



UPAN Newsletter Volume 12 Number 4 | **APRIL 2025**
“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

* * * * *

Men’s Reentry Support – Measles Concerns – Nutritional Concerns – BOPP Ends Smart Scheduling – IPP Release Locations – New Release-Day Procedures – Medicaid Info – Captain Your Story – Citizen’s Academy Sign-up – SOLID Graduation – Hustle 2.0 Changes Lives – United Way 2-1-1 Free Help Social Service Orgs – Med Info Release Rules – UPAN Service Award to “Skee”– Mark Hugentobler’s Freedom Scholars Academy

* * * * *

Next Meeting: Monday April 14, 2025 6:30- 8:30 p.m. Guest Speaker: **Sam Arungwa, PhD**, Director for Prevention Science here in Utah And Co-Chair for PRWG, National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
Join all meetings at <https://bit.ly/UPAN-Meet>

Following Meetings: Monday May 12, 2025 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Guest Speaker **Channae Haller** of Justice By Objectives.
This will be an IN PERSON meeting at 141 East, 5600 South Suite 300 Murray Utah 84107 and also live on Zoom.

Meeting Monday June 9, 2025 zoom meeting: Mark Hugentobler speaking on the Freedom Scholars Academy

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
» Men’s Reentry Support Group meetings	Pgs. 1-2
» UDC Measles Concerns Under Observation by Molly Prince, LCSW	Page 2
» Nutritional Concerns by Molly Prince LCSW	Page 2
» BOPP Ends Smart Scheduling by Molly Prince LCSW	Pgs. 2-3
» IPP Release Locations by Molly Prince, LCSW	Page 3
» New Release-Day Procedures by Molly Prince, LCSW	Page 3
» Medicaid Info explained to UPAN’s Molly Prince, LCSW by Dr. Wisner of DHHS	Pgs. 3-4
» Captain Your Story by Amy Chandler	Page 4
» Citizen’s Academy Class Notification , learn a deeper understanding of UDC ops by Molly Prince LCSW	Pgs. 4-5
» SOLID Graduation , Successful Offenders Learning Individual Development 1 st Graduation Ceremony	Pgs. 5-6
» Hustle 2.0 Changes Lives – Iron County Jail sets standard for Behavioral Changes by Molly Prince LCSW	Pgs. 6-7
» United Way 2-1-1 – Free Social Service Organizations – Help when needed by Susan Sundstrom	Pgs. 7-8
» Medical Info Release Rules – What to Know by Michelle Williams, FNP	Page 8
» UPAN Service Award to Esekia "Skee" Afatasi by Shane Seversen	Pgs. 8-9
» All My Friends Are Felons Author, Mark Hugentobler’s new endeavor – Freedom Scholars Academy	Pgs. 9-10
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.

USARA & UDC Start Re-Entry Support Group for Male Parolees April 8, 2025

The Utah Dept. of Corrections, in collaboration with Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA) is launching a Re-Entry Support Group dedicated to supporting men re-entering the community after release on their journey to successful reintegration. **WHEN:** Every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. beginning April 8, 2025

WHERE: USARA, 180 East, 2100 South, Suite 100, Salt Lake City, UT 84115 **WHY:** ▪ Supportive Community: Connect with others who understand your experiences. ▪ Resource Sharing: Access to valuable resources to aid your re-entry journey. ▪ Safe Space: Engage in a non-judgmental, confidential environment. ▪

Opportunity: Build a strong support network and empower each other toward lasting success.

USARA is a nonprofit org dedicated to supporting individuals and families in recovery from substance use

disorders. Learn more at USARA – Utah Recovers at <https://www.utahrecovers.org> **Contact:** Ann Coburn SUDC, Healthcare Program Coordinator, Re-Entry & Rehabilitation, UDC, acoburn@utah.gov 801-522-7868

UDC Correctional Health Services Looking at 2025 Measles Outbreak in US

By Molly Prince, LCSW taken from Information Sheet Provided by UDC in March 2025

Correctional Health Services is following the 2025 Measles Outbreak in the United States and is pro-actively planning to be able to provide vaccines to those individuals who need and want them.

As of March 7, 2025 the CDC issued a health alert about Measles cases reported in Texas, New Mexico, Alaska, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York City, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington. Texas has the biggest number of cases. As of March 17, 2025, there were no reported cases in Utah. However, it seems to be popping up around the country, so CHS wants to be prepared.

Measles, also known as Rubeola, a highly contagious virus, is very dangerous and can cause death.

Measles is transmitted by direct contact with infectious droplets or by airborne spread when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Measles virus can remain as infections in the air and on surfaces for up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves the area.

Infected people are contagious from 4 days before the rash starts until 4 days after it has shown up.

Symptoms generally appear within 7 – 14 days after infection.

- Symptoms in the first few days include fever that spikes, cough, runny nose, and red or watery eyes.
- 2 – 3 days after the first symptoms very tiny white spots appear in the mouth. These are called Koplik spots.
- 3 – 5 days after the first symptoms, the Measles rash appears. It usually begins as flat red spots on the face at the hairline. Then they spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. When the rash appears, a person's fever might spike to over 104 degrees.

CHS is reaching out to people who might benefit from a measles vaccine in both prisons. Dr. Bank, of DHHS explained to us in a Stakeholder Meeting on March 18th that Medical has been reaching out to incarcerated people who might be candidates for a measles shot or booster. If someone has never had a shot and Medical has not reached out to them, please contact medical. Correctional Health Services is working on obtaining vaccines to provide to at-risk individuals identified if those persons want the vaccine.

UPAN Attempts to Address Nutritional Concerns

By Molly Prince, LCSW

In response to ongoing concerns about the quality, quantity, and nutritional value of the meals served in USCF and CUCF, UPAN has again asked questions.

This time, our questions have been heard and on March 18, 2025, at the monthly Stakeholder Advocate Meeting facilitated by Esekia Afatasi, Stakeholder Experience Coordinator for UDC, we were able to have some time to talk with the dietitian, lieutenant over culinary in USCF, and culinary manager. This is another first in UPAN's 11-year history in advocacy.

What we did learn is that there is software that menus are assessed through called Nutritionist Pro.

It was also shared with us that the actual menus are being slightly revised here and there in order for some items to be made from scratch, such as rolls and cookies

and cakes, rather than using pre-packaged items that contain more sugar and salt than home-made. However, the menus the prisons are using have not been fully revised from before COVID.

We also were advised that if someone receives food or milk that is unfit for consumption they should return it for a replacement. This will also help those in charge of the kitchens become aware of it and they can check their supplies. They cannot correct what they are not made aware of.

Due to the scope of our questions and concerns reported by incarcerated and families, we will have another meeting dedicated specifically to these concerns in April. We will keep families posted on the Family Facebook Group and provide updates in upcoming newsletters.

Board of Pardons & Parole Ends Smart Scheduling

This information was shared at our monthly advocate outreach committee meeting with the Board of Pardons & Parole.

“Smart Scheduling” was a process that began during the pandemic and continued through March 2024 allowing the Board flexibility with scheduling hearings at a more realistic time. Scheduling Review is the process that

occurs in the first six months of incarceration and includes the tentative date for the Original Hearing.

As of March 14, 2025, the Board of Pardons and Parole will no longer "Smart Schedule" Original Hearings for

individuals who were given a tentative date before April 2024 during the Scheduling Review process.

This means that if you currently have a tentative month and year for an Original Hearing, you can expect to see the Board at that time. As a result, there may be an increase in Rehearings that align more closely with sentencing guidelines. If your Original Hearing date has

already been "Smart Scheduled"—meaning it was moved to a date closer to your sentencing guideline—you will keep that new date.

If you have questions, families can reach out to bopinfo@utah.gov with specific questions or call 801-261-6464. Mailing address: Board of Pardons & Parole 448 East Winchester, Suite 300, Murray, Utah 84107

Where Do State Inmates Housed in IPP Release? by Molly Prince, LCSW

Some families have asked where and how people are released who are in the custody of the State but are housed in Inmate Placement Program County Jails. UDC's Lt. Werrett and Captain Maw answered these questions and gave a brief overview of this process.

Very few state inmates release from county jails these days. According to Lt. Werrett, around 99% of releases from the Utah prison system are done at Utah State Correctional Facility in Salt Lake City.

How it works. If someone is brought to USCF from an outlying county a day or two before being released, they will be housed in the Fremont building in temporary housing. If this is the case, the individual typically cannot make phone calls because they do not have their phone account set up at USCF and they would not have anyone on their approved prison phone list if they were housed in a county jail. The rare exception would be if the person had been recently housed in USCF or CUCF.

However, we are told that most people are brought from the county jails the day of release and processed out as they arrive.

For those that do release from a county jail, the release from the jail to the community must be approved and agreed upon by the County Sheriff's Jail Commander and UDC's IPP. One of the criteria for someone to release directly from a jail is that they will be living in that same county.

Please note that they will not receive the same information and support as someone releasing through USCF receives on release day. Logistics for picking the releasing individual up from the jail are arranged well in advance with their family.

Some counties will not allow any state inmates to be released from their facility, so they will be transported back to USCF for release.

New Release Day Procedures Began March 18, 2025 By Molly Prince, LCSW

It was announced on March 11, 2025 that changes in the Release Day procedures would begin on March 18, 2025, taking the Release Day Fair outside of the prison gates.

The Release Day Fair was moved as of March 18 from the Visiting building to the Release Fair/Training Room area outside the gates. The new location is in the old Daycare Building on the west end of Law Enforcement Bureau building. This building is on your right as you drive in. The building and parking lot are before you get to the Vehicle Direction Station (check-in entrance gate). For further reference, it is the same parking lot used when you pick up property at USCF.

Releasing individuals are now escorted through their process for release inside the prison. Case Managers/Workers, Inmate Accounting, Pharmacy, and Records will have tables set up to help incarcerated people complete the checkout process.

UPAN wants to congratulate all releasing individuals on their accomplishments, We wish you the best on the new leg of your journeys!

Policies On Use of Medicaid for Incarcerated Patient Health and Mental Health Care

In case you were wondering.... The following was explained to UPAN's Molly Prince, LCSW by Dr. Wisner of DHHS regarding confusion around what Medicaid will currently cover for patients in the custody of a prison or jail.

Generally, Medicaid does not cover healthcare services for incarcerated individuals except in specific circumstances.

They are then transported out in a van through the Vehicle Screening Point at the Vehicle Direction Station and dropped off at the Release Fair Building. They will attend the Release Fair, reunite with their families / support systems, and leave the prison grounds with their support systems.

Families picking up the releasing person will receive an email stating the pick-up date and time. We were informed that the Case Manager will send an email to the person who will be picking up the releasing individual. The email will include the specifics about the date and time to be at USCF to pick up their loved one who is releasing. The incarcerated person will provide the Case Manager with that information.

If you have further questions, contact Lt. Brendie Werrett bknorr@utah.gov or Case Manager @Adam Yorgason (UDC)

One key exception is inpatient hospital care. Under federal Medicaid rules, an incarcerated individual may be eligible for Medicaid coverage if they require inpatient

treatment in a medical institution for more than 24 hours. This applies to hospitals, psychiatric facilities, and other approved inpatient care settings.

Medicaid can cover the cost of inpatient services only in these limited cases.

All other healthcare services provided within the correctional facility remain the responsibility of the correctional institution. The purpose of this exception is to ensure that individuals with serious medical conditions receive necessary hospital-level care without disruption.

The incarcerated individual must still qualify for Medicaid.

Meaning, whatever qualification requirements the Medicaid office performs or requires still applies to incarcerated individuals. This means that incarcerated patients may still not qualify for Medicaid support if hospitalized for a length of time if they do not meet the Medicaid criteria.

For Reference: The provision in federal law that allows Medicaid to cover inpatient services for incarcerated individuals is found in 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(a)(29)(A) (Section 1905(a)(A) of the Social Security Act). This statute states that Medicaid may cover services provided to an inmate only when they are admitted as an inpatient in a medical institution for at least 24 hours.

Additionally, 42 C.F.R. § 435.1010 clarifies that for the purpose of Medicaid only, individuals are not considered inmates of a public institution when they are patients in a medical institution. This allows them to be eligible for Medicaid during the period of inpatient care.

This means that while routine medical care within correctional facilities is not covered, and outpatient care is not covered, Medicaid can reimburse for inpatient hospitalizations, including psychiatric care, if the inmate meets the eligibility requirements.

A Message to UPAN Families from Amy Chandler of Captain Your Story

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

Captain Your Story is taught in both Utah Prisons and has had a profound impact on hundreds of incarcerated individuals who have participated in it over the past year. It did not get additional funding from the Utah Legislature this year due to Utah's budget cuts. My Story Matters is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

We want to express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support of Captain Your Story and the work we are doing throughout the prison system. Your belief in our mission has meant everything to us.

Over the last year we have been able to work with over 700 residents of both CUCF and USCF through Captain Your Story. We have launched parenting classes, financial classes, leadership classes, and more guide certification courses. We have worked with 114 family members of those incarcerated to get these valuable tools into their hands. We are also deeply committed to supporting individuals transitioning out of corrections. We are building a network of resources to ensure they can continue the path to achieving the vision they are creating.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, the funding we had hoped for was ultimately cut. While this is a

setback, we are not giving up. We are actively working on a Plan B, determined to find new solutions to ensure this critical work continues. The momentum we have built is too important to stop now.

Now, more than ever, we need our community to stand with us. Donations and key corporate partnerships are vital to bridging this gap, sustaining our impact, and expanding our programs where they are needed most. If you are able, please consider donating or connecting us with individuals and companies who can help. You can reach out to support@mystorymatters.org to learn more about how to help.

Together, we can rise to the challenge and build a brighter, safer future. Thank you for your continued support—we are committed to making this work happen, no matter what.

“Your past will come into perspective as you claim and create your future!” Amy Chandler

2025 UDC Citizen’s Academy Application Period Open March – May By Molly Prince, LCSW

The 2nd Annual Utah Dept of Corrections’ 10-week Citizen’s Academy will be held August to October, 2025.

UDC is currently accepting applications from those interested in attending. It is designed to increase the public’s knowledge and understanding of the various divisions within the Utah Dept. of Corrections. The instruction will cover a variety of topics each week, including facility tours, lectures, and hands-on training.

Six (6) UPAN Directors participated in the Inaugural Citizen’s Academy in 2024. We experienced 3 hours of classroom presentations and training per week, in the evening. In addition, we met on 3 different Saturdays to

tour USCF, community correctional centers, and to experience what the job of a probation / parole agent is like. All of us who took the Academy graduated from it with a deeper understanding into the operations of the huge Dept. of Corrections in Utah, and with insight into different divisions of the prison system and why some policies are the way they are. In addition to what is listed above, other topics include an overview of UDC with presentations from a wide variety of Divisions; Release/Re-Entry Simulation; Critical Incidents and Response; Rehabilitation and Educational Programs; Emergency Response; Field Scenarios, and Ride Alongs. **Limited openings are available.** Participants

must be at least 18 years old and able to pass a criminal back-ground check. Contact esekiaafatasi@utah.gov for more info and/or application submissions.

Application link is:
<chromeextension://efaidnbmninnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://corrections.utah.gov/.../Citizens-Academy...>



It does not matter if you are part of an advocacy group or if you have an incarcerated loved one. People from all walks of life attend. In the 2024 Academy we had a total of 9 advocates from three different advocacy organizations (some with incarcerated family members), two peer support specialists, two spouses of A P & P agents, the founder and director of My Story Matters, prison volunteers, a representative from a community agency who partners with the prison; and a “regular citizen” never before involved with the criminal justice system. It was a great opportunity to get to know each other from different perspectives and get to know the Chiefs, Division Directors, and staff members of UDC.

1st S.O.L.I.D. Graduation Ceremony held March 20, 2025 By Molly Prince, LCSW

The very first Graduation Ceremony for the Successful Offenders Learning Individual Development (SOLID) Program was held on Thursday, March 20, 2025 in the Bear Gym. UPAN’s Molly Prince was fortunate enough to be invited to attend this inaugural ceremony along with other advocates (Roni and Paige) and stakeholders including Peer Support Specialist Bryan Nielson; Amy of Captain My Story and Susi and Simi of PIK2AR KAVA Talks who facilitate programs within S.O.L.I.D.

101 graduates of the program were honored in a ceremony that included a variety of speakers and performances of S.O.L.I.D. participants and graduates. The talent in those who are part of S.O.L.I.D. was showcased by these speakers and performers. The master of ceremony “**London**” set the tone that reflected the serious accomplishments of all of these individuals who graduated, interspersed with humor and respect.

The National Anthem was performed with grace and beautiful voices by graduates **James Ferguson** and **Kadin Lightel**, along with S.O.L.I.D. members **Dennis Archuleta** and **Joel Badger**.

The Valedictorian Speech was offered by graduate **Matthew Mabey** with his motivating speech entitled “*Pathways to Hope, Purpose, and Success.*”

A moving and heartfelt talk entitled “Purpose” was shared by Juvenile Justice Youth Services Outreach representative and graduate, **Jonathan Hunt**, outlining the journey into finding one’s own purpose.

Jacob Selin’s powerful **Poetry Performance** of his poignant and inspiring poem, “*Recovery*” brought several of us to tears as we witnessed his powerful delivery of the raw and honest verses depicting the journey and deep work to move from darkness and hopelessness into recovery, self-awareness, and light.

S.O.L.I.D. Program Director Fonua Kimoana shared the history of the program developed by an inspired group of incarcerated residents who were supported by **UDC administration** and **Captain Karic, Lt. Heaps**, and other staff to become a reality a year ago. Fonua acknowledged the realization of the dream that he, **Alfredo “Fredo” Lolani, Shaine Smith, Bryan “Kofi” Gbedemah, and Zachariah Martindale** have worked hard to realize as this program has grown and evolved over this past year. His talk helped to illustrate the commitment that these individuals have made to create a program that encourages and allows individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together in an environment of recovery and growth. He expressed appreciation for the UDC administrators, wardens, and staff who believed in this program from the beginning and have helped to facilitate its creation, and supported S.O.L.I.D. as it has matured, reaching this milestone.

Bear 2 Captain Karic gave a speech about his experience with this unique program which was developed, implemented, and run by residents who created it, putting their vision into reality. He acknowledged that there have been challenges, but together, S.O.L.I.D. directors and participants have met them and resolved them. Captain Karic has been an advocate for this program from the beginning and there is deep appreciation for him.

Former S.O.L.I.D. Lt. Heaps attended this graduation and celebrated those who have made it happen. He shared his own experience in being involved from the beginning. It was an honor for him to attend and acknowledge all of their accomplishments. It sounded as if being part of S.O.L.I.D. was one of the highlights of his career with corrections.

Utah Senator **Derrin Owens** has been a champion of helping to get funding for the Utah Department of

Corrections to expand and improve services and programs, including S.O.L.I.D. He was honored at this ceremony with a shadowbox collage of items from UDC showing appreciation for all of his efforts. This was given to him by Executive Director **Jared Garcia**, who also spoke a few words at the graduation.

To close the event, a **Musical Performance** was given by the band made up of S.O.L.I.D. residents - **Joel Badger, George Glines, Khamtanth Kommanivong, Zachary Martindale, and Gabriel Valle**. They sang a lively rendition of “*Believer*” (Imagine Dragons). It was a fitting song for the occasion!

“I hope you always have the courage to keep growing with every beat and breath no matter how many times the world breaks your heart.” Haneen

Hustle 2.0 and Sgt. Michelle Walker in Iron County Jail is a Life Changing Combination

Summarized by Molly Prince, LCSW

This info adapted from summary entitled “Iron County Jail Leads the Way in Transformational Programming.” Link Below

When it comes to high-impact programming that changes behavior, Iron County Jail in Utah is setting the standard. Since embracing Hustle 2.0, their commitment has paid off—both for the facility and the incarcerated individuals who participate.

According to **Sergeant Michelle Walker**, who is the Program Coordinator at the jail, *“Hustle 2.0 is also incredibly practical for staff. It’s an in-cell, self-paced, low-lift solution that reduces misconduct and shifts mindsets.”*

Utah’s Iron County Jail is considered a model for other facilities in utilizing Hustle 2.0 despite challenges of programming in a jail. Iron County Jail has been running Hustle 2.0 since 2021 and, despite being a small jail, has issued 287 graduation certificates to Hustle’s participants.

Sergeant Walker has been instrumental in making Hustle 2.0 a success at Iron County. She explains how the use of Hustle 2.0 has become a valuable asset for this facility. *“With our limited classroom space, traditional programming is hard to offer at scale, but Hustle 2.0 keeps inmates busy in-cell. The inmates love Hustle 2.0. It’s relatable, interactive, and keeps them engaged. It gets them actively thinking and expressing, rather than just sitting and listening, unlike traditional programs that rely on lectures. This is what leads to lasting behavioral changes.”*

Walker goes on to say, *“Hustle 2.0 is a game changer ... If you want a high-impact, low-staff burden program that changes behavior, this is it.”*

Overall Benefits to Everyone. Graduates with longer stays have even completed Hustle 2.0’s “University Collection” and additionally earned a certificate from Southern Utah University’s MBA program, and now have the opportunity to turn their Hustle 2.0 coursework into three college credits. Iron County’s results speak for

This event was designed, coordinated, and facilitated by S.O.L.I.D. The ushers, photographer, videographer, were all members of the S.O.L.I.D. community. Two former S.O.L.I.D. community members who paroled recently returned to participate in this graduation ceremony. It was truly inspiring to feel the positive energy and witness this celebration of accomplishment!

The knowledge, intelligence, talents, abilities, and skills of participants were clearly evident during this event. The S.O.L.I.D. program clearly helps individuals discover - or re-discover - themselves and meet their potential.

themselves—less misconduct, more accountability, and stronger reentry preparation.

Sheriff Ken Carpenter has fostered a forward-thinking, rehabilitation-focused approach that has allowed Hustle 2.0 to thrive at Iron County. His support has been crucial in ensuring that incarcerated individuals have access to tools that help them transform their thinking, their behavior, and their futures.

Next-Level Coaching, Connection, and Transformational Conversations. On Feb. 3, 2025, Hustle 2.0 held an exclusive, high-energy volunteer event at Iron County Jail, bringing together dedicated participants, a group of top business and community leaders, and the Hustle 2.0 team for an unforgettable day of employment readiness, decision-making coaching, and reentry preparation. The event reinforced what Iron County staff already see daily—Hustle 2.0 keeps people engaged, accountable, and actively transforming their lives.

Participants and volunteers engaged in Hustle 2.0’s Transform Your Hustle curriculum, which covers:

- Employment readiness—how to secure and keep a job
- Decision-making and boundaries—key strategies for staying out of trouble
- Healthy relationships—understanding who belongs in your circle
- Reentry preparation—planning for success beyond incarceration

These small group discussions were electric. Participants were coached on real-world challenges, practiced networking skills with business leaders, and received direct feedback on their goals and next steps.

SUU Graduation, A Celebration to Remember. At the end of the February 5th event, participants received their certificates of completion in a powerful graduation ceremony. Each participant shook hands with Sergeant Walker and Tyler Stillman, the Director of Southern Utah University’s entrepreneurship program, marking a moment of achievement, recognition, and pride.

To reinforce the importance of positive peer connections, participants and volunteers also wrote affirming messages to one another, offering encouragement, wisdom, and support for the road ahead.

The volunteers were left stunned by the impact of the program. Director Stillman said, *"The energy, the honesty, the commitment—Hustle 2.0 is delivering real change in a way that far exceeds anything we expected. Southern Utah University is proud to partner with Hustle 2.0."*

A standing ovation. A most powerful moment came when program participants gave Sergeant Walker a standing ovation—an unheard-of display of gratitude in a jail setting. The incarcerated students spoke openly about how her leadership has changed their lives: *"I've never had someone in a uniform believe in me like this." "Sergeant Walker makes me feel like I actually have a future. She doesn't just talk about change—she gives us the tools to make it happen."*

What Participants are Saying: "Since I've signed up for this program, I've been drug-free and violation-free! This program has united Honey Badgers nationwide! It has given me an outlet to look at myself in the mirror and

demand change. And most importantly, it has shown me that I'm not alone!" -- Vernon

Dallas stated, "It's like I found a new me that I never knew existed. This program has got me out of my comfort zone, down to tears and asking for forgiveness, with a new light and hope for my future. I've noticed so much change in my attitude, emotions, and behavior towards everyday circumstances, to where my staff and family give me positive feedback... Thank you so much for the support and inspiring me to go further."

Other Jails in Utah could benefit from Hustle 2.0. According to Hustle 2.0, it rewards only the top 1% of its correctional partners with exclusive events like this. That means the most committed, forward-thinking facilities—the ones that truly invest in transformation—get access to business leaders, networking opportunities, and next-level programming.

UPAN hopes that other county jails in Utah will commit to positive culture change and helping incarcerated individuals transform their lives and invest in more meaningful programs including Hustle 2.0. UPAN would love to see more IPP Jails utilizing this program!

https://www.hustle20.com/?utm_medium=email&

***"The calmer you are, the clearer you think.
Let your decisions come from a place of peace, not from reaction." Pramod Mohapatra***

March UPAN Meeting: United Way 2-1-1 Utah Resource Network By Susan Sundstrom

Oasis Perez, from 211 Utah presented to the UPAN monthly family support group meeting on March 10, 2025. She is the Partnership and Engagement Manager of 2-1-1 Utah. Oasis is a dedicated professional with expertise in trauma-informed care, healthcare, and advocacy. She holds a bachelor's degree in Gender Studies with a minor in Ethnic Studies, giving her a deep understanding of social justice issues, systemic inequality, and culturally competent care. In her role at 211, Oasis focuses on building meaningful relationships with organizations to empower marginalized communities.

This was a valuable opportunity for families, advocates, and supporters to learn how to better navigate and utilize available resources during difficult times.

211 Utah is a partnership of a variety of social service organizations supported and run by the United Way of Utah. They act as a clearing house to connect people with other organizations and providers for services, including housing, healthcare, employment, food, utilities, and other services. Oasis Perez identified that throughout Utah this clearinghouse provides up to 10,000 services through 3,000 organizations through one centralized phone number.

They can even provide rides to appointments on a limited basis.

211 is more than a hotline. The 211 Team is made up of compassionate, trained information specialists and

outreach coordinators who identify caller needs, assess them for eligibility for the appropriate services, and provide them with the appropriate resources. They offer personalized services. Service navigators connect clients directly to an organization and help clients navigate systems quickly.

The services of 211 are free, confidential, and available in multiple languages. They ask a series of questions to better understand what community resources might meet your needs. They also schedule follow-up calls to ensure you have received the assistance you were seeking.

You can search their web page by zip code for whatever help you need and many options will be presented to you. The telephone on-line representative can also do the search for you.

211 logged 277,074 interactions in 2024. This included 35,095 calls, 214 chats, 127,265 client searches on the 211 app, 431 emails, 108,646 web searches, 514 texts, among other things.

The most common referral categories include clients seeking transportation, housing, food / meals, healthcare, utility assistance, and clothing or personal and household items, according to Oasis.

211 Ride United Program is a partnership between United Way Worldwide, Lyft, and 211 Utah that provides

Utahns who otherwise do not have resources for one-time transportation needs along the Wasatch front. This is short term use, and not a recurring service. Destinations eligible for this service include medical appointments, employment related, food access, financial services, and educational destinations. Funding for this program is limited and restricted to 1 round trip journey per household per week. In addition, 211 has information on alternative transportation options, including discounts for bus passes, and senior ride

programs. 211 is a valuable service for families of justice involved individuals, as well as those returning to the community after incarceration. To access their services, you can call them at 1-888-826-9790, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; you can text at 801-845-2211; e-mail them at 211ut.uw.org; go to their app on-line; do an on-line chat at 211utah.org; or be seen in their office in person. [211 is a non-emergency community helpline. Ed.]

UDC's Medical Release of Information – What You Need to Know By Michelle Williams, FNP

The Utah Dept. of Corrections cannot give out information on an incarcerated person's health status without their Medical Release of Information Form being completed by the incarcerated person naming a person they designate for Correctional Health Services (CHS) to be able to talk to regarding medical information.

This process allows incarcerated individuals to assign a person of contact who can obtain medical updates without having to request records.

Initial Set Up. Each incarcerated person is supposed to be offered this form at intake, when they process into the prison system. If they completed the form, a family member can confirm it has been filed by calling the Family Medical Line at 801-522-7293.

After Intake. If the incarcerated person did not complete this upon intake, or if it is not on file with CHS, they need to request a Medical Release of Information Form from their Case Manager. The Case Manager then is supposed to coordinate with a notary and meet with the incarcerated person for the signature. The Case Manager then is the person who files the form with Correctional Health Services to make sure it is in the patient record. The inmate can also request an OMR (Offender Management Review) meeting in which to sign it in front of a notary. If this is the case, it is still the Case Manager's responsibility to get it to CHS for uploading into the patient records.

Grant or Deny. The Case Managers do not have access to medical information and cannot speak to families regarding their loved ones' medical situation.

There are some safety rules against disclosing certain situations, including a scheduled procedure or surgery that occurs away from the prison.

Good to Know.

- ▶ Once in place, the Medical Release of Information is permanent for the duration of their current prison stay, unless the incarcerated person revokes it in writing.
- ▶ It is also sometimes called a limited power of attorney. But the prison staff should recognize it as Medical Release of Information.
- ▶ The Release can only list one person that the inmate wishes to allow on this release.
- ▶ The inmate's signature must be notarized.

What happens if it isn't on file? If a family member calls the Family Medical Line and learns that the Medical Release of Information is not in their loved one's medical file, then they should contact the Case Manager for assistance. Case managers' emails can be found on the UDC website: corrections.utah.gov under the Offender Search button.

If families encounter difficulty with this process, please feel free to reach out to the UPAN Med Team at medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org *Doing this NOW will avoid problems in the future.*

Celebration of Partnership and Service By Shane Severson, UPAN Director of Communications

On March 6, 2025, as part of the Quarterly UDC Family Orientation held at the Fred House Training Academy in Draper, UPAN presented **Esekia "Skee" Afatasi** with UPAN's first annual "Dream Maker of 2024" Award! 🏆

As UDC's first Stakeholder Experience Coordinator, Skee has truly embodied his personal motto - "TEAMWORK Makes the Dream Work" - by creating unprecedented bridges between UDC and both incarcerated and community stakeholders during his first year.

Note: Stakeholders include those in the care and custody of UDC, their families and support systems, advocates, UDC staff and their families, community organizations serving justice involved persons, and more when it comes to Utah Dept. of Corrections.

Skee's accomplishments speak volumes about his character and commitment. In less than one year, Skee

accomplished the following (among other things we probably do not even know about) to help foster understanding and build relationships between UDC and stakeholders:

- Implemented and attended every session of Utah's first-ever UDC Citizens Academy, creating unprecedented opportunities for advocates and citizens to understand correctional operations.
- Established and supported the Incarcerated Individual Advisory Committee (IIAC) for both men's and women's units, ensuring their voices are heard.

- Coordinated numerous facility tours, helping demystify UDC operations for family members and community stakeholders.
- He led stakeholder meetings with remarkable skill, ensuring productive dialogue between advocates, other interest groups and UDC administration.
- Consistent demonstration of his exceptional responsiveness and commitment to addressing stakeholder concerns at all levels.
- Skee has worked beyond regular hours, often late into evenings, to ensure stakeholder inclusion and participation.

The surprise presentation was made by UPAN Directors **Molly Prince, An Bradshaw, and Shane Severson**. Skee was completely surprised and responded with his characteristic humility, grace, and humor.

UPAN was given an information table at the Family Orientation for the first time ever. We're also grateful that UDC provided UPAN with our first-ever table at the orientation, allowing us to directly connect with new families navigating the system. We shared information about UPAN, and offered newsletters from the first three months of 2025. This represents a significant step forward in our collaborative relationship!

Valuable face time with new Executive Director Jared Garcia. We talked with the new director, who reaffirmed his commitment to continuing strong partnerships with UPAN and other advocacy groups.

Freedom Scholars Academy / Captain Your Story Lifestyle

A Letter from Mark Hugentobler to Incarcerated Folks and Families on His Latest Endeavor

Hello all, This is Mark Hugentobler. Many of you may remember me as the author of "All My Friends are Felons" and then the voice of the "All My Friends are Felons" podcast. Being in this space for over 15 years, Molly asked me to write a quick note and let you know our newest adventure.

For some time, I and a felon friend have entertained the possibility of creating a transitional housing opportunity for individuals leaving prison. We all know the challenges they face, a place that will accept them, dealing with a driver's license and identification, transportation and assimilation, and of course finding employment. These obstacles as well as the problem of just going back to their former "street life" have led to the horrendous recidivism rates we face as a state. Thankfully the new leadership in the Utah Department of Corrections has helped the "ship" make a 180-degree turn and we are finally headed in the right direction even if the progress is slow.

Many of you know that for some time I have been involved with the Captain Your Story (CYS) lifestyle model. (MyStoryMatters.org) In addition to being the "Justice Involved Director" for that nonprofit, I have the opportunity to go into the prison in Gunnison every Monday and guide upwards of 60 men in this life directing and life changing model. The results have

Deputy Executive Directors at UDC. We also spoke with **Mike Schoenfeld**, who has been promoted from Law Enforcement Bureau Chief to Deputy Executive Director (taking Director Garcia's former position). We learned that **Spencer Turley** and **Maria Shirey** have also been promoted to Deputy Executive Directors, from their former positions as assistant deputy directors, joining **Rebecca Brown, LCSW**, in the executive leadership team. Though we weren't able to connect with all of them during the event, we wish them all congratulations.

Special thanks to Lt. Brendie Werrett for organizing this successful event, **Liam Truchard**, UDC Information Specialist for managing the livestream, and all the UDC staff and Utah Board of Pardons and Parole presenters who shared valuable information with families. Feedback from a few families indicated that they were pleased that they attended, despite the bad weather, and learned a lot that they had not known prior to this orientation.

Missed the event? Watch the recording at: <https://www.youtube.com/live/ancqe0GQkw4>

This event truly exemplified what's possible when corrections professionals and advocacy groups work together toward better outcomes for incarcerated individuals and their families. Here's to continued partnership and progress!

been amazing both with the individuals inside the prison as well as for those who have learned to live the lifestyle and paroled. Currently, our outcomes for those men and women are an amazing 98% success. Only 2% of our parolees have returned to prison.

In light of the course correction the UDOC is making, and our success with CYS, we wanted to create an opportunity for these people that would create a pathway of assimilation back into society in which we could guide them through the nightmare that is often release-from-prison. Thus Freedom Scholars Academy was born.

Freedom Scholars Academy (FSA) is a 1-year men's transition program in which each member, upon being released from prison or even coming in off the streets, lives with others who are learning, living, and leveraging the Captain Your Story tools in their lives. At the academy, individuals will be directed and supported to obtain their drivers license, and other necessary paperwork, etc. including making connections with the various government agencies that are in place to support them. Through the first 9 months, they will participate in the Captain Your Story curriculum as well as be given direction in any necessary secondary education needs. They will also receive instruction and guidance in:

-- **Access** - Freedom Scholars Academy works to address the full spectrum of hierarchal needs including

physical and mental health, childcare, and legal services among others. Each participant receives a thorough needs assessment and help navigating the often-complex systems necessary to access benefits to programs such as Voc Rehab, DWS, TAM Medicaid, insurance, and access to other non-profit programs.

-- **CYS Lifestyle** - The most critical and effective part of the FSA curriculum will be the use of the Captain Your Story tools, taught over the 9 months of their stay at The Academy that will be a guide to the rest of their lives.

- They will learn how to create a vision of what they truly want and who they want to be.

- They will learn to focus on the things in their lives they can control and address those things with intention.

- They will learn the value of community and will learn tools to identify and attract people to them who are willing to support them in their sobriety and their journey to become [their true selves]. Likewise they will learn how to address those who do not provide that support.

- They will learn to create their own personal identity and learn to develop the traits and attributes of that person, using their vision, beliefs, and actions.

- They will learn to face their challenges with courage and a sense of purpose realizing that growth is hard, that if they choose the correct hard, the outcomes will be better.

- They will learn to be well rounded and balanced taking care of the little things that strengthen the big things.

- And finally, they will realize that they are the authors of their story. Just as they chose their way into their current lives and addictions, they have the power to choose their way out.

-- **Education** - In partnership with Adult Education, Freedom Scholars Academy participants will be assessed to identify any needed improvements related to basic literacy, and numeracy at the secondary education level. Participants may also receive assistance with enrolling in post-secondary education and vocational training.

In addition, Freedom Scholars Academy will provide in-depth financial education, teaching lifelong financial principles. We will guide participants in improving

Mark Hugentobler (435) 851-1628 Freedom Scholars Academy, Box 391, Ephraim, UT 84627

Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh

Why is everyone so tired on April 1? Because they've just finished a long, 31-day March ~ Last month, looking forward, we learned the following: Can February March? No, but April May ~ This month we look at the calendar backward: July asked June, May April March in February and January. Yes, and also December and November. But not in October nor September said August ~ Dear Algebra, Please stop asking for us to find your X. He's not coming back and don't ask Y.

When challenges occur, be flexible & optimistic. Don't let an April shower prevent your May flower. Be cool. 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: contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org
Facebook: [Facebook.com/Utah Prisoner](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.

communication skills, parenting skills, and other interpersonal skills necessary for a successful life.

-- **Employment** - We all know that a criminal background significantly impacts a person's lifetime earnings and represents obstacles that make self-sufficiency seemingly impossible. Freedom Scholars Academy workforce readiness programs will provide immediate Social Enterprise opportunities providing opportunity to teach the value of paying your way, providing needed opportunity for skill development preparatory to successfully entering the job market and society.

-- **Housing** - Formerly incarcerated individuals are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public. Upon successful completion of Freedom Scholars Academy participants will be placed in our own transitional sober-living homes. These supervised alcohol/substance-free properties will provide a safe, stable living environment. Structure, staff and peer-driven accountability inspires personal responsibility, restores self-esteem, and eliminates isolation by creating a community atmosphere with the ultimate goal of independent living.

-- **Assimilation** - Upon completion of FSA, our participants will start life with both feet on the ground, an occupation, a quiver of skills and hope for a bright future.

We are extremely excited to open our doors in **Layton, Utah** where a benefactor has been good enough to provide a space for our Academy. As we are just starting out, we are in the fundraising phase. Our goal for the first phase is to raise \$20,000. Thanks to generous donors who have family who have been in the justice involved space, in just 3 weeks, we were well on our way to achieving that goal. We are 2/3s of the way there. We continue to hope for anyone that has the means to contribute and I would ask any of you that may have the desire to support our cause to throw in. Large or small, anything helps.

Freedom Scholars Academy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and any contribution you make is completely tax deductible. Thank you,