



UPAN Newsletter Volume 11 Number 9 | **SEPTEMBER 2024**
“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

* * * * *

**Phone Successes – Holiday Gifts for Needy Kids – S.O.L.I.D. Program by
 Prison Peers – SOTP Challenges & Advancing Treatment – *Dell-Emerald Topics* –
 11 Years of UPAN (founding, accomplishments, directors/volunteers, & goals)**

* * * * *

Next Meeting: Monday, September 9, 2024 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. **Family Meeting.** Meetings are **FREE** and open to the public. **Join all meetings at** <https://bit.ly/UPAN-Meet>

Following Monthly Meetings: Monday, October 14, 2024 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Speaker: Jennifer Yim, Administrative Director of BOPP. **Please submit questions to** utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com **by September 20, 2024**
 Monday, November 11, 2024 Speaker: Brian Redd, Executive Director, Utah Dept. of Corrections
Please submit questions to utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com **by October 10, 2024**

Meetings Available on UPAN Facebook Live and on UPAN's Facebook page afterwards. Visit UPAN Facebook page for newsletters. Visit website (page 10) to subscribe to the UPAN Newsletter, or Utah Prisoner Advocate Facebook Page for link to current monthly meeting. Free to the public. Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/UPAN-Meet>

In This Issue: Meeting Announcements, UPAN Newsletter contents in this issue and UPAN Disclaimer	Page 1
» Prison Phone Justice Wins! A brief summary by CURE National	Pgs. 1-2
» Holidays – All Hearts Come Home for the Holidays by Karen Thompson, Special Projects Director	Page 2
» SOLID Program at USCF, Peer Presented by Molly Prince, LCSW	Pgs. 3-4
» SOTP Challenges & Advancing Treatment, Dr. Candice Waltrip by Shane Severson & M. Prince, LCSW	Pgs. 4-6
» <i>Dell-Emerald Topics</i> Fun Times by Ed.	Page 6
» Eleven Years of UPAN An informative and enjoyable read by Molly Prince, LCSW	Pgs. 7-10
Couple of Smiles & Maybe a Laugh plus UPAN contact information and Facebook info	Page 10

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

“Your journey is not the same as mine, and my journey is not yours. But if we meet on a certain path, may we encourage each other.” Unknown

“Take a moment to appreciate the people who never gave up on you.” Love Wide Open

Prison Phone Justice Wins! 📞

A brief summary sent out by CURE National <https://curenational.org/>

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE) is a grassroots organization that was founded in Texas in 1972. It became a national organization in 1985. CURE believes that prisons should be used only for those who absolutely must be incarcerated and that those who are incarcerated should have all the resources they need to turn their lives around. CURE also believes that human rights documents provide a sound basis for ensuring that criminal justice systems meet these goals. It is a membership organization.

The FCC has voted to implement new rules to significantly lower the cost of phone and video calls in prisons and jails, following the Martha Wright-Reed Fair

and Just Communications Act. These changes will help families of incarcerated individuals save millions of dollars annually. It is supposed to go into effect in 2025.

- **New Rate Caps:** Phone calls in prisons and large jails are capped at 6¢/minute, and video calls are capped at 16¢/minute. For medium-sized jails, phone calls are capped at 7¢/minute, and video calls range from 11¢ to 25¢/minute, depending on the facility size.
- **Eliminating Additional Fees:** Companies can no longer charge extra fees for services like account deposits. These costs must now be included in the per-minute charges.
- **Banning Kickbacks:** Most "site commissions" or kickbacks to contracting agencies are banned, which previously led to higher costs.

- **Alternative Pricing Plans:** Companies can offer new pricing plans if they provide cost savings to consumers.
- **Accessibility and Consumer Protection:** Telecom providers must make services accessible to people with disabilities and return unused funds in accounts when an incarcerated person is released.

Prison phone justice is essential for keeping family connections strong, lowering the chances of recidivism, and easing financial pressures. It is a crucial element to having a more humane system. Stay up on prison phone justice and read more on the ruling by [Prison Policy Institute](#) and [Worth Rises](#).

Other links of interest:

- <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-404087A1.docx>
- <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1541/text>
- https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=39744
- <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us> and <https://uccmediajustice.org/>

“What you do makes a difference. You have to decide what kind of difference you want to make” – Jane Goodall

UPAN - ALL HEARTS COME HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Karen Thompson, UPAN Director of Special Projects

Reaching out to UPAN families needing help with HOLIDAY gifts for children 0 – 18 years old.



If your child has a parent incarcerated by Utah’s prison system, please mark your calendars and prepare to apply for help with a holiday gift for them. **We are launching our UPAN effort on 1 October 2024.** It is never too early to plan!

This project will be facilitated by having sponsors order the gifts from Amazon.com and gifts will be delivered to the homes of the children / custodial parent or custodial adult.

To apply for your children. Please complete one application per family, and send the following information for each child:

- Child’s Name; Age; Gender; Shoe Size; 1 want; 1 need.*
- Name of the custodial adult.*
- Name and DOC # of the incarcerated parent.*
- Physical address of custodial parent (required for Amazon Delivery, Amazon will not deliver to PO boxes). Phone number for any questions*

The limit for each request per child cannot exceed \$150 per child. We hope to deliver 1 pair of new shoes; 1 want and 1 need to each child. Mail your Holiday Requests to: UPAN All Hearts Come Home for the Holidays 2024 PO Box 33, Layton, Utah 84041

ALL Requests MUST BE RECEIVED by UPAN by November 1, 2024

Become a UPAN All Hearts Sponsor. Anyone wishing to fulfill Holiday requests and sponsor a child or family of children will find a link on the UPAN Family Facebook Page beginning November 15, 2024.

All Hearts Sponsors will be given a list of what is needed for a child or the number of children they are wishing to sponsor.

ALL gifts must be ordered for Amazon delivery by December 15, 2024.

Confidentiality and anonymity. Identities, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, and any other contact information of all parties will be known only to Amazon and the UPAN Directors managing this Holiday Project. The safety of your information is a priority. We will provide this information again in the October Newsletter. ***Working together we can make a difference!***

“Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” – Albert Einstein

“When you can’t control what’s happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond to what’s happening. That’s where your power is.” Unknown

Advocates & Stakeholders Learn About the S.O.L.I.D. Program in USCF

By Molly Prince, LCSW

Advocates Molly Prince (UPAN) and Roni Wilcox (PAG) had the opportunity to tour the S.O.L.I.D. Program in Bear 2 twice in one month! We toured the evening of July 15 after our quarterly meeting with Executive Director Brian Redd and his team. Deputy Director Rebecca Brown, Warden Bart Mortensen and Stakeholder Experience Coordinator Esekia Afatasi accompanied us. Then on August 12, the Stakeholders group also toured S.O.L.I.D. during the day. That time, UPAN directors Molly Prince and Heidi Kubbe and other advocates had the privilege to sit in on a couple of seminars. We were able to hear about the history of S.O.L.I.D., what it offers, and ask questions of program participants.

S.O.L.I.D stands for Successful Offenders Learning Individual Development. This program is about 8 months old and is designed to support the incarcerated individuals' growth and change while also having the potential to reduce overall recidivism rates. It continues to evolve and grow and is proving to be the answer for those incarcerated people who want what it has to offer and are ready to immerse themselves in the program.

This unique program was created, designed, and is administrated by several incarcerated founders that include Alfredo "Fredo" Lolani, Shaine Smith, Fonua Kimoana, Brian "Kofi" Gbedemah, and Zachariah Martindale. They have support from Brandon Hillman who handles a lot of the office support duties. They have the endorsement of UDC Executive Director Brian Redd, USCF Wardens, and complete support of Captain Sasa Karic.

Captain Karic and the correctional officers make a difference in this very different type of correctional program in a prison housing unit. UDC and the program provides the security of the building. They work with Correctional Health Services for medical and mental health services. There are therapists available.

In addition to providing avenues for resident participants in the S.O.L.I.D. Program to learn, grow, change, and evolve as they make healthier choices in their lives, this program also has goals to create a safer environment within the prison, preparing them for potential eventual release to the community, with reduced recidivism.

According to Fredo Lolani, as quoted in an August 1, 2024 press release from the UDC, "S.O.L.I.D is a place that anybody, whether just beginning their prison stay or getting out to the community, can begin the process of changing their lives. Simply put, it is a doorway to change." In the orientation during our tour, Mr. Lolani shared the origin of his idea to start the program. He shared that Officer Jennifer Mullins in CUCF inspired him and talked to him about creating something that would come from people who had gone through the life

experience that preceded going to prison, as well as being in prison. Something that could inspire people to support each other in their healing and change process.

We were able to speak with residents in two of the housing units in Bear 2 about their experience in the program. We were told that it is a safe place to be compared to other areas of the prison. Rather than focusing on differences, they focus on their shared experiences and what they can learn from each other.

The concept of peers teaching and supporting peers is throughout the program. They have seminars daily, presented by residents. Each resident has the opportunity to present a certain number of seminars each month. Those who have anxiety over this are supported and helped by other community participants. Each participant is encouraged to teach seminars composed of information and skills they have learned throughout their life, to use their strengths and knowledge and share it with other residents.

S.O.L.I.D leaders explained that the skills learned from going through the seminar process include organization, public speaking, and increasing confidence. The press release from S.O.L.I.D explains "The real gold in this process comes from the re-enforcement of core beliefs, problem solving, and the knowledge of self-worth that is obtained from creating and teaching a seminar, and sharing new and familiar information to others who can relate." This supports all members of the community remembering that they are not alone in the life experiences and choices they have experienced before, during, and after their incarcerations.

There is a housing unit that provides a safe haven for those who have a history of physical or cognitive disabilities or mental health concerns. I asked residents everywhere I went what they have gained from or what they like about the program. Answers were varied, but all included the sense of community, support, and safety as the most important aspects that allow them to grow and thrive in the program.

S.O.L.I.D. has Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS) that offer support, including mental health support, to all residents of the Bear 2 community. These CPSS are prisoners who have gone through specialized training and have been certified by the Utah Association of Peer Support Specialists. The purpose is to benefit those within the program to overcome their addictions, deal with mental / emotional issues in a safe and healthy manner, and de-escalating confrontations. Each of the peer support specialists have life experiences that create an ability to relate to their peers. According to the August 1 press release, peer specialist Sione Kauvaka says he is a CPSS because, "I like to instill hope in others."

Residents who are CPPS have learned skills that can extend to the community upon release from prison. These include addiction recovery and skills that will enhance their ability to find employment and support their families. The press release states, "The hope is they can create safer environments by working with others that are around them, in finding solutions to their addictions and criminal behaviors before their families and communities experience any further harm."

Everyone in the program chose to be there. UDC does not require or force anyone to participate. There is an application process in which interested persons in USCF can apply and write an essay on why they want to become part of S.O.L.I.D.

It is understood that what they have in common is more important than their differences. It was stressed to us on our tours that there are people from different cultures, races, religions, and social areas in S.O.L.I.D and they get along. People who have been involved in gangs live beside those who have never been affiliated; there are people who have taken a life, and those who have offended sexually living together in peace.

The vision of S.O.L.I.D is "to build a community of hope and support that cultivates the growth, strength, and success of everyone who participates." The S.O.L.I.D. flier states "We are a peer led community that strives for excellence and encourages our members to engage in collaborative partnerships."

There are currently 382 program participants. This includes five S.O.L.I.D. administrators, 26 community leaders, and 11 active peer support specialists. The self-improvement includes C.O.R.E. educational classes; life skills; vocational and college educational opportunities; and peer led seminars.

Since its beginning at the first of 2024, there have been 700+ peer led seminars; 350 peer support sessions with 25+ interventions. They have reported an average of 50 monthly interventions to address potential conflicts and behavioral issues. They have received 1,200 letters of interest to participate and there are currently about 150 incarcerated applicants on a waiting list to get into the program.

The S.O.L.I.D. program has a variety of messages shared with all participants. This includes a personal Commitment to CHANGE: **Compassion, Honesty, Accountability, Necessity, Gratitude, Education.**

It is important to note that this type of program would not be possible without the complete understanding and support of its goals and processes from Capt. Koric and his staff of correctional officers.

The encouragement of the late Taberon Honie was echoed during the presentation offered on August 12th by the founders of S.O.L.I.D. which seems to be a program that lives up to his final words, "If they tell you you can't change, don't listen to them. To all my brothers and sisters here, continue to change..."

Navigating Challenges and Advancing Treatment: A Deep Dive into Utah's Sex Offense Treatment Program with Dr. Candice Waltrip

By Shane Severson & Molly Prince, LCSW

On August 12th, 2024, the Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN) hosted its monthly meeting featuring Dr. Candice Waltrip, a leading expert in forensic psychology and the supervising psychologist for the Utah Department of Corrections. Dr. Waltrip oversees the Sex Offense Treatment Program (SOTP) within the state's correctional facilities. This meeting was of particular importance, as nearly one-third of Utah's incarcerated population is serving sentences for sexual offenses. Both the incarcerated and their families have expressed growing concerns about the availability and effectiveness of treatment programs.

Background of Dr. Candice Waltrip. Dr. Waltrip's career is distinguished by her deep commitment to forensic psychology, crisis intervention, and sex offense treatment. Educated at Azusa Pacific University, she specializes in forensic psychology and psychodynamic psychotherapy, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role at the Utah Department of Corrections. Her work spans various settings, including state hospitals and correctional facilities, where she has not only practiced but also played a pivotal role in training the next generation of psychologists.

Dr. Waltrip's scholarly contributions include publications like *The Cognitively Impaired Juvenile Sex Offender: A Reference Manual for Practicing Clinicians*, which underscores her expertise in managing complex forensic cases. She also Chairs the Utah Sex Offense Task Force which oversees treatment providers of this specialized therapy in the community, and is on Utah's Sex Offense Management Advisory Committee, both established by Utah Legislature.

Key Issues and Responses. There were a variety of questions submitted prior to the meeting that Dr. Waltrip answered. She also responded to questions presented during the meeting.

Treatment for females. One of the foremost concerns addressed during the meeting was the availability of treatment programs for women incarcerated for sex offenses. Attendees questioned why the SOTP, which is often required by the Board of Pardons & Parole (BOPP) before release, is not offered to women, particularly when their release dates were being delayed as a result. Dr. Waltrip explained that this was a challenging decision made in 2022, driven by both resource

limitations and current research indicating that women generally present a lower risk of reoffending sexually. "We decided to focus our efforts on higher risk, higher needs individuals," she noted, emphasizing that the decision was in line with research and best practices for this population. To address the gap, life skills classes tailored to the women's specific needs will be introduced, beginning in September. The BOPP is notified of this recommendation. This also applies to men who are assessed as low risk.

Risk Assessments and Psychological / Psychosexual Evaluations. A significant portion of the discussion centered on the timeline and process for performing risk assessments and psychosexual evaluations on individuals ordered by the Board of Pardons & Parole to undergo SOTP. Ideally, these assessments are conducted within one to three months prior to an inmate's original hearing. However, Dr. Waltrip acknowledged that resource constraints, particularly a shortage of psychologists who do the psychological and psychosexual evaluations, have sometimes led to delays.

The prison prioritizes cases based on the severity of the offense and the perceived risk for re-offense, with higher-risk individuals receiving more comprehensive evaluations, including full psychosexual evaluations. This approach is intended to ensure that those who are at the higher risks to re-offend are given the appropriate level of treatment and monitoring.

Finally, she explained that there is always more than one treatment evaluator that reviews the evaluations and assessments, and there are always 2 – 3 signatures on each report. This ensures dependability and objectivity in the processes that determine what will be recommended for each person referred to SOTP.

Low Risk Individuals. When an individual is assessed as low risk, a Low Risk Verification Report is sent to the BOPP with a recommendation regarding the level of treatment that they should receive. This includes informing the BOPP if they would be appropriate to receive SO treatment in the community rather than in a prison setting. These Low Risk reports would generally result in a special attention review by the BOPP. Then it is up to the BOPP to decide if they will follow the recommendation or not.

Dr. Waltrip explained that the inmate should get a copy of that report in their Blue Packet, and in some cases SOTP will meet with the prisoner to explain the findings of the assessment. They have been behind on these reports and have been working to catch up. She stated that over the last 6 months they completed 45 of these assessment reports for individuals housed in CUCF.

The Board will follow the sentencing / incarceration guideline and has a lot of other data points they will look

at prior to determining if they will decide to release someone to parole.

Another concern was raised about the treatment of low-risk individuals who are still required by the BOPP to complete in-prison sex offense programming. Dr. Waltrip explained that while the UDC aims to align its practices with evidence-based research, which is to not mix low risk with high risk people in a treatment group, there are instances where the Board of Pardons & Parole insists on in-prison treatment for individuals even though they are assessed as low-risk.

In such cases, SOTP may place these individuals in preparatory treatment programs (otherwise known as pre-treatment or Pre-SOTP) like "Preparing for Change," which is a psychoeducational group course designed to offer insight and skills "with a sex-offense lens," without the full intensity of core treatment. This approach helps to avoid "overdosing" these individuals on a higher level of treatment, that runs the risk of exposing them to a level which research has shown can actually increase the risk of reoffending. She said the BOPP accepts those courses and then those individuals can complete the full course of treatment recommended in the community.

She clarified that upon the completion of a risk assessment, that report is provided to the BOPP with a recommendation of either treatment in the community upon parole, or treatment within the prison setting while the inmate is still in custody. She reports that she has worked with the BOPP to understand the importance of not placing low risk offenders in therapy groups with high-risk offenders, and using state resources to treat those who are at a higher risk to re-offend sexually.

Where SOTP is offered. A question was asked about the capacity of SOTP throughout UDC. It was shared that there are currently about 200 program participants in both Pre-SOTP and CORE treatment spread between USCF, CUCF and three county jails: Kane County, Sanpete County and San Juan County.

Staffing challenges within the SOTP, particularly the retention of specialized sex offense therapists, were another significant topic of discussion. UDC is currently down two psychologists which can slow down some of reviews of reports. Dr. Waltrip acknowledged that while the program at the Utah State Correctional Facility (USCF) in Salt Lake is fully staffed, recruiting and retaining therapists, especially in rural areas like Gunnison, remains a challenge due to competitive pay issues. To address this, the department has implemented various incentives, including hiring bonuses and the potential for sole-source contracting with community therapists. Dr. Waltrip emphasized that despite these challenges, the department is committed to maintaining high-quality care, with current caseloads capped at 24 clients per therapist to ensure both quality treatment and work-life balance for staff.

Program structure. Dr. Waltrip also provided detailed insights into the structure of the SOTP. The program is divided into phases, beginning with preparatory psychoeducational groups and progressing to more intensive treatment as a program participant advances in the program. This also should advance as the participant approaches their rehearing or release date. Contrary to some misconceptions, the program includes both group and individual therapy sessions, with a focus on tailoring treatment to the specific needs of each participant. Dr. Waltrip emphasized that individual therapy is an integral part of the process, designed to address the unique challenges faced by each inmate.

Visitation privileges for inmates convicted of sex offenses involving minors, were also a topic of discussion. Several families in the meeting and others who emailed questions ahead of time expressed frustration over the difficulties in securing visitation for their children with their parent who was convicted of a sexual offense against a minor, even when the children in question were not the direct, primary victims.

Dr. Waltrip explained the stringent review process in place to evaluate such requests, which involves assessing the inmate's offense, their relationship with the child, and a long list of other factors to ensure that any visitation does not pose a risk to anyone, including the primary victim. She encouraged families to reapply if they have been previously denied, especially if there have been changes in the inmate's circumstances or in departmental policies.

She further explained that when a visiting application is submitted that includes minor children of someone who offended against minors (either in person or online), the application is forwarded to the SOTP team to review. She stressed it is the treatment team that reviews the application and makes the recommendation about visitation. No one person is given that authority, it is a team decision. Further, regardless of what SOTP team recommends, anyone else in administration can override the recommendation.

Dr. Waltrip recommended that if a family receives a denial automatically (without it being reviewed by the SOTP team) to send the application back to the facility with an email saying, "I have been told to re-apply" and mention that SOTP needs to review it.

It is a policy of the prison to not approve visitation between the inmate and a primary victim, no matter what

the age. Reunification might be possible in the community after release during the continued care program.

Provider for American Sign Language. If a program participant needs an American Sign Language interpreter, they will get an interpreter for them. In the community, however, it is up to the client to find and pay for the ASL interpreter (since community treatment is paid for by the person who offended sexually).

Continued Care in the community upon release. The requirement in best practice was touched on that recommends continued care in the community setting with an approved provider of sex offense treatment upon release from incarceration. This allows the individual to utilize the skills learned within the more protected environment of prison out in the world where they can have therapeutic support while practicing those skills in stressful situations, and facing any triggers or high risk situations. Continued care can also provide support while individuals are adjusting to living with sometimes stringent parole stipulations and restrictions, learning to navigate the world again, and reconnecting and rebuilding relationships.

Individualized Treatment. UDC no longer uses a "one size fits all" approach to sex offense specific treatment. Throughout the meeting, Dr. Waltrip underscored the importance of individualized treatment and the UDC's commitment to evidence-based practices. She acknowledged the inherent challenges in balancing resource constraints with the need to provide effective treatment and emphasized their ongoing efforts to improve the SOTP.

The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for open dialogue between Dr. Waltrip representing this highly specialized area of treatment within the UDC, the families of the incarcerated, and advocates; fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in managing the treatment of those who have offended sexually in Utah's correctional system.

In conclusion, the August UPAN meeting with Dr. Candice Waltrip was a significant step in addressing the concerns of those directly impacted by the SOTP. As UPAN continues to advocate for transparency, reform, and support for incarcerated individuals and their families, such dialogues are essential in driving meaningful change within Utah's criminal justice system.

Dell-Emerald Topics **Fun Time:** There's nothing I can't do. Except – reach the top shelf. I can't do that. ~~ I tried to be normal once – worst 3 minutes of my life. ~~ If you see me talking to myself, just move along, I'm self-employed and we're having a staff meeting. ~~ Mom didn't raise no dummy, and if she did, it was my brother (sister).

"You will never find your worth in another person. You find it in yourself, and then you will attract those who are worthy of your energy. Realize this. Stop waiting for others to tell you of your importance. Tell yourself. Believe it." Anonymous

Eleven (Yes, 11) Years of UPAN

by co-founder Molly Prince, LCSW

July 29, 2024, marked 11 years since UPAN had its first gathering of family members of incarcerated individuals in the group room of my clinical office. My intention was to form a family support group for those on this prison journey. It is amazing how the time has flown by. It continues to be rewarding to review the various accomplishments the families of prisoners and formerly incarcerated that make up UPAN have made related to Utah's criminal justice system. I am going to indulge in a walk down memory lane and also share our current status.

The Prison Family. Prison visiting brings a variety of people from diverse backgrounds together. By 2013, my husband and I had been visiting our incarcerated loved one on a regular basis for several years. The challenges, frustrations, and even the joys of the prison journey became common discussion with other families and friends of prisoners while waiting to visit.

During 2013, while visiting the maximum allowable visits per month, several of us got to know each other quite well while confined to the small USP Draper Oquirrh waiting area - sometimes for up to an hour before we were allowed to proceed. We helped new visitors understand the nuances of how to achieve a successful visit in Draper. We shared our frustrations with each other about everything from the archaic visiting rules still in place at that time to ongoing problems with the inmate phone service, to cost of commissary and lack of nutrition in meals, to challenges with the medical and mental health service. With the exception of one of the most archaic and discriminatory visiting rules back then,* today these are still the same frustrations and concerns that UPAN advocates to change!

We exchanged phone numbers and email addresses. We became what I considered a "prison family." We would not see each other at any other time besides before or after visiting, but we developed acquaintances and alliances that helped get us through the often overwhelming and discouraging prison journey that families travel with their loved ones.

The History. By 2013, my late husband, Lacey Harris, and I had been attending the FOCUS meetings since about 2008 or 2009. FOCUS was hosted by the UDC for families and community members interested in what was happening in the prison system. I encouraged others in visiting to attend the FOCUS meetings. But UDC was inconsistent about posting FOCUS meeting notices in the visiting waiting areas of all the housing facilities to inform families of when they were held. Some families would show up to these meetings and share their questions, concerns and frustrations. At one meeting which became particularly emotional, it became evident that Utah prison families needed another outlet to come together and share their fears and frustrations

while also working to change and improve the system for our incarcerated loved ones.

After a lot of consideration, prayer, and discussion with my husband, I decided to hold what I called a prison family support group in the group room at my clinical office. I shared this with others in visiting who expressed support for that idea.

At that time, Brooke Adams was still a reporter for the Salt Lake Tribune. She reported on criminal justice issues and I had met her at the FOCUS meetings where I was pretty vocal about concerns we had with the prison. I told Brooke that we were going to start a support group for people with incarcerated family members. She was very encouraging, as I was a bit concerned that as a visitor and family member it could have negative ramifications for our incarcerated loved one. She put a short article in the Tribune about our endeavor. Brooke was very supportive of the group that became UPAN, and attended several of our monthly meetings before she became the Public Information Officer for UDC and later moved on to another stage of her career.

The First Meeting of what would evolve into UPAN was attended by 25 people and we did not have enough chairs for us all to fit in my office group room. During that meeting we handed out surveys of the areas that the attendees thought were the most pressing that they wanted to focus on. We collected email addresses and phone numbers to start our email list. A father of an incarcerated man who had previously worked for the UDC suggested we should start out by having a meeting with the newly appointed Executive Director of UDC, Rollin Cook. He pointed to myself, Heather Fabian, Chris Moon, and Tanja Schaeffer and said we four should be the ones to meet with UDC Executive Director Cook. So we did. We formed a working relationship with Dir. Cook.

We had monthly meetings in various libraries around the valley. Our first Secretary, Heather Fabian, was instrumental in getting our monthly meetings scheduled and notices sent out. Within about two months, this group had grown from merely a family support group to a large group of people dedicated to advocating for our loved ones and making serious changes in Utah's criminal justice system. The original four women who met with Dir. Cook came up with the name Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN). In October 2013 UPAN incorporated as a non-profit in Utah.

Guest Speakers. We continued to have monthly family meetings. We discussed our experiences, fears, and frustrations. We tried to support each other by answering each other's questions from our individual experiences. Over time, UPAN progressed to inviting various guest speakers, starting with an attorney

presenting on the Board of Pardons and Parole in a two-part series.

Over the past decade we have had so many guest speakers we cannot list them all in this article, but they have included representatives of various government agencies and private organizations advocating for or providing services for prisoners and parolees; representatives from various divisions of the UDC, BOPP, ACLU, U of U, SLCC, Journey of Hope, Fresh Start Ventures, Rocky Mtn. Innocence Center, and many other organizations that work toward supporting incarcerated people, advocating for change in Utah's criminal justice system, and other agencies.

The Legislative Auditors presented on the BOPP audit, the SOTP audit, and the 2021 Medical Audit. Other speakers include volunteers who have worked in our prisons; formerly incarcerated people; attorneys on a variety of topics; and many more. UPAN has also worked to make sure we have a couple of family meetings a year in which our attendees can ask questions, share answers, concerns, and get acquainted.

We have had presentations from our own ranks of directors and volunteers. We always have a variety of updates on a selection of topics from UPAN directors.

By 2017 we were invited to use the Kafeneio Coffee House as a permanent home for our in-person meetings and have been forever grateful to Pam Day and her family for offering us a safe place to meet that had the added benefits of being able to purchase sandwiches for dinner and coffee or tea or soft drinks to keep us going! Unfortunately, this wonderful café closed during COVID and has not re-opened.

Our meetings moved to Zoom a few months into the pandemic and have remained there so that we can reach families across the state and the country. We did have one in-person meeting in June 2023 to celebrate our 10th anniversary and see each other in person.

Facebook Family Group. Also in the past few years, UPAN started the public Facebook Page as well as our private Family Facebook Group which has helped us connect with each other even more and provide support for families of Utah's prisoners all over the country.

Learning to advocate. Families learned how to contact UDC with concerns to advocate for their loved ones. Over the years and with changes in UDC Executive Administration, UDC became inconsistent with holding the community FOCUS meetings. So we learned who to contact in UDC via email and phone calls to compensate for the loss of the FOCUS meetings. Steve Turley (now retired) who used to chair the FOCUS meetings when he was DPO listened to us and was instrumental in getting the first version of the Verbal Authorization to Share Medical Information implemented.

Since then Steve Gehrke (who recently left UDC for a position in the Governor's office) was instrumental in getting the duration of the Medical Release updated for easier access and use.

UPAN's Director of Communications Shane Severson was also the one who recommended UDC create a Family Medical Phone Line to (then) Public Information Office Kaitlin Felsted for families to call about the status of their loved one's health. Kaitlin was able to get that implemented and it was very helpful during the pandemic.

UPAN has held four in-person "Meet your Legislator" meetings in which all legislators were invited to come and UPAN families spoke about the challenges and concerns they would like addressed by lawmakers, the last being in 2019.

UPAN families learned how to write and talk to our elected officials when we could not achieve change otherwise. UPAN families contributed to sharing information and getting the 2016 Board of Pardons & Parole Legislative Audit ordered. Since then many UPAN families have kept their legislators informed on prison issues, resulting in a legislative audit of the prison Sex Offense Treatment Program several years ago. More recently, two Audits of Healthcare in Utah's prisons have been completed which led to the State having the Dept. of Health & Human Services oversee the delivery of medical services in Utah's prisons.

Growing Over the Years. UPAN's directors are the backbone of UPAN. We started out with basically three directors and have had as many as 13 at one point. We still need more.

Since UPAN is ALL VOLUNTEER and not funded, and the problems related to our prison system are vast, we have created a system of volunteer directors over specific areas.

Current Directors.

An Bradshaw - Director of Volunteers and Event Coordinator. An coordinates with guest speakers for the meetings and with Shane, etc.

Chris Moon - one of the UPAN Co-Founders and current Secretary. Chris is also a Family Facebook Group Administrator

Devin Presbrey - Director of Visiting Issues.

Deon Corkins - UPAN Newsletter Coordinator - meaning managing all the volunteers who print out and mail in newsletters to inmates without family to do so; Mail person - getting the mail from the PO Box, triaging it and scanning and sending to appropriate directors to respond to, dealing with returned mail, etc. Deon also is a Family Facebook Group Moderator.

Faye Jenkins - Director of Sex Offense Issues, and also serves on the Sex Offense Management Advisory Committee under the Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice focusing on registry issues.

Heidi Kubbe - Director of Board of Pardons & Parole Issues; Director of Commissary Issues; and some generalized issues specific to CUCF.

Karen Thompson - Director of Special Projects (mosquitoes, 2024 UPAN Holiday Project); on the UPAN MAT/SUT Committee.

Susan Sundstrom - Director of Educational Opportunity Issues; Member of the UPAN MAT/SUT Committee.

Marsha - On the Med Team as Health Educator - Marsha helps to guide people on Facebook Family Group on the steps to advocate for their loved ones and is currently researching all the county jail contact info and processes regarding medical problems.

Shane Severson - Director of Communications / Social Media / IT, Zoom, Google Chat... Facebook Family Group Admin, anything technical (and he has been part of us for the 11 years that UPAN has been in existence).

Virginia Robertson - Director of Med Team, Nurse Practitioner, retired and primary person who contacts UDC about medical concerns when inmate and family efforts have failed; member of the UPAN MAT/SUT Committee.

Maureen Parker - Med Team, Nurse Practitioner helping Virginia; on the UPAN MAT/SUT Committee.

Warren Rosenbaum - Newsletter Editor for 10 full years and counting!

Molly Prince - Co-Founder, Director, writes and gathers articles for monthly newsletter; member of the Med Team; member of the UPAN MAT/SUT Committee; and the person who attempts to field everything that does not fit the above categories; attends stakeholders and other meetings with UDC.

Directors Needed. We need a Director of Women's Issues; Director of LGBTQIA+ issues; Director of Dietary/Nutrition; Director of Phone Issues; Director of IPP Issues, and many others.

The basic qualifications for directors are a desire to advocate to improve the conditions for incarcerated in Utah; willingness to learn some basic approaches that UPAN uses in working to solve problems with UDC; willingness to learn the processes UDC requires in order for us to communicate and advocate; ability to communicate well in writing (emails) as well as verbally - this includes being respectful while being clear and assertive; willingness to be a team player and keep UPAN leadership informed of what they are doing; ask questions when in doubt; willingness to process with UPAN leadership the strong emotions that arise doing this work, particularly frustration and feeling discounted or unheard; have time to devote to this volunteer work every week (depending on the area, some are more busy than others); must be a self-starter.

Certain directors are involved in regular meetings with UDC through the monthly Stakeholder Group Meetings, quarterly advocate meetings with UDC Executive Director and his team and activities sponsored by the UDC such as the currently in process Citizen's Academy. Certain directors also attend monthly BOPP community outreach meetings with the administrative staff of the BOPP.

Please email us at utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer for any of these positions. You may also reach out to An at an.bradshaw@utahprisoneradvocate.org

UPAN is always in need of Newsletter Volunteers.

These are wonderful, generous, dedicated souls who print out and mail in newsletters to incarcerated folks who do not have family or friends in the community to do so for them. Contact Deon at:

deon.corkins@utahprisoneradvocate.org

Appreciation for UPAN Families. UPAN does its work with our wonderful directors who volunteer countless hours to the various issues and concerns brought to us by families on a daily basis. We send a sincere shout out to all the families who participate in the UPAN Family Facebook Group, sharing support and advice from their own experience with families who are newer to the prison journey. We appreciate all the families who have participated in information gathering on polls we have put on the Family Group regarding visiting and families who have answered requests for feedback on what UPAN should suggest in various areas of interest to UDC. Thank you to those people who keep us updated either on the Family Group or via emails about developments in various areas of the prisons, in various programs, both positive developments or concerns that they have learned of.

Appreciation for Prisoners. We at UPAN appreciate the input and information that we receive from incarcerated individuals about what is happening in our prisons. Sometimes we receive positive information about certain staff or programs that are making a positive difference. We share this with UDC administration, as we like to acknowledge those who are doing a good job!

More often, we hear from prisoners when things are going wrong, especially related to medical concerns and safety and security issues.

These letters are sorted and forwarded to the appropriate UPAN director for follow-up. Please know that we cannot always respond individually to every letter we receive, as we are all volunteer, doing this around our jobs, our families and community responsibilities, and our justice involved loved ones. Also know that these are all read and we contact appropriate UDC officials when we have enough information for them to look into a problem.

We need specifics to provide UDC, as they cannot research or investigate something that is a generality. An example of not being able to get help on something is when we hear that people are not receiving their mail, but we do not have anything specific like housing units and time frames, or names of recipients, etc., so we are told that all mail coming into the facility is being delivered.

A special shout out to a particular incarcerated individual, JW, who has been instrumental in gathering information for us to use in our efforts to promote the creation of a Hospice and Long-Term Care Program in USCF. And thank you to all of the individuals who have given their specific permission for us to use their information in our advocacy work!

Appreciation for UDC's Administration. UPAN has long asked for, prayed for, and worked toward an open line of communication with the administration of Utah Dept. of Corrections. This is being realized more and more over this past year with Brian Redd at the helm. His leadership and interest in improving transparency has set the tone and given permission for various administrators, directors, both wardens, and a variety of others in leadership positions in UDC to coordinate with and communicate with UPAN directors. I personally interact with dozens of administrators, wardens and deputy wardens on a weekly basis over the past months, a significant increase from what was happening prior to May of 2023.

The UDC's creation of the Stakeholder Experience Coordinator position 8 months ago was a great step forward in the connection between advocacy groups and UDC. It chose wisely in placing Esekia Afatasi (Skee) into this position. He has taken this position, is very serious about it, and is running with it. He has offered a variety of opportunities for stakeholders to gain a much better understanding of how UDC and the prison itself works, including offering the very first Citizen's Academy ever sponsored by UDC. This will be an annual opportunity for anyone interested to be able to learn more about the processes of various divisions of Utah's huge Department of Corrections. This means from the prison to the halfway houses (community correctional centers) to Adult Probation & Parole. Skee has helped

incarcerated individuals get initiatives approved to help them improve their situations.

So, not only has UPAN come a long way in 11 years – so has UDC, and that likely could fill up another article. **Deep Gratitude.** I look back at the past decade and am amazed at the progress that UPAN has made with the input and information provided by our families, inmates, parolees, other grassroots advocacy organizations, and volunteers interested in improving our prisons and criminal justice system. UPAN is growing exponentially these days and every person involved here is deeply appreciated!!!

On behalf of the UPAN directors and the many families and inmates who benefit from the work UPAN does, I want to thank everyone who has contributed in any manner to UPAN's cause. Those who have shared information with us, contributed financially, talked to or written their elected representatives and senators, helped us advocate by simply talking to their friends and neighbors about the issues we face, spoken at our meetings or at rallies, contributed articles for consideration for publication, and taken on a cause that is close to their heart. As Esekia Afatasi says,

“The teamwork makes the dream work.”

**Until 2012 or 2013, UDC restricted visiting of a married woman to a single man who was not her biological son, brother or father. It required the married woman to be accompanied by either her husband or the biological parent of the incarcerated man she was visiting. Thanks to Steve Turley, former warden of USP, former Director of the Division of Prison Operations, this rule was finally changed prior to UPAN's formation due to the advocacy of Molly Prince and her husband Lacey Alan Harris who faithfully attended each month what were called the UDC FOCUS groups at Region 3 A P & P in Salt Lake City Utah.*

“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.” — Ernest Hemingway

“As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world as in being able to remake ourselves.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh

Why did the chicken cross the road? To get away from all those “chicken crossing the road” jokes ~ History alert: When World War Two is written this way, “WW II” don't read it as “World War Eleven” ~ Seasonal alert: In Sept. & Oct., Humpty Dumpty expects to have a great fall ~ Kids don't play Hide and Seek much because good players are hard to find ~ What do cows do on date night? Go to the moo-vies ~ What has four wheels and flies? A garbage truck.

A sense of humor helps you through trying times. Without it, you can be upset. With it, you are cool! Ed.

Chief Newsletter Editor: Molly Prince, LCSW

Detail Newsletter Editor: Warren Rosenbaum (aka Ed.)

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network Contact Info

Our Contact Information:

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network
P. O. Box 464, Draper, UT 84020

Website: UtahPrisonerAdvocate.org

Email: 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