VOLUME 3 • 2022

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I remember thinking for our first art show: I hope we can pull this off. If we sold a few paintings and raised a few dollars for charity, then it was a success. And that's what I thought was the best-case scenario. Let's pull this off, let's call it a success, and then let's move on from our only art show, back to focus on the Center's research and education.

I was wrong.

I was wrong because I thought the art show was all about the art. Now, the art is exceptional—so much so that we created a minimalist cover for this Express volume to feature the artwork of Inkarcerated. But the art show is more about the people behind the art. Certainly the artists, who share their incredible talent and more importantly their time, but also the students who tirelessly curate the show, the community partners who go beyond their daily duties to facilitate creativity, and the people from all walks of life who show up the night of the show to celebrate and to support. Bruce Ward and Gen McKenzie perfectly capture this community of support in their feature article on our Inkarcerated art show.

We've now held 3 shows selling over 300 works of art raising over $23,000 for youth and family organizations. And each show has involved more and more people.

The people behind the work are featured all over this volume. Hannah White recounts her experience engaging in research alongside women who are incarcerated, providing answers to questions about resilience and growth in prison. Margarita Herrera tells Caitlin Matekel how her mom inspired her to pursue a career in corrections, and she shares what she wants you to know about people who do the work in corrections. Alyssa Lopez takes you inside her Inside-Out Prison Exchange class to show how people on the inside display the same humanity as people on the outside. Five years from now, you'll find Leya Reyas spending time with the people around her, tending to the needs of her community and serving her community members. Fittingly, Raven Simonds advocates for the value of telling people's stories while engaging in research.

Enhancing the lives of people who live and work in our correctional system means never forgetting the people behind the work, research, classes, programs, and day-to-day safety and well-being.

I'll see you at the next art show. And then again at the one after that.

-Kevin Wright

The CCS Express
Volume 3, 2022

Director
Kevin Wright

Volume Editors
Alyssa Lopez
Hannah White

Student Contributors
Hannah White
Caitlin Matekel
Alyssa Lopez
Leya Reyes
Genevieve McKenzie
Raven Simonds

Community Contributors
Margarita Herrera
Bruce Ward

The Center for Correctional Solutions

ccj.asu.edu/ccs

Facebook
fb.me/ccsasu

LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/company/asuccs

Twitter
@CCS_ASU

Instagram
@CCS_ASU

Center for Correctional Solutions
Arizona State University

The CCS Express is a publication of the Center for Correctional Solutions at Arizona State University

Questions and comments can be sent to ccs@asu.edu

If you are interested in supporting our work, please visit asufoundation.org/ccs

3 Positivity in Prison through Participatory Action Research

How changing the question can change perspectives for researchers, students, and people living in prison.

6 Conversations with the Community

Margarita Herrera shares what inspires her as a correctional officer and how she strives to make a difference through her work.

9 Lessons from the Inside Out

A second opportunity in the Spring 2022 class of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

13 Alumni Spotlight

Leya Reyes discusses her ongoing commitment to strengthening communities and serving others.

16 {Ink}arcerated

Art that creates meaning, supports the community, and brings people together.

19 Student Highlight

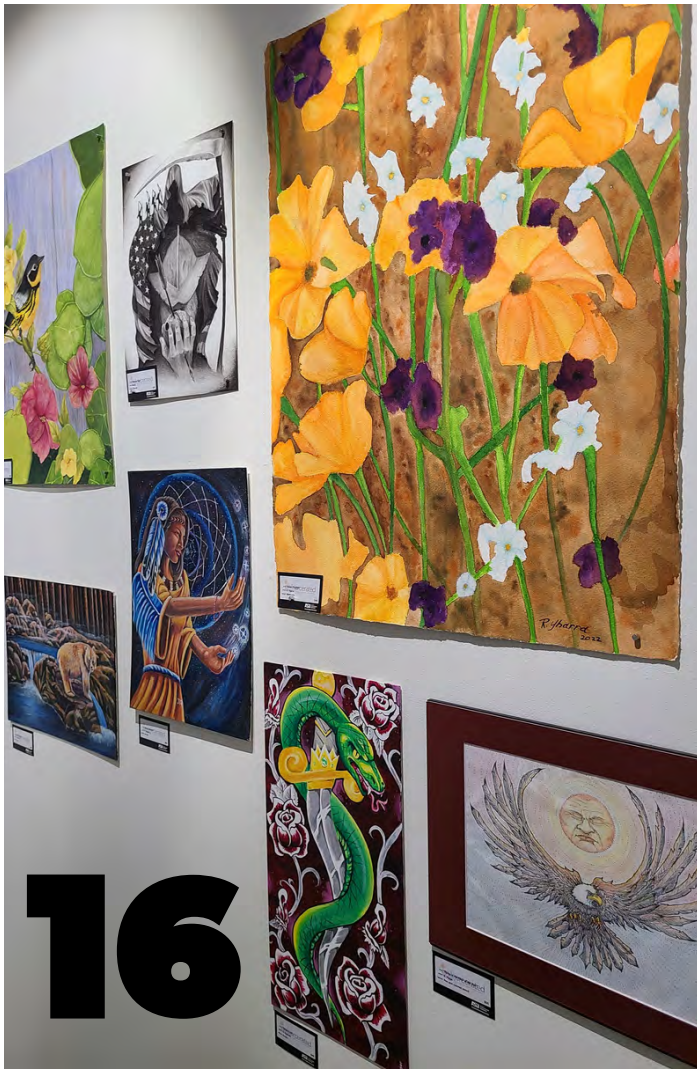
Raven Simonds highlights the importance of human-centered narratives and telling stories through research with correctional populations.

22 Supporter Thank You

Join us to repair harm, empower people, and promote public safety.

23 Checking in with Alumni

CCS students Danielle, Caitlin, Stephanie, and Raven have new beginnings and new opportunities.



Positivity in Prison through Participatory Action Research

By Hannah White, M.S.

Honored. Fun. Educational. Heartwarming. Pleasantly Challenged. Excited. Hopeful.

That's how incarcerated women described their experiences interviewing their peers alongside ASU researchers. I would describe my own experience interviewing alongside these women as **Fulfilling.**

Earlier this year, I joined a team of incarcerated women and researchers from ASU to interview 200 incarcerated women. This participatory action research (PAR) approach combined our knowledge with the expertise of the incarcerated women to design a questionnaire and collaborate on interviewing. We asked questions that you might find surprising, including a series of questions that highlighted the most positive qualities of the women and their lives. Incarcerated people are often asked about their deficits and their pain, rather than their strengths and their values. Asking people in prison about their negative experiences is important, but in the end it gives us more answers to what is wrong as opposed to what *could* be right. So, we began our interviews with open-ended questions that gave the women the opportunity to talk about their personal strengths, their best memories, and what makes them resilient. This approach to asking questions is known as appreciative inquiry.

Appreciative inquiry is seldom used with people incarcerated in the United States, but

it can be especially useful when conducting research with people in prison. What is unique about this approach is that it alters the way we think about problems and devise solutions. Appreciative inquiry allows us to ask questions that highlight the best in people. It is a strengths-based and forward-looking way of discovering people's capacity for growth and transformation.

> I'm more than just an inmate, **I have skills.**

With the exception of only 3 women, everybody responded with something they were proud of. Many talked about their pride in being a mother, their success in school and work, and their sense of determination and perseverance.

> Once I got here I didn't have a pity party. I did my best to stay focused in prison…. **My strength** is in reading and language arts. Reviewing what I've written shows growth… When you're in prison, you have to start from the bottom up.

I hadn't really interacted much with people in prison in any meaningful way before these interviews. But through my interactions with incarcerated women, I realized it was easy to talk to and relate to people in prison, and it felt rewarding. People who live in prison are just that...people. They have healthy relationships, accomplishments in many areas of life, and skills that allow them to help themselves and others.

The women often had a surprised reaction when I started our interview with, "Tell me something about yourself or your life you are proud of." Many women needed a moment to think about their answer. Maybe they weren't prepared for this question or maybe they hadn't been asked a question like this in a long time. Or ever.

I wasn't interested in their past or their mistakes, and I think they knew that. Despite being in prison, the women found ways to push through adversity and stay motivated. They reflected on and acknowledged their personal strengths and growth. Throughout the interviews, I was moved to see each woman's face light up as they talked about the confidence they have in themselves and the rewarding experiences they have had...even while in prison.

> I like to keep a positive mindset. If I see somebody down, even if they aren't my friend, I do what I can to **lift them up** … People were there for me when I came back, so I try to be there for people.

“I’m doing time differently this time.

I won't allow myself to be just a number.

Together, we completed these interviews to inform on our approach to reimagine the prison experience: the Point Model (Potential, Opportunity, Investment, Nurture, Transformation). The interviews have also been used to produce several master’s theses, including my own, as well as research papers to be presented at the American Society of Criminology conference.

What these interviews have taught me is that nothing is all good or all bad. No matter the circumstances, people find ways to succeed and thrive. We can make people’s lives better and more meaningful if we harness their strengths and capitalize on what they view as the best in themselves and their experiences. Whether we are living in the outside world or inside prison, we are all capable of one thing: **Growth.**

“You guys are helping me **grow.**

- incarcerated interviewer

But these interviews have done much more than that for everyone involved. It was a learning process. It was challenging and emotional at times. And it was inspiring. Our incarcerated collaborators have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to interview their peers and hear their stories. They have said that interviewing has impacted how they interact with others and form relationships.

Hannah White is a graduate research assistant at CCS and a first-year PhD student studying Criminology and Criminal Justice at ASU. She graduated with her Master’s degree from ASU in May of 2022. Her research interests include women in prison, resilience and post-traumatic growth, trauma-informed corrections, and qualitative methods.

Conversations with the Community

Each issue features a conversation between one of the CCS students and a community member. In this issue, we present a conversation with Caitlin Matekel and Margarita Herrera.

MARGARITA HERRERA

Margarita Herrera is a COIII for the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) and has worked in corrections for 20 years. She is passionate about program facilitation and giving incarcerated men the tools to heal and grow during and after incarceration.

Caitlin Matekel is a doctoral student in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and was a research associate for the Center for 5 years. She has worked as a volunteer facilitator for ADCRR for 7 years and now serves as the Clinical Director for The Change Companies.

CM: What drew you to a career in corrections?

MH: My mom. She became a Correctional Officer (CO) my senior year of high school. She had never finished high school so she went back for her GED to become a CO. This was a huge milestone for her. It offered financial freedom, benefits, insurance, and a retirement that she never had before. When I started as a CO she taught me that "you aren't here to punish them, prison is the punishment." That always stuck with me.

CM: Tell me a little bit about your career and your role now.

MH: I am coming up on 20 years with the department. I was a CO for 14.5 years and then I was promoted to CO III.

For the last four years as a CO III I have spent most of my time facilitating classes. Facilitating is really just guiding discussions on various topics with students in the class. We have students volunteer for the class and bring them together to learn. My primary focus is building trust with each other and with me. It is easy to do when you set rules around confidentiality and create a non-judgemental environment. This lays a platform for the students to open up and speak freely with each other. I guide the lessons and discussions and ask them questions but they really learn better from each other. I am just there to keep it all moving.

CM: What is the most rewarding part of your career?

MH: It is definitely facilitating. I think just watching them open up to each other and have these moments where they realize their negative behaviors, why they acted that way, and how to change it. As simple as that sounds, they were never really shown how to do this before. They often come from families that didn't foster self-realization or correct behavior in a positive way. A lot of their parents modeled these behaviors for them. The group really does this themselves, I just lead them and keep them on track. I could never know exactly what they need to hear but they all relate to each other and know what the others need.

When I started as a CO she taught me that "you aren't here to punish them, prison is the punishment." That always stuck with me.

CM: What is the most challenging part of your career?

MH: These inmates have experienced severe trauma throughout their lives and I am not equipped to really make an impact on that. I don't have the training or education to really respond to trauma. The things they have experienced make them calloused and that is a hard barrier to work through in the classroom.

CM: What should the general public know about people who work in corrections and people who live in correctional settings?

MH: The public would benefit from knowing about the good things the inmates do. Like working on the fire crews, they work hard to remove brush and protect people's houses. Many of them graduate with GEDs or high school diplomas. It is important to recognize these milestones. The media only focuses on the negative things they do. Same for staff. They are here making a difference everyday, but all

the public sees is when we mess up. COs are first responders, they save lives daily. We provide first aid and medical care for inmates in distress, but this is never talked about.

CM: If you had unlimited resources, what program would you implement?

MH: I would bring dogs into the prison. There are so many dogs that are abused, neglected, and overlooked that could provide and be provided for by a population that understands them. Every person can benefit from the love and loyalty of a dog. I have worked in rescue for a long time and have seen how the whole community benefits. Both the inmates and dogs have been through a lot and would be able to connect and help each other heal. This would allow the inmates to learn important skills. It is a benefit for everyone.

CM: What advice would you give your younger self?

MH: I learned a lot in the Cultural Diversity class I taught. A lot of how people act comes from how they were taught growing up. We think people should act a certain way but we don't recognize that different cultures are taught very different things. I have learned that people who are different from me are not against me. I would tell my younger self to recognize that people are different; it is not personal when they act in a way that I don't agree with or understand.

Margarita and Caitlin at the 2019 {Ink}arcerated art show

CM: When you're not working, what do you do for fun?

MH: I enjoy working with dogs in rescue. I like to work out, I have a great group of workout friends. We bring our dogs to the workouts. Even during COVID we worked out at a park so we could keep our momentum going safely. I do 5Ks for different causes that are special to me. I was taking care of my mom for a long time, which I really loved doing.

Margarita dedicates this interview to her mother, Sharon Montano, who passed earlier this year. Sharon worked for the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry for 20 years before retiring and inspired her daughter's career in corrections.

Lessons from the Inside Out:
Reflections on Opportunity and Growth in Prison

By Alyssa Lopez

That should be me...

That's what I thought when I first entered prison. As a recovering addict, I've made many mistakes that should've landed me behind bars. However, I was shown grace. I was given a second chance through rehabilitation.

This past spring, I was fortunate to be part of a second opportunity for ten incarcerated women through the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. Centered around the concept of motivational justice, the class combined ten ASU undergraduates with ten incarcerated women to explore intrinsic motivation and self-growth alongside facilitators Caitlin Matekel and Danielle Haverkate. Our curriculum followed the

content of four popular psychology books, but within a matter of hours, the course became so much more. Twenty-two strangers began a journey of self-discovery, empowerment, and contagious giving.

Our discussion of one of the books blossomed into lessons of assertiveness, boundaries, and reciprocity. Many of us found common ground over the consequences of our overflowing empathy. Together, we learned the importance of service and healthy selfishness. As we explored the characteristics of healthy

relationships, I admired the self-reflection of my inside classmates. Some women shared stories of their untreated traumas, their growth amid solitary confinement, and their people-pleasing contributing to their imprisonment. However, each of the women turned her pain into passion by connecting with and learning from her peers. I was amazed as they brainstormed innovative programming ideas, such as accountability partners and previously-justice-involved mentors to guide their goals from weight loss to spiritual connections. The sentiment that "prison fences can either dictate your life or your circumstance" motivated many of the women. It was truly inspiring to see them thrive in spite of incarceration.

Both the inside and outside students were given the opportunity to lead lesson plans. The outside students were tasked with creating an activity surrounding contagious giving. We decided on a tribute to the children's book The Giving Tree. Each student's name was written on leaf-shaped Post-it Notes and their peers were instructed to write uplifting comments to each other anonymously. I think this activity captured our group's dynamic: each student's choice to give so much of themselves to the class fostered the most welcoming and supportive space possible.

...each woman turned her pain into passion by connecting with and learning from her peers.

The inside students presented an equally-impressive lesson plan: students were partnered for an obstacle course and told that one person would be blindfolded and the other would lead them through verbal instructions. The outside students chose their roles. Then, to our surprise, the inside students reversed our roles, and everyone was plucked from their comfort zone. The obstacle course was a meaningful lesson in communication and growth, and it was astonishing to see the innovation displayed by the inside students. They taped pieces of construction paper to the floor to represent "lava" that couldn't be stepped on and even had a "pin the toilet paper on the table" challenge.

The final task—the blindfolded student tracing their partner's hand, then twirling into an office chair to mark completion—highlighted the exemplary patience of my peers. Not a single woman rushed her partner to the finish line. The lack of competition, coupled with the encouragement of other teams, was truly moving to see. All of us laughed through the entire experience.

The last ten minutes of each evening—the "Final Ten"—were the most anticipated portion of the class. These short periods were dedicated to decompressing, reflecting, and laughing; they relied on partners to guide activities ranging from skits to "telephone." One evening, we recited our favorite class memories; another, the class was split in half, and each group competed to make the other laugh in record time. The ingenuity of my classmates was extraordinary, and team-building games like "the human knot" solidified the community we had built. Notably, our game of charades—in which one partner directed the other to illustrate an arbitrary object through verbal cues alone—inspired several students' tattoos. For a few moments, these interactions allowed us to forget we were in prison.

Graduation marked the most bittersweet of goodbyes. We shared memories of our favorite times together and reflected on the invaluable lessons we learned over the semester. I again

learned the importance of community—first founded upon makeup routines, movie references, and chanting "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," and ending with support circles for struggling peers. I found a support system in the most unexpected of places. I discovered newfound framings of incarceration, such as its framing as a teacher of patience, or as an opportunity to read, reset, and reflect. I learned more about our justice system than a textbook could ever teach. I learned the value of giving, the need for self-forgiveness, and the importance of active listening.

I discovered newfound framings of incarceration, such as its framing as a teacher of patience, or as an opportunity to read, reset, and reflect.

The vulnerability and wisdom expressed by my classmates was unmatched, and I'm honored to have witnessed their growth. Now, I'm left with creative ideas for reform, tremendous faith in the success of my inside peers, and a newfound hope for humanity in prison.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program granted a second opportunity to all of us, and I'm eternally grateful to have been a part of it.

Alyssa is earning her B.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice and is a Research Fellow at the Center. She currently serves as an Administrative Assistant to the Parent Student Prison Initiative, a 501(c)(3) empowering incarcerated parents and their students through education.

Alumni Spotlight

Each issue checks in with a former student of the Center to learn what they've been up to since graduating. In this issue, we catch up with Leya Reyes, who was a student in the Center through 2019.

LEYA REYES

Leya Reyes graduated from ASU with a Bachelor's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice with a minor in Social Welfare. She is now in graduate school completing her Master's in Social Work at ASU. In addition, she works as a Housing Case Manager for UMOM New Day Centers. She enjoys grabbing coffee with friends, watching reality TV, and exploring the West Coast as often as she can.

Where are you now?

I currently live, work, and study in Phoenix, Arizona. After graduating from ASU in 2019, I became a Youth Development Peace Corps Volunteer in the Dominican Republic; however, I was evacuated seven months later due to the global pandemic. Although it was a bummer to come home from the DR sooner than expected, I am happy to be back in my sunny hometown.

What are you working on?

I am entering my second year of graduate school, pursuing a Master's in Social Work at Arizona State University. I am currently interested in learning about how school-based social work interacts with the school-to-prison pipeline, as well as effective interventions to preventing violence at a young age.

I also work full-time as a Housing Stability Specialist at UMOM New Day Centers, doing work centered around reducing homelessness and housing insecurity in Maricopa County. When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time outside or booking trips to visit my friends who now live all over the country post-college.

How has your time in the Center influenced your work?

The Center sparked my interest in working with populations impacted by our criminal justice system. As a daughter of a formerly incarcerated parent, this topic has always hit close to home. Dr. Kevin Wright allowed me the opportunity to assist him in conducting qualitative research that centered the valuable life experiences of those living inside prison walls. These stories deserve to be heard, spotlighted, and can shape our perspectives, providing nuance and context to the topics of mass incarceration, the cycle of violence, and the way the justice system interacts with vulnerable populations. My time spent reading and studying these individual narratives is an experience I will never forget. These stories stay with me and influence my perspective as I work in spaces that are both directly and indirectly connected to incarceration, such as schools, homelessness services, etc. My undergraduate years spent working with Dr. Wright set a foundation for my interest in critical thinking and compassion-driven research to solve complex social issues.

Leya is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer. She served in the Dominican Republic in the Youth Development sector.

Share your best ASU memory.

I will never forget my experience studying abroad. I was fortunate enough to spend an entire summer in Cuba, which also happens to be my birthplace. ASU gave me the opportunity to practice my Spanish, learn about the long history of Latin American revolutions, and spend time with family and friends to expand my knowledge of the country's rich culture and history.

...the valuable life experiences of those living inside prison walls... deserve to be heard, spotlighted, and can shape our perspectives...

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

In the next five years, I hope to be living and working in a city where I am engaged in community-centered social services. It may seem simple to some, but I know that my life's work will always be to spend time with the people around me, tending to the needs

Leya giving a poster presentation as an undergraduate research fellow at CCS

of my neighborhood and serving community members by breaking down barriers and highlighting strengths. I am open to the many channels available for me to make this happen, whether that is pursuing PhD work, becoming a mental health professional, or even running for local office. Hey, maybe I'll end up doing all three! There are so many ways we can uplift our communities.

If you could be anyone for a day, past or present, who would it be and why?

This may sound silly, but I would probably pick Bad Bunny, who is my favorite Latino music artist. He just looks like he lives the best life in Puerto Rico, hanging out by the beach or touring the world singing and dancing. I don't have a musical bone in my body, so it would be so fun to experience the life of a celebrity for a day.

What's something that most people don't know about you?

One of my primary forms of "self-care" is watching reality TV. Yes, you heard that right! The work we have chosen to do can be challenging and mentally draining. On those days where I feel like I need a recharge, nothing makes me laugh more than highly-produced and trivial drama on my television screen! LOL.

{Ink}arcerated

By Bruce Ward with Genevieve McKenzie

During my incarceration, drawing and painting took on a meaning I hadn't intended. What began as a way to pass the time while building a skillset quickly became my purpose. It's easy to squander your time in prison and many people forget that their life is going to continue afterwards. Having a purpose and structure during those years created a challenge I could grow towards. Every day, I focused my time on painting portraiture. I wanted to plan for my life ahead and knew that having a career as a portrait artist was attainable so long as I stayed vigilant.

Geoff Manes, a peer artist of mine, was the person who told me that ASU was seeking donations for an upcoming community art show. The artists on a prison yard know each other. It's a small community that teaches one another techniques of the craft and eagerly boasts completed works. The first {Ink}arcerated: Creativity within Confinement art show was created in 2017 by 10 ASU undergraduate students seeking to highlight the artistic talent that flourishes behind prison walls through the power of creative expression. For me, it was my first opportunity to showcase my work outside of prison. I had a portrait in mind — a person who deserves our praise and respect. I intended my portraiture to promote philanthropic causes and highlight humanities heroes. I knew ASU was the perfect place to show my work and find people of like-minded ideology, so I spent the next few weeks painting Nadia Murad.


Nadia Murad by B. Ward

During my last year of incarceration, I focused my ambition on becoming an ASU student attending the Herberger Institute for Design. I have now been a student at ASU for two years, studying as a Sculpture major and minoring in Architectural Studies.

Earlier this year marked the third {Ink}arcerated art show hosted by the Center for Correctional Solutions (CCS). These shows bring the community together to view and purchase art that has been created by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated artists. All of the money raised by art sales is donated to a local non-profit organization. A small army of CCS members and volunteers work tirelessly behind the scenes to pull each show off. This time, I was asked to join the CCS {Ink}arcerated team as curator of the show, a role which involved pricing and preserving the art we received as well as directing the display of the installation.

{Ink}arcerated has multiple avenues of public engagement: raising money for local charities that contribute to the well-being of our community, allowing incarcerated artists to promote their work and engage with the local community in a positive way, and fostering an artistic environment inside the Department of Corrections through the donation of art supplies. I was inspired by the amount of assistance and support we received from the ASU community and our Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) partners to accomplish these goals.

Wise Eyes by A. Ramos

The use of the gallery space at ASU's Gallery 100 for this installation was a fortunate opportunity for the CCS team. ASU head of galleries Mikey Estes guided me through the process of preparing the gallery and allowed our team to hold the space for a three-week period. I was also amazed by the support ASU students generated with both their time as volunteers and donations for supplies. One ASU art student, a painting major, was inspired by the therapeutic value of creating artwork in

The CCS team at the 2022 {Ink}arcerated art show

confinement and was able to donate $250 worth of supplies. The School of Art also contributed high quality materials that will empower artistic expression for the next show. Getting supplies donated to the artists has continued to create meaningful relationships between CCS and ADCRR. Our hopes of establishing an environment of artistic creativity inside our institutions is only possible through ADCRR staff who find value in our cause and the general wellness that creating artwork provides.

Guests visiting the 2022 art show gallery

The 2022 {Ink}arcerated show was a massive success. Attendees ranged from ASU students eager to engage with a socially motivated art show to Department of Corrections employees exploring the collection of talent. Three formerly incarcerated artists were painting live at the event and were given the opportunity to speak on their process and meaning of their work. We sold over 150 works of art and raised over $10,000 for the MLB All-Star D-backs branch of the Boys and Girls Club.

One of my favorite moments during the show was the ADCRR public affairs representative interviewing my friend, Geoff Manes. The communities who came together for this art show are motivated by great artwork in a fun environment but also by the power art holds as a positive, long-term therapeutic endeavor.

Drawing and painting took on an unintended meaning for me during my incarceration. By focusing my time on a skillset of creativity I promoted a growth mindset for myself and others around me. As our Inkarcerated art show continues to grow, we hope more incarcerated artists find meaning in both their craft and their link to the community.

Bruce serves as a peer-educator/mentor for individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction. He acts as a spiritual guide for those who are lost and creates socially engaged artwork that help facilitate his mentorship role. His work has helped multiple people change the course of their lives, ending the cycle of addiction and violence. Bruce is a co-curator of the Inkarcerated art show and has continued to represent the work of incarcerated artists through building his own gallery.

Bruce's work can be seen through his gallery, Dreamstate Content.

Genevieve recently graduated with her Master's in Criminology and Criminal Justice from ASU. She was in the class of freshmen who developed the Inkarcerated concept and has worked closely with CCS and the artists to lead all three shows.

Student Highlight

Each issue provides the opportunity for a student member of CCS to contribute a piece of writing. In this issue, Raven Simonds highlights the power of storytelling.

THE VALUE OF STORYTELLING IN RESEARCH

BY RAVEN SIMONDS, PHD

I have always enjoyed reading. Almost exclusively fiction and novels. Anything with a story. Anything with a problem to solve and people or something to root for. Over the summers during grade school, I would select an array of fiction books from the library and try to read as much as I could before school started again. In an effort to preserve the joy I got out of reading when I began graduate school, I always set an outrageously ambitious, though impossible, "fun" reading goal each year - 100 books, 50 books, 20 books. Admitting to reading three "fun" books a year while in graduate school would be a generous estimate. But I always reasoned my lack of reading for enjoyment as a product of

the large amounts of academic reading that were required in graduate school already. This left little time for reading for the sake of reading. By this I mean articles that communicate from a storytelling point of view without compromising the integrity of their contribution. I have now come to realize that part of the reason why I did not read much for "fun" in the more traditional, familiar sense in graduate school was because I was doing so in a way I had not before – I read a lot of good articles. These articles told stories. These articles had problems to solve and people or something to root for. Selfishly, these articles were always the quickest reads. In other words, they were written in a way that was easy to read. This reduced the feeling that I was "doing homework," of course. But these articles were also the most interesting to discuss in class and the easiest to communicate their findings to family and friends outside the traditional academic space. It was more than simply an article or document of empirical research—the meaning of these articles could be understood through their story, as well as their findings.

This is not to say that the highly technical or equation-ridden articles I read during graduate school felt the same as reading a really good book. Some articles were better at telling stories than others and some, perhaps, were not meant to tell stories at all. But the ones that did stood out.

...the frequent subjects of correctional research—those who are incarcerated and those who work in the correctional system—have their own narratives as well.

We seek out stories in daily life. This could be through "retelling our experiences, in reading novels, short stories, watching television, using the Internet, playing video games, viewing films, even our dreams" (Lewis, 2011, p. 505; Farrant, 2014). We seek out stories in our research, too. More importantly though, reflecting a style of storytelling adds an additional "human-like" element that can sometimes be missed in research. And what is more central to the human experience than storytelling? I think this can be especially important within corrections. Incorporating elements of storytelling can help reinforce the truth that the frequent subjects of correctional research—those who are incarcerated and those who work in the correctional system—have their own narratives as well. The way they are communicated in research and academic writing can have a profound impact on how we view the world and the impact they have on it (Lewis, 2011).

I was fortunate in my graduate education to be taught early on that good articles indeed tell stories—"what's the story here?" is something I heard a lot. I did not understand this at first. I thought, "I have a research question and one that I could answer with data! What 'story' was needed here?" But reading good articles and surrounding myself with others who approached research, and the way research is communicated, with both honesty and care changed my mind. Research can put forth rigorous findings while simultaneously telling a story. The best articles do both.

In graduate school, you are taught theory, how to write well, how the criminal legal system operates, and how to run statistics. These are all important. This is all so you can perform the duties related to research and writing a research article well. But hopefully, you learn how to be a storyteller too.

References

Farrant, F. (2014). Unconcealment: What happens when we tell stories. Qualitative Inquiry, 20(4), 461-470.

Lewis, P. J. (2011). Storytelling as research/research as storytelling. Qualitative Inquiry, 17(6), 505-510.

Young, K., & Saver, J. L. (2001). The neurology of narrative. SubStance, 30(1), 72-84.

Raven is a recent PhD graduate from ASU's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Her dissertation project included interviewing men preparing for release in Arizona on what social supports they anticipate having upon release.

She currently works as a Research Analyst at the New York City Criminal Justice Agency. In this role, she collaborates with the Research and Evidence-Based Practice teams to provide practically useful and methodologically sound knowledge on pretrial issues in New York City. Broadly, her research interests include social support and social networks, reentry, and applied quantitative methods.

Thank You to Our Supporters!

Adriana Romero
Alan Barnes
Allison and Chris Williams
Amanda Hinkle
Ana Carrano
Andrea Hanson
Becky and Mark Gilbreath
Bianca Rodriguez
Brooklyn Calain
Carrie Tucker
Christina Young
Christopher and Mary Sutton
Christopher Sullivan
Cindy Taylor
Cody Telep and Danny Hernandez
Cynthia and Bradley Lietz
Dagmar Moravec and Patricia Barnhart
Damiera Wilson
Danny Trejo
Donald and Shannon McKenzie
Donald Shaw
Elizabeth Wolfe
Hannah Thomas
Henry Fradella and Kyle Kelley
Jack Schermerhorn and Margaret Miller
Jade Clark
Jared and Jessalyn Coffin
Jasmine Krapf
Jennifer Bickford
John Wright and Barbara Green
Jordyn Shafer-Frie
Katherine and Caleb Morey
Linda Bennett
Lisa Wright
Lysandra Rosenberger
Lyssi Harding
Madison Sutton
Madysen Genzmer
Marcy Stempler
Maria Bellamy
Mariette and David Matekel
Mark Scarp
Marshall Kain
Mary Bankhead and Jacob Sheets
Matt and Madison Moore
Matthew Ingram
Melissa Lopez
Michael Harris and Lori McClelland
Na'Kisha Sheppard
Nicole Purcell
Orneita and Dwain Burton
Patricia Curran
Rebecca Pfeffer
Regina Maier
Ryan and Janet Callozzo
Sandy Moshi
Sarah Allred
Scott Decker
Shannon Corcoran and Jacob Young
Shannon Magnuson
Sherry Thurston
Subrata Guha and Laura Fuller-Guha
Thomas and Mary Smith
Travis Meyers
Vanessa Hernandez
Zarouhi Khachoyan

Join them at asufoundation.org/ccs

Checking in with Alumni

A year ago we shared information on our doctoral students. Now...

Danielle Haverkate

Danielle's research reflects an interest in what happens to people and their families when they encounter the correctional system. Her dissertation examines how women's identities as mothers impact their prison and reentry experiences, and how correctional and public policy can better support people returning to their communities. She values collaborative work with stakeholders of the justice system, including state agencies, community organizations, and people incarcerated.

She recently accepted a position as Senior Research Associate in the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, where her research will continue to have an impact on staff and people incarcerated.

Caitlin Matekel

Caitlin is a PhD student in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. She has six years of experience teaching in correctional institutions, including the Inside-Out Prison Exchange program and the Impact of Crime on Victims and Communities class. Her dissertation research focuses on the conceptualization of prison in research and practice, stemming from her work as a project manager on National Institute of Justice sponsored work on restrictive housing.

She recently accepted the position of Clinical Director with The Change Companies, a behavior change organization that develops curricula for justice, addiction treatment, and behavior health institutions.

Stephanie Morse

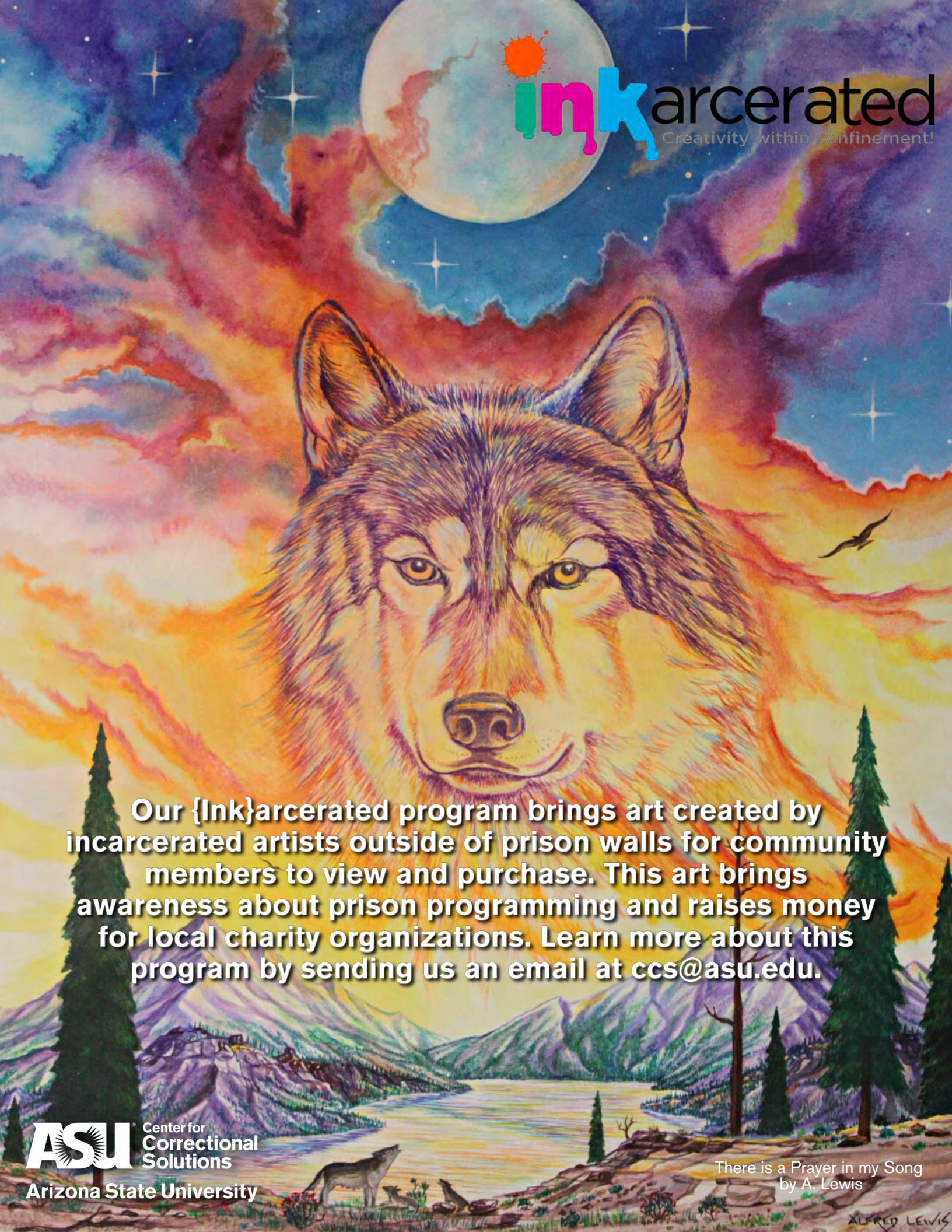
Stephanie is committed to engaging in research, teaching, and service that is strengths-based, inclusive, and uplifts others. Her work is focused on prison life and prison social organization, with a particular emphasis on rehabilitation and promoting resilience and positive outcomes with correctional populations.

Currently, Dr. Morse is an Assistant Professor at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Raven Simonds

Raven's research interests center around corrections and reentry, with an emphasis on how social support can be leveraged for successful reentry outcomes. Her dissertation used social network analysis to examine the relational structure of social support during reentry. Her research aims to show the value of the supportive actions made by others and offer tangible solutions for how this can be enhanced.

Dr. Simonds currently works as a Research Analyst with New York City Criminal Justice Agency, a non-profit with both service and research arms that seeks to reduce pretrial detention in New York City.


inkarcerated
Creativity within confinement!
Our {Ink}arcerated program brings art created by incarcerated artists outside of prison walls for community members to view and purchase. This art brings awareness about prison programming and raises money for local charity organizations. Learn more about this program by sending us an email at ccs@asu.edu.
ASU Center for Correctional Solutions
Arizona State University
There is a Prayer in my Song
by A. Lewis
ALFRED LEWIS