**As of 2024**, many of those counties that contract with UDC have expanded and have more beds than they will need in the foreseeable future, so they rent them to the State of Utah.

According to the Jail Programs Handbook (accessible by the button at <https://corrections.utah.gov/county-jail-program/>) in 1993, UDC was contracting for 117 county jail beds. In FY 2023, Corrections housed above 1,450 incarcerated people in counties, at an average of 1,572.

**Reasons some people want to be in the Inmate Placement Program.** UPAN directors understand that some state inmates prefer county jail placement for a wide variety of reasons. In the past it had to do with visiting and the cost of long-distance phone calls, so to be closer to their families. These days, being close to family is less of an issue because so many county jails do not allow in person visits. However, local phone call costs can make a difference.

Today, the programs offered in the various county jails are a reason some incarcerated individual’s request to be accepted into IPP and transferred to a participating county jail. Not every jail has the same opportunities.

More recently, there has been interest in IPP due to the ability to participate in specific programming such as substance abuse or sex offense treatment programs. County jails have been useful for safety and security

purposes, such as when an individual cannot be safely housed in general population in one of the prisons but also shouldn't be housed in a maximum security unit at the prison.

It is now our understanding that there are a couple of jails that will take individuals who have a classification related to past gang involvement. In recent years, there has been an expansion of treatment programs for substance use or sex offenses in more of the IPP jails.

UDC has renewed its commitment to working to improve the opportunities that individuals in the custody of the State have to get an education, learn social skills and self-management skills, participate in treatment programs, and psychoeducational skills programs to improve themselves. This is vital to their rehabilitation and the probability that they will do well upon return to the community at some point. This renewal of UDC's interest in preparing people for re-entry in the community and reducing the likelihood of relapse or recidivism has become evident since the new administration was put in place beginning in May, 2023.

**However, not everyone will get out.** Before continuing this article, it should be stressed that for many in the care and custody of the State of Utah, their incarceration is NOT a short "time-out" of a year or two, but is a way of life for many years, and often the entire life of a prisoner.

**Prison is a way of life** for many of those with years-long sentences, as well as their families. It should be noted that families do time right along with the incarcerated person. Some inmates will never be released. Some will spend 15 or 20 or 30 years in

prison before being released to the community to rebuild a life.

**In 2015, UPAN stressed concern with IPP and other UDC administrators regarding the lack of consistency** in property matrices between the prison and the various county jails, and between county jails themselves. We have been advised in some cases, this has been addressed, and that the county sheriff's and jail administrators work with IPP in terms of working toward reducing the loss of property due to incompatible property matrices by an inmate during moves between one facility to another. All property not allowed to follow the incarcerated person must either be picked up by family designated by the offender, or it is discarded and destroyed by the facility. Collectively, this costs prisoners and their support systems thousands of dollars each year.

**Storage of property.** UPAN has also requested the possibility of the prisons and jails allocating storage space to assure that an inmate's property could be held at the facility left behind for a certain number of months in case the inmate is transferred back to that facility within the year, so that multiple transfers will not result in such serious loss of property over and over again. We are unsure what the status is of this request. We originally requested this back in 2016. We discussed it again in the fall of 2023 with the new administration.

**Each county jail has different things to offer.** UPAN will begin writing an article each month on a specific jail (or two) and what programs they have to offer, based on the updated Jail Programs Handbook mentioned above.

## **Importance of Positive Human Touch for Prisoners and How Visiting Rules Impact It**

By Molly Prince, LCSW

This article references information found in the July, 2018 blog by Natalie Korman entitled *Prisoners and the Importance of Positive Human Touch* on the adoptaninmate.org website at <https://adoptaninmate.org/prisoners-and-the-importance-of-positive-human-touch-by-natalie-korman/> with other information for other sources including from <https://www.streetroots.org/news/2021/07/07/science-behind-human-touch-and-what-happens-when-prisoners-go-without> that features Tiffany Field, who is the founder and director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine and has authored more than 400 journal papers and more than 20 books, primarily focused on different aspects of touch.

**The importance of human touch** has been researched for years. This research consistently shows that physical human touch, particularly positive, supportive touch, is necessary for psychological health. Many people may be familiar with the need for babies to be held and cuddled to develop in a healthy manner. This is also true for people of any age who also need to receive and give positive physical contact to maintain a healthy emotional state.

Tiffany Field, one of the world's foremost experts on the science behind human touch and on the effects of going without it is quoted in the above referenced article from streetroots.org. She states that while she has not directly studied prisoners who are deprived of

supportive human touch over time, she can draw conclusions from the information they have studied on isolation of people from touch. She states that "anyone who isn't touched for a prolonged period of time is going to be depressed" because their serotonin levels become low. Prison is a stressful environment even in the best of circumstances, so inmates who cannot receive healthy, supportive human touch have more stress because their cortisol levels will be elevated. Positive human touch also activates the immune system. Field states, "And probably they'll experience some illness because the immune system is not being activated by that kind of stimulation."

Further, Field reports, “We know from our studies that they will also become aggressive.” This is inferred from studies they did of children in different settings. She states, “We looked at how much touch stimulation they were getting, mostly in the form of caring physical contact from their parents or their friends.” They found that the kids who had significantly less touching were significantly more physically and verbally aggressive. She states, “Those are some of the effects that we would expect from touch deprivation.”

**Lack of human touch is harmful to humans.** So the information that has been confirmed by various research studies verifies that the lack of positive human touch contributes to depression, anxiety, and aggression. It seems logical that increasing the ability for Utah’s incarcerated to receive positive touch from people who care about them would reduce mental health issues and decrease safety and security threats.

**Incarcerated people are not just among the most socially isolated in our society, they are physically isolated — specifically, isolated from positive human touch.**

While it may be common knowledge that violence — including sexual violence — occurs in prison, the gravity of the issue of touch is often not widely considered. Whether at the hands of their fellow inmates or of prison staff, incarcerated people may go many years experiencing only touch from people who either have no interest in their wellbeing or outright wish them harm or death.

Some incarcerated persons may be lucky enough to enjoy the spontaneous, positive touch of fellow inmates who are also friends, such as in handshakes, high fives or pats on the back. The challenge with this is that when non-violent touch occurs in prison, it must be deliberate and specific. Friends or allies may shake hands or even give quick hugs. In prison, every moment of physical contact can be measured in some way to initiate or preserve alliances, or break them, in order to maintain the prisoner’s status or survival in prison.

**Restricted from touch by family and friends.** Incarcerated people in Utah are increasingly denied the ability to touch or be touched by their loved ones. Some incarcerated people who have the privilege level to have in-person contact visits are able to touch visitors through brief hugs at the beginning or end of a visit - depending on which prison they are in and the staff in charge of that visit, that day. In the past, visitors and inmates were able to hold hands on top of the table during the visit, which contributed to the wellbeing of both parties. It facilitated spiritual connection when praying with hands held, and a physical and emotional reassurance between the incarcerated and parents, children, siblings, spouses, friends, and all types of relationships.

Many other people in the custody and care of the State of Utah only receive barrier visits, separated by thick protective glass. This makes loving, reassuring touch from their support system is impossible, sometimes for many years, and sometimes for life.

Even others only receive video visits, which does not even allow the visitor and prisoner to look at each other in the eye. It does not allow even the exchange of personal, positive energy through glass in person, much less through a hug.

Finally, in Utah we have a number of incarcerated people in our prisons and jails who have no visitors at all. This could go on for years for anyone incarcerated.

**In-person visiting in the Utah prisons is greatly appreciated, and still has its challenges.** Visiting can be a challenge to both visitors and those receiving visits. Recently, it has been more of a challenge to UDC staff and administration in their attempt to keep the facility safe and free of illegal substances.

In-person visiting hours and opportunities have become more restricted in both Utah’s prisons since re-opening after COVID and the move to the new prison. Prior to COVID, in person visiting had more choices and visiting did not require visitors to pre-schedule. Yet, prior to the pandemic, video visiting was not offered in either CUCF or the old USP.

Currently visiting is limited to certain days in both prisons. It must be scheduled online ahead of time, so there is no opportunity for unanticipated visits to occur when someone is traveling into the city or down to central Utah for work or other reasons. Video visiting has been somewhat unreliable when staff does not get the inmate to a video visit, or when other issues have arisen and visitors are not made aware of cancellations.

For the incarcerated, strip searches in most prisons are standard procedure before and after a prisoner receives a visit. Millions of opportunities for positive physical contact are poisoned or vanish altogether as soon as a person enters prison.

**IPP visiting.** The IPP county jails do not offer contact visiting at all and haven’t for many years. A few of the jails, such as Garfield, offer in-person barrier visits. Salt Lake County Jail has in-person barrier visits, but it is not an IPP jail. There are no contact visits in any Utah jails that this author is aware of. Video visiting is available in Utah’s county jails.

In general, county jails are designed to house county inmates, who normally do not remain in jail for more than about a year. Of course, there are some exceptions for people awaiting trial who are unable to bail out and remain in county jails, as a county inmate, for more than a year.

However, people in the care and custody of the State of Utah who are sent out to county jails have the potential to remain there for multiple years, sometimes as many as 10. To clarify, they may remain in the same jail for years, or be moved from jail to jail over the years, not stepping foot back into either of Utah's state prisons. This eliminates the opportunity for families to have a choice to visit in person at the prison, and results in IPP inmates having absolutely no opportunity for a hug or caring touch with loved ones for years on end.

**Video visiting.** The inclusion of video visiting that began in Utah's prisons during the pandemic does expand a much needed opportunity for people who cannot travel to the prisons, or cannot get off work when in-person visiting is offered.

There continue to be challenges with video visiting reported to UPAN, including challenges with getting the visiting scheduled and approved online as well as periodic failure of staff to get incarcerated people to the video visiting area or provide them with the tablets on time. Video visiting does provide additional options for families to see their loved one's face when talking to them. The challenge with anyone who has done a video visit (or a Zoom meeting, or Google meet, etc.) is that it is impossible to have direct eye contact at the same time with both visitor and visited person via technology, which takes away another opportunity for positive emotional connection.

**UPAN wants to acknowledge and express our deep appreciation for Utah Dept. of Corrections' continued commitment to in-person visiting.**

Nationally, (and in Utah), there is growing concern by families and advocates that extremely expensive digital and phone connections that have been replacing in-person visiting at Utah's jails and have the potential to do so in many prisons, are further distancing prisoners from positive human touch.

While many prisoners may have the consistent and long-lasting support and frequent contact with family and friends, there are many who do not. Some prisoners, for a variety of reasons, receive few or no letters, phone calls or visits. This can have a devastating effect on the person in prison.

**Struggle between human need for touch and security.** There is a struggle in finding the balance between the security issues that Utah's prisons are constantly monitoring and the emotional well-being that in-person contact visits provide. That includes hand holding on top of the table as an appropriate method of positive human touch.

**How visitors can help preserve the touch that is currently allowed and work toward more.** What can assist in UPAN's position - that we need to return to a compassionate approach to touch in visiting, is that all

in-person visitors follow all visiting rules at all times. This way, UDC might realize that allowing families to have a hug and / or kiss both before and at the end of a visit, as well as hand holding on top of the table, can still be a safe and appropriate approach to visiting.

The use of cameras, videos of the in-person visits, and constant monitoring by staff, both inside the visiting room and on camera, can reduce concerns that our prison administrators have about inappropriate activity occurring.

When inappropriate activity occurs or when rules are broken, UPAN urges Corrections Officials to take action toward those breaking the rules, and not create more challenges or sanctions against all the visitors. Unfortunately, the actions of a few recently have created stress in visiting because SWAT and dogs have been brought in, and other measures taken.

**Summarizing the challenges.** Shrinking visiting hours and poor opportunities for communication, and the increasing expense of electronic communication plague incarcerated people and their families. Since it is private, for profit inmate communication service companies that provide our prisons and jails with services for phone calls and video visits, it can become very costly for families to stay in touch.

Utah's jails have already demonstrated their eagerness to depend on technology for visiting (and even written communication, in some cases\*) without considering the loss of positive human contact. Utah's prisons have wisely incorporated video visiting into the types of visiting that are available. \*Incoming inmate mail sent to a third party, copied, and resent electronically to the addressee.

UPAN's position is, and has always been, that the most beneficial types of visits for both incarcerated people and families / friends are in-person. Contact visits are the best option to contribute to health, mental health, and wellbeing. Contact visits should always be offered for those who have the privilege level for it.

Barriers are limiting, with thick glass between us. However, many of us who have experienced both barriers and videos agree that at least a barrier visit allows us to look at each other physically in real life, assess our incarcerated loved ones' health and well-being, and look into each other's eyes, and feel each other's energy at a much more healing and profound level than will ever be possible on a video visit. Most of Utah's jails housing long-term state inmates do not offer this approach to visiting.

It is important that we always remember the impact on the well-being of those involved in Utah's criminal justice system when decisions are made that could further reduce positive human contact, including the opportunity to experience supportive human touch.



March is Women's History Month. Rather than look at history, this year we want to share something about a new organization of women making a difference in other women's lives today. All information is taken directly from Kourageous Vision's website.

**Kourageous Vision, Women's Non-Profit – The Best is Yet Unseen** is a new, non-profit, Christian based organization whose mission is empowering women through mentorship and unwavering support. It provides a nurturing environment that fosters self-acceptance, love, and the freedom for each woman to embrace their Kourageous Vision wholeheartedly. It is committed to stand beside women on their journey, nurturing their growth and courage every step of the way. <https://kourageousvision.org/our-mission>

**A Kourageous Vision.** According to the website, "The term 'Kourageous Vision' encapsulates the essence of its mission. It represents the audacity to dream big, the courage to face challenges head-on, and the vision to create a world where women uplift and empower one another. This vision doesn't just benefit women today; it lays the foundation for a more inclusive, supportive, and empowered future for generations to come." How this is done is explained below.

**Inclusive Empowerment.** The mission of Kourageous Vision (KV) centers around investing in the support of all women, without exception. A woman's journey is multifaceted, so KV encompasses women in both professional and personal pursuits. This inclusive approach ensures that no woman feels excluded or marginalized and that each individual can draw strength and guidance from the Kourageous Vision community.

**Cultivating Connections.** In a world in which women can often feel disconnected and isolated, the mission of Kourageous Vision shines as a beacon of connection and community. This community understands the value of meaningful relationships and friendships, and actively works to develop these connections. Women are provided with a genuine support system that extends beyond surface-level interactions.

**Kourageous Vision Offers Prison Ministry.** The website states, "Our organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of incarcerated women. We believe in the power of redemption, transformation, and hope. Our comprehensive program focuses on three core pillars: Bible studies, family support, and reintegration services. We are committed to helping incarcerated women build a better future for themselves and their relationship in Jesus."

**Prison Bible Studies: Faith-Based Rehabilitation.** It offers voluntary Bible studies within correctional

facilities, providing a safe and supportive environment for incarcerated women to explore their spirituality, find peace, and discover the path to personal growth and redemption.

**Empowerment and Healing.** The KV mission is rooted in faith and is an opportunity for women to share their expertise and share your story to make an impact in the lives of all women.

**Community Support Networks and Mentoring.** This organization offers mentorship, support groups, and guidance in addition to connecting incarcerated and returning women to resources within the community.

**Empowerment Beyond Bars.** This organization is dedicated to supporting women both within and outside of prison, underscoring its commitment to true empowerment. KV believes in second chances and that every woman has the potential for growth, regardless of her past. By reaching out to incarcerated women in the prison program, hope, guidance, and a chance to rebuild their lives upon release is offered.

**Nurturing Empowerment.** In a world often characterized by competition and criticism, this organization stands as a nurturing haven. Kourageous Vision believes in the power of love, encouragement, and belonging to foster personal and collective growth. This nurturing environment empowers women to overcome challenges and achieve their aspirations with a renewed sense of confidence and purpose.

**Collective Wisdom.** This organization is built upon the premise that every woman has a story to tell and wisdom to share. By bringing together a diverse community of women, it taps into a wellspring of collective experiences and insights. This collaborative atmosphere promotes mutual learning and growth, allowing women to learn from one another's successes and challenges.

**Personalized Success.** Each woman is encouraged and empowered to define their own paths to success. Through support and guidance, women can identify and pursue their unique goals and aspirations. This personalized approach ensures that each woman's journey is both fulfilling and aligned with her values.

**Inspiration in Action.** This non-profit organization goes beyond mere assistance by serving as a platform for women to share their stories and successes. By highlighting real-life achievements, others are inspired to believe in their own potential and take bold steps towards realizing their dreams.

***Kourageous Vision offers a variety of services in the community:***

**Professional Investment and Career Services** include helping women craft a resume that highlights their unique talents and sets them up for success. Women are provided with tools and knowledge to master the art of resume writing. For those who already have a resume, services include helping to update and give resumes a fresh, modern look that stands out to prospective employers.

This organization also offers assistance to ensure participants are dressed to impress in interviews, and for success in their careers. This includes helping women to build their wardrobe tailored to their professional aspirations. Kourageous Vision recognizes that confidence starts with what you wear!

Women are assisted in discovering the power of self-care and grooming. This organization will share tips and tricks to help you look and feel your best so you are ready for each day.

**Personal Investment.** Kourageous Vision has developed a unique blend of activities that ensures those involved will find inspiration and connection at every step of their journeys. This program promotes the cultivation of lasting bonds and friendships in a supportive community of strong, like-minded women. Their gatherings create an incredible network of women who uplift and inspire one another.

They take walks in the park to reconnect with nature, rejuvenate the soul, and enjoy sharing these walks with fellow women who share an appreciation for the outdoors. It's an opportunity to clear the mind and find serenity.

KV offers book clubs to assist in exploring thought provoking reads that spark the intellect and ignite discussions that go beyond the pages of the book.

**Religious and Spiritual Support.** Church Services are offered in the community through The Door Christian Fellowship for uplifting and encouraging services. It is a

Christian Nondenominational Bible church.

There is a program called Coffee Connection Christ in which women can start their day with a warm cup of coffee and conversations that matter. These gatherings offer a safe space to share, support, and connect with incredible women.

Kourageous Vision holds Bible Study Groups in which women can deepen their beliefs and their relationship with Jesus through meaningful dialogues, insights from sacred texts, and build profound connections with other women.

**Mentorship Programs** are a part of Kourageous Vision. Women can discover and unleash their potential under the guidance of accomplished mentors who are passionate about women's empowerment. Benefit from their wisdom, experience, and network to propel your personal and professional growth.

**KV accepts donations of women's clothing.** It goes directly to women in need. This includes sharing contributions with the women at Orange Street Community Correctional Center (OSCCC) in Salt Lake City, which is the only all-women's halfway house in Utah. The staff at OSCCC are supportive of the services Kourageous Vision offers through their center.

If you want to donate good used women's clothing and toiletries to Kourageous Vision, please contact 801-403-0596 to arrange a convenient pick up or drop off. This month's newsletter suggests that they are in need at this time of sweatpants and sweatshirts, leggings, pajamas, or socks to add some comfort to the days of the women at OSCCC.

Their monthly newsletter called Grace In Action. Contact – Kourageous Vision, PO Box 571401 Murray, Utah 84157 801-403-0596 email: [info@kourageousvision.org](mailto:info@kourageousvision.org) website - <https://kourageousvision.org/>

***“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated.” Maya Angelou***

**Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh** *What's Irish and stays out all night? Patty O'Furniture ~ What do you call a parade of rabbits hopping backward? A receding hare line ~ Why did the teddy bear say no to dessert? Because he was stuffed ~ What do you call a chicken who crosses the road, rolls in the mud, and then crosses back again? A dirty double-crosser. ☺*

***“A single twig breaks, but the bundle of twigs is strong.” Tecumseh, Shawnee chief***

*Be flexible and open to good suggestions; rare is the time that we can do crossword puzzles in ink. Stay cool. Ed.*

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### **Utah Prisoner Advocate Network Contact Info**

**Our Contact Information:**

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***“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***