

CITIZENS UNITED FOR THE REHABILITATION OF ERRANTS



January 2, 2020

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Iowa CURE members and friends:

First, Happy New Year, and a new Decade.

We have lost some board members and we have gained some. We lost two of our board members to death. Sr. Joanne Talaricco, and Sheila Corebie. Sr. Joanne, was a fighter for Juvenile Justice. She was also a great asset to anything her heart lead her too. She is truly missed. Her passion is still in so many people that she touched while working on prison reform. Sheila brought a voice to the board that had been missing. As a returned citizen she voiced to our group about her successful transition. May they both rest in power.

We have added new members to our Iowa Cure Board. Please give a warm welcome Christy Lockheart and Melissa Gradischnig. We are so glad to welcome them to our team. Look forward to them to introducing themselves in our next newsletter.

Recap of last year. Iowa C.U.R.E held four meetings in 2019.

In January, at our winter program, we had the pleasure of welcoming Deon Harris. Deon was formerly incarcerated. He is the author of the book, "Doing Time Constructively".

In April we had our spring program and board meeting. We welcomed Dr. Beth Skinner, now the DOC Director, Sean Crawford, Associate Warden of Treatment at Newton Correctional Facility, and Katrina Carter, Director of Programs and Reentry. They gave us clarification on the questions we had given to former Director Bartruff.

In August we had our summer program and board meeting. We welcomed Jeff Wright who is the State Public Defender. He provided a very good outlook on what prison should be about.

In November we had our fall program and board meeting. Our guest was Dr. Jerome Greenfield, the Director of Medical and Mental Health for the state of Iowa Prisons. He gave an excellent presentation. We gave him questions and he will give us the answers in writing in the beginning of 2020.

We, Iowa C.U.R.E, have been fortunate to have been involved in numerous ventures this past year. In April I had the great opportunity to represent Iowa C.U.R.E in Alabama for the National meeting. I was also able to attend a conference in Michigan for the Sentencing Project. I am doing my best to represent Iowa C.U.R.E. In October I was again given the opportunity to represent Iowa C.U.R.E at the "Challenging Life Sentences, put on by the Sentencing Project in Detroit. Our board member Larry and his wife Nancy also attended the conference. It was an educational and insightful experience. The experience to be in a room at breakfast, lunch, or dinner with someone who had spent 30,40 or 50 years in prison, is mind blowing. It is also a wonderful testament to the will to survive. There is much work to do on the sentencing of life in prison. We as a society have to believe that no human being is not worth a second chance. I am truly honored to have been able to service as the Iowa C.U.R.E president this past year. We have a long road ahead of us, and 365 chances to make change. Thank you for being in the struggle for JUSTICE. Thank you for struggling with us!

Peace,

Carla A. Dawson - Iowa CURE

IN THIS EDITION

PG. 2 – Iowa C.U.R.E and Iowa Coalition for Juvenile Justice

PG. 3 – Sentencing Project Conference

PG. 4 – ACLU and Iowans Against the Death Penalty

PG. 5 – Governor's FOCUS Committee, Iowa Board of Parole, and Iowa Justice Action Network

PG. 6 – Ombudsman and Iowa Department of Corrections

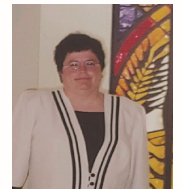
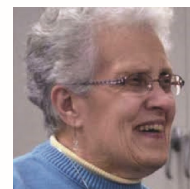
PG. 7 – Resources

PG. 8 – Visiting perspective

In Memory

Sr. JoAnne Talaricco

Sheila Corsbie



August 25, 1936 -
May 10, 2019

January 20th, 1955 -
August 22, 2019



Writing to Iowa C.U.R.E

Iowa C.U.R.E is a volunteer-based organization. Each letter received is delegated to a volunteer that can best answer any questions or concerns. C.U.R.E also has board members who are assigned to each institution in the Iowa System. When mail is received the letter is forwarded to the delegate and a copy is sent to the president. In order to maintain coordination among our correspondents, each month all of them get a list of letters received, with a brief summary. Also included is the address changes of our incarcerated members. It also includes the names of new members. This procedure was implemented so we have continuity in correspondence and also see if there are any trends and issues that may arise throughout the institutions. We always appreciate letters from people incarcerated in Iowa prisons and those concerned for them. This gives us the opportunity to hear voices that might not otherwise be heard. Iowa C.U.R.E advocates for positive change throughout the criminal justice system.

We are an organization with members in and out of the prison system. We cannot offer legal services or accept phone calls from prisoners. Letters will be answered to the best of our ability. Do not send us your legal documents. In joining CURE, you are NOT entering into a contract for services.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

2020 DUES NOTICE

Please remember to pay your 2020 Iowa CURE dues. Please fill out the application form below and mail it with your membership fee to the Iowa CURE office address below: Prisoner \$2, Individual \$10, Family \$20, Sustaining \$50, Life \$100

Name _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____

Why should I join C.U.R.E? Being a C.U.R.E member gives you access to experienced staff, reputable research, political action, community organizing, leadership and strategy development as well as informative fact sheets, action alerts, legislative and issue updates.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter to interested friends, family, associates, and loved ones in prison.

Iowa Coalition for Juvenile Justice

(Focus group of C.U.R.E)



In memory of Sr. JoAnne Talarico

The annual National Juvenile Justice Network Conference was held in Washington D.C. Christy Lockheart and Wendy Wittrock of the coalition attended. This year's conference was "Modeling Youth Led Advocacy." Most of the panelist speakers at the conference were juveniles who have been in the system or are currently in the system. Many of them voiced their concerns over the broken juvenile justice system. Many of the speakers addressed the fact that there where little to no resources to help them while they were detained. Some discussed how they were not ready to leave detention due to lack of necessities such as shampoo and clothing. Some had no family members to return back home or a place to stay. One common agreement the speakers brought up is early intervention. They felt that resources like mental health and counseling would have prevented them from going into the system. Some speakers and panelist talked about the school to prison pipeline. They addressed that kids need to stay in school. We need to hold parents and educators accountable to keeping kids in school. If you have a passion for education juvenile issues join our team.

CONTACT US

Chair Wendy Wittrock & Co-Chair Christy Lockheart
Email - Iac4jj@gmail.com Website - www.ic4jj.org

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Save the Dates

2020 C.U.R.E Meetings

January 19th, 2020

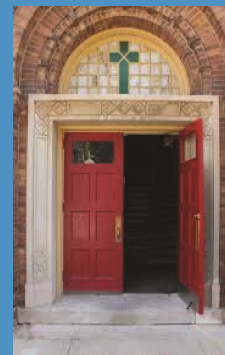
April 5th, 2020

August 16^h, 2020

November 22th, 2020

All meetings will be held at 2pm at
Trinity Las Americas
1548 8th Street
Des Moines Iowa 50314

Snacks and drinks will be provided. Any change in location, date, or time members will be notified.



Board Members

Anne Bickell, Peggy Aguilar,
Eddie Bloomer, Jackie Robinson,
Carla Dawson, Carolyn Uhlehake,
Brian Carter, Mary Kay Dial,
Richard Nordin, Larry Smith,
Wendy Wittrock, Sue Hutchins,
Melissa Gradischnig, Christy
Lockheart

Consultant to the board: Jean
Basinger

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Like us on Facebook

Iowa C.U.R.E members attend conference in Detroit Michigan

On October 5-7th, 2019, National C.U.R.E from Washington D.C hosted a national meeting in Detroit Michigan. The topic was "Challenging Life Sentences". Carla Dawson, Larry Smith, and Nancy Smith represented the Iowa C.U.R.E Chapter. Currently in the United States 1 in 7 persons in prison are serving a life sentence. 1 in 5 African Americans are serving a life sentence. In 2016 less than 5 of federal prisoners were servicing a life sentence. Most people age out of criminal behavior after the age of 30. There were 16 states represented at the conferences. They were MO, MA, MD, OH, MI, OR, DC, CO, TX, LA, IN, IA, DE, IL, KS, and UT. Of the attendees there were former lifers, families of lifers, and advocates.

After registration on October 5th everyone introduced themselves, where they are from, and their backgrounds relative to lifers. This consisted of advocates, former lifers, formerly incarcerated, and/or having a loved one who is serving a life sentence. Later that day the question was asked, 'What brings you to the meeting and what work are you doing?' The responses varied. Of the former lifers in attendance they had served nearly 300 years.

cumulatively. Of these individuals some admitted their guilt and others declared their innocence. On October 6th Nicole Porter of the Sentencing Project and Edward Sanders introduced the *Campaign to End Life Imprisonment* and the movement to abolish life sentences. The Iowa C.U.R.E members in attendance talked personally, with Nicole. The discussion centered around ending life sentences in Iowa. The feedback received is that there is not an easy way. Nicole stressed that we must:

- Elect officials that want reform
- Communicate to our elected officials what the public needs done
- Get our officials to realize that prison sentencing changes are beneficial to everyone, not only the incarcerated, but to families and the community

A brain storming strategy session was held in the evening led by Kay Perry and Nicole Porter. The goal was to identify actionable steps for participants to use to end life sentences. The following areas for criminal justice reform formed the primary focus of the session: felony murder, elderly parole, mental health, juvenile lifers, compassionate release/commutations, developmental disabilities/cognitive impairment, virtual lifers, (minimum 50 years), sex offenders, and the Exception Clause of the Thirteenth Amendment. Several impact strategies were discussed.

Other presentations were Charlie Sullivan, Executive Director of C.U.R.E National sharing information about the movement to replace ankle bracelets with smartphones. This caused mixed discussions. Eldon Dillingham advocated for abolishing life sentences to include 6,400 committed for sex offences. The final speaker was Claudia Whitman, who has successfully brought about releases of persons serving life sentences, closed out the conference with thoughts and actions concerning things she has done.

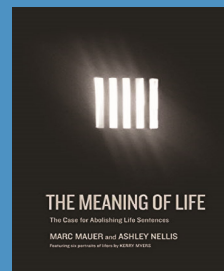
The Prison Policy Initiative recommends the following in regard to life sentences:

- 1- Implement presumptive parole so that individuals are released upon their earliest eligible date unless there are explicit reasons not to do so.
- 2- Implement second look sentencing. The Model Penal Code recommends long sentences be automatically reviewed by a panel of retired judges after 15 years, with an eye toward possible sentence modification or release and subsequent review within 10 years.
- 3- Grant good time for individuals who obey prison rules and participate in programming.
- 4- Implement universal parole eligibility after 15 years.
- 5- Apply sentencing reforms retroactively.
- 6- Eliminate parole revocations for technical violations.
- 7- Implement a robust compassionate release program that is available to all incarcerated people regardless of the underlying offense, that is streamlined so that people do not die due to bureaucratic bottlenecks prior to release, and that the limit of ability of prison officials to overrule (on medical grounds) a recommendation by medical professionals.
- 8- Use communication in a broad, sweeping manner to remedy some of the extremes of the punitive policies that have led to mass incarceration



Nicole is available to assist with a presentation throughout the country by one of two authors of the ground-breaking book *The Meaning of Life: The Case for Abolishing Life Sentences*. Cost \$25.99 from The New Press, 120 Wall Street 31st Floor, New York, NY 10005.

Nicoles emails address is nporter@thesentencingproject.org.



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American Civil Liberties Union MOVING FORWARD ON FIXING FELONY DISENFRANCHISEMENT

By Mark Stringer, Executive Director of the ACLU

As the dust settles from the 2019 Iowa legislative session, one of the clear bright spots is the broad support and the leadership of Gov. Kim Reynolds for changing the Iowa Constitution to end lifetime disenfranchisement in Iowa. Iowa is one of only two states that takes away voting rights—for life—from anyone convicted of a felony. That includes even low-level felonies like stealing an expensive bike, writing a bad check, or being caught with drugs. While some were disappointed that the Governor's proposed constitutional amendment didn't pass this year, as we look forward to next session, we remain optimistic for two reasons. First, we're glad there is support for the constitutional amendment path on this issue. It's the only permanent way to make sure an estimated 60,000 (and growing) Iowans who have lost their voting rights can once again register to cast their vote. Over the past 15 years, voting rights for those with felony convictions—and for a time even those with mere aggravated misdemeanors—were restored or taken away with executive orders issued by various Iowa governors, and the law varied depending on the philosophy of the governor currently in office. All of this has created confusion, uncertainty, and fear. This is no way to run a democracy. The only way to change the law and to protect it from the vagaries of any given year's political climate is the path Gov. Reynolds has proposed: changing the Iowa Constitution. The legislature could, of course, pass a bill that changes Iowa Code to restore voting rights to those with felony convictions, but that law could easily be changed or rescinded later on during another legislative session. Changing the Iowa Constitution is a long process, as it should be. To change it, a proposed amendment must pass two consecutive General Assemblies (each General Assembly covers two years—two legislative sessions). It must then go to a vote of the Iowa people before becoming enshrined in the Iowa Constitution. While this constitutional amendment has hit a speed bump in the Iowa Senate, the process is not over and we remain committed to getting it across the finish line. Second, we are encouraged to see broad support in Iowa for ending felony disenfranchisement. Legislators of all political stripes recognize that blocking voting rights does nothing to keep our communities safer. Instead, it does the opposite. It continues to penalize people long after they've served their sentences and prevents them from becoming truly invested in their communities and contributing members of society. Legislators also see the devastating impact this law has on communities of color. Because of systemic racism in the criminal justice system, a far higher proportion of Black people are incarcerated in Iowa. In fact, one in ten adult African-Americans in our state cannot vote because of a felony conviction—further stripping away their voice in a democracy that has so often failed them. People who have had their voting rights taken away can apply to the governor's office to have them restored. But since 2011, only about 350 Iowans have had that right restored because the process was complex and risky. Now, Gov. Reynolds has taken steps to improve the form, removing a fee and altering the wording to lessen concerns about perjury if the information was not complete or accurate. A strong, healthy democracy encourages voter participation from as many segments of the community as possible. We look forward to continuing to work with Gov. Reynolds, legislators and a broad range of groups to make that a reality finally—in Iowa.

Iowans Against the Death Penalty

It may not seem like much, but once again, Iowans Against the Death Penalty were instrumental in defeating another bill in the Iowa Legislature that would have reinstated capital punishment in Iowa. The bill was introduced in Iowa Senate as Senate File 296 by Behn (Boone), Garrett (Indianola), Greene (Burlington), Chapman (Adel), Guth (Klemme), Costello (Imogene), Edler (State Center), Shipley (Nodaway), Zaun (Urbandale), Kapucian (Keystone), Schultz (Schleswig), Segebart (Vail), Cournoyer (LeClaire), Johnson (Independence), Zumbach (Ryan), Sweeney (Alden), Rozenboom (Oskaloosa), Carlin (Sioux City), Whiting (Spirit Lake), and Feenstra (Hull). The bill was considered in a subcommittee consisting of Sen. Shultz, chair; Sens. Bisignano (Des Moines); Chapman; Garrett, and Sen. Petersen (Des Moines) sitting in for Sen. Hogg (Cedar Rapids). The bill passed out of subcommittee along party lines. Sens. Shultz, Chapman, and Garrett voting for the bill; Sens. Bisignano and Petersen voting against it. IADP presented testimony during the subcommittee, along with various individuals and groups. The Senate Judiciary Committee brought the bill up for consideration and it passed from the committee to the floor of the Senate. Those voting to move the bill out of committee include: Zaun (Committee Chair)(R – Urbandale); Dawson (R-Council Bluffs); Chapman (R-Adel); Garrett (R-Indianola); Schultz (floor manager)(R-Schleswig); Shipley (R-Nodaway); Sweeney (R-Alden); and Whiting (R-Spirit Lake). Those voting against moving the bill out of committee include: Kinney (D-Oxford); Bisignano (D-Des Moines); Hogg (D-Cedar Rapids); Nunn (R-Altoona); Petersen (D-Des Moines); Sinclair (R-Allerton); and R. Taylor. (Mt. Pleasant). The bill became Senate File 588 and remained on the calendar until it was no longer eligible for debate. At that time, it was referred back to (Judiciary) committee and that is where it remains today. It is eligible for consideration in the Senate Judiciary Committee at any time next year.

In the Executioner's Shadow is a brief film divided into three separate stories, perspectives from a former state executioner, a victim of the Boston Marathon bombing, and the parents of a daughter who was murdered. In the Executioner's Shadow allows a glimpse into Jerry's rarely seen world of death row and execution. It explores Karen's moral conflict as she attends the accused bomber's trial, a young man the same age as her son. It defies our perception of justice as Vicki and Syl fight for the life of their daughter's murderer. IADP would like to conduct these screenings and discussions. If you know of an organization that would like to co-sponsor a similar event with IADP, please let us know


CONFERENCES

If you are aware of a conference taking place and the conference host(s) have a slot for booths, let us know and we will contact the host(s) to obtain a booth

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Fees are \$15 for individual and \$50 for groups annually

Please mail your membership fees with your name, address, email, and telephone number to: PO Box 782, Des Moines, IA 50303

Questions? Call 15-229-4578 or email Info@iowansagainstthedeathpenalty.com. Like us on Facebook 

Governor's FOCUS Committee unanimously adopts policy recommendations for criminal justice reforms

Members

Adam Gregg, Lt. Governor (Chair), Dr. Beth Skinner, Director, Department of Corrections, Helen Miller, Chair, Board of Parole, Steve Bayens, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, Judy Bradshaw, Director, Iowa Law Enforcement Academy, Jeff Wright, State Public Defender, Bruce Vander Sanden, Director, Sixth Judicial District, Department of Correctional Services, Betty Andrews, President of the Iowa-Nebraska NAACP, Rev. Alfonso Perez, Member, Commission of Latino Affairs, John Koufos, National Director of Reentry Initiatives, Right on Crime, Janelle Melohn, Director, Crime Victims Assistance Division, Office of the Attorney General, Jennifer Miller, Marshall County Attorney, Darius Potts, Ankeny Police Chief, Tim Lane, Scott County Sheriff

“Iowans recognize the power of redemption and second chances, and criminal justice reform continues to be a key priority for my administration,”

12/12/19 - DES MOINES— Today, the Governor's FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform (Fueling Ongoing Collaboration and uncovering Solutions) unanimously adopted recommendations for criminal justice reform efforts in the state of Iowa. The recommendations include various changes, including legislative proposals and executive action. “Iowans recognize the power of redemption and second chances, and criminal justice reform continues to be a key priority for my administration,” said Gov. Reynolds. “These recommendations help address our state's workforce needs, protect our communities, and send a strong message to every Iowan that it's never too late to turn your life around. I want to thank this diverse group of stakeholders and committee chair, Lt. Governor Gregg, for helping us chart out transformational change to Iowa's criminal justice system.” Gov. Reynolds has made criminal justice reform a priority from the very

beginning, and I was proud to chair this broad and talented group of dedicated stakeholders to provide the Governor with these forward-looking recommendations,” said Lt. Gov. Gregg, FOCUS committee chair. “I am excited about what lies ahead in our push for criminal justice reform”. Over the past year, Gov. Reynolds has championed several initiatives that focus on providing second chances to former offenders. These recommendations will build on that work and form the foundation of a package of legislative proposals aimed at advancing our “2nd chance” initiative this next year. Gov. Reynolds officially launched the FOCUS Committee this past November at the 7th Annual Iowa Summit on Justice & Disparities. She then appointed a broad, diverse, talented group of stakeholders to develop and adopt these recommendations. <https://doc.iowa.gov>

NEWS OF THE IOWA BOARD OF PAROLE



Helen Miller, who served in the Iowa legislature for 16 years has been appointed by the governor to serve at the chairperson of the Iowa Board of Parole. Jeff Wright who had been serving in that position has been appointed to head up the Iowa State Defender's Office. Miller who represented Fort Dodge and surrounding rural areas in Webster County was the longest serving African American women in the Iowa house. She did her undergraduate studies at Howard University and received her law degree from Georgetown Law Center. She practiced law in the area of criminal defense. She shares the governor's commitment to second chances and redemption. The addition of chairperson Miller meant that there was a gender imbalance on the board. Sue Lerdal, who served many years on the board volunteered to resign to address this problem. With the retirement of Sheila Wilson there are now two vacancies on the board. The board consists of 5 members. Currently the members, in addition to Ms Miller are: Norm Granger, Vice Chairperson, Kathleen Kooiker and alternates: Greg C rocker, Sue Weinacht, and Jackie Romp. Members are appointed for 4 years. The Board must have 2 out of 3 of the following requirements: 1. Contain one member who is a disinterested layperson 2. Contain one member who is an attorney licensed to practice law in the state and who is knowledgeable in correctional procedures and issues, 3. Contain one member who is a person holding at least a master's degree in social work or counseling and guidance and who is knowledgeable in correctional procedures and issues. The meetings of the Board are public. E-mail Patricia Jay at Patricia.Jay@iowa.gov if you would like to attend a meeting.

Iowa Justice Action Network

CRADLE TO PRISON PIPELINE

In November The Iowa Justice Action Network held their state-wide annual conference in Coralville, Iowa. This year the focus was on the family and what is often referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline. Dr. Tammy Nyden, professor at Grinnell and founder of Mother's on the Front Line, was the keynote speaker. Her work addressing the needs of families and children caught in the mental health and/or juvenile court systems advocates for realistic, necessary changes in the way we approach education. Panels shared information about challenges that face children at different stages of growth and development. Living Beyond the Bars of Iowa released their Guide to Loved Ones for navigating the Iowa prison system. Highlights of the conference included the performance of the Hip Hop Kids from Waterloo and a display of art work done by Iowa inmates.

SAVE THE DATE

IOWA JUSTICE ACTION NETWORK LOBBY DAY

State Capitol, Des Moines, IA Rm 116
Thursday February 6th at 11:30 am
Cost for lunch \$14

To sign up send a check to:
IJAN 2709 Edgewood Drive
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
or pay via credit card at
www.iowajusticeactionnetwork.com

Questions? Contact Allen Hayes at allen.hayes@uni.edu or call 319-266-8406

BECOME A MEMBER

Cost – **FREE**

Email your name, email address and telephone number to: iowajusticeactionnetwork@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook

Office of the Ombudsman Ombudsman Communication Rules

Every Iowa Inmate has the opportunity to contact the Ombudsman’s office without the fear of reprisal from prison management or staff. Iowa prisons are to provide addresses and phone numbers for you to make legitimate concerns known especially if your safety or well-being is an issue i.e. inadequate clothing, food, health care, heat, cooling, personal safety, etc.

Below are the Administrative Rules put forth by the Ombudsman’s Office regarding phone calls and letters from incarcerated individuals to their office.

- **141-2.3(2C) Institutional Communications**
- 2.3(1) Correspondence. Any correspondence from a person confined or residing in an institution or facility under the control of an agency shall be forwarded, unopened, and without undue delay, to the Office of the Ombudsman, y the institution or facility.
- Any correspondence from the office of the Ombudsman to such person shall be delivered, unopened and without undue delay, by the institution or facility to that person.
- 2.3(2) Telephonic communication. A telephonic communication between a person confined or residing in an institution or facility under and agency’s control and any staff member of the Office of the Ombudsman shall not be monitored by any officer or employee of that agency.

The following numbers should be available to every inmate in an Iowa prison on their computers:
515-281-2592 – Iowa Ombudsman’s Office
866-293-4261 – Iowa Prison Library Support Line
866-448-4612 – Iowa Special Defense Unit
866-448-4613 – Iowa Appellate Defenders Office



New Leadership for IDOC



There have been many changes in the top leadership of the Iowa DOC in recent months. Following the retirement of Director Jerry Bartruff, Dr. Beth Skinner was selected by the governor to head up the Department. Dr. Skinner has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree and doctorate in social work, all from the University of Iowa.

Dr. Skinner worked in community-based corrections and then took a job with the Council of State Governments Justice Center in 2012. She returned to Iowa to head up the work as statewide recidivism reduction coordinator overseeing a 3 million dollar grant to reduce recidivism. When the 3 million dollar grant expired she was appointed to be Risk Reduction Director. She and the governor share the goal of giving incarcerated persons a second chance. They share the goal of a criminal justice system that rehabilitates offenders so that redemption is possible. The governor has said that she wants a system that rehabilitates offenders so they can find purpose and become productive members of society. Dr. Skinner shares this goal.

There have also been a number of other changes in staffing throughout the system. Dan Craig who worked in many capacities throughout the system recently retired. His most recent position was as interim director of corrections. Patti Wachnedorf who also had worked for the department over the years recently retired form her position as warden at ISP. Randy Gibbs who recently served as warden at the Clarinda Correctional Facility was moved to serve as warden at ISP and deputy warden Steve Weiss became warden. Bill Sperlslage who has served many years at ASP and ISP became the deputy director of prisons. Jeremy Larson is now the warden at ASP.



Iowa Department of Corrections Meetings 2020

January 3, 2020
Evelyn K Davis Center
1171 7th Street, Des Moines, Iowa

February 6, 2020
This meeting will begin at 9:30
Des Moines, Central Office
(Legislative Breakfast 7-9)
510 East 12th Street Des Moines, IA

March 6, 2020
6th Judicial District
Faches Center 951 29th Ave SW,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

April 3, 2020
North Central Correctional Facility
313 Lanedale, Rockwell City, Iowa

May 1, 2020 Anamosa State Penitentiary
406 North High Street, Anamosa, Iowa

June 5, 2020 - 4th Judicial District
Residential Correctional Facility
900 9th Avenue, Council Bluffs, IA

July 10, 2020
Iowa State Penitentiary
2111 330th Avenue, Fort Madison, Iowa

August 7, 2020 - 2nd Judicial District
Fort Dodge Community Corrections Center
311 1st Avenue South, Fort Dodge, Iowa

September 11, 2020
Newton Correctional Facility
307 S 60th Avenue West, Newton, Iowa

October 2, 2020 8th Judicial District
Ottumwa Residential Facility
245 Osage Drive, Ottumwa, Iowa

November 6, 2020
Des Moines, Central Office
510 East 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa

December – No meeting



PELL GRANTS FOR INMATES

In 1994, Congress banned people in prison from receiving Pell Grants. Legislation to restore Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals has been passed by the House Education and Labor Committee. This is a bill in the U.S. Congress called **REAL (Restoring Education and Learning) Act**, which has been introduced in both houses of Congress with Republican and Democrat sponsorship. (Inmates are among the least-educated people in America. That's despite research that shows education is one of the most effective ways to keep people from coming back to prison. Now, there's renewed interest in giving adults behind bars better access to higher education. A new bipartisan bill in congress would allow incarcerated people to use federal Pell Grants - designed for low-income students - to pay for higher education, including college classes and workforce training.) "Restoring access to higher education behind bars will create safer prisons and communities; prison education programs are shown to reduce prison violence and recidivism."

APPLYING FOR A COMMUTATION

Commutated sentences are usually a reward for good behavior, but they can also have other purposes, such as to reduce an unreasonably harsh sentence or to address a judge's refusal to give a prisoner credit for time served. The most common purpose of a Commutation is to reduce a Life Sentence to a number of years or reduce a number of year sentence to lesser years. Nicole Porter of the National Sentencing Project stressed that more inmates should try for a commutation. Because legislation is constantly changing and everyone has a chance to have their sentence reduced, regardless of the crime and especially if they have a good record while incarcerated. However, an inmate must apply. Iowa's language on the Application is ambiguous, it says, quote "Application for Commutation of a Life Sentence" This leads one to believe that only inmates with a Life Sentence or a Long-Term sentence can request or fill out and submit the Application to the Governor. This is not true. If an inmate feels their sentence is unreasonably long or harsh, he/she can fill out and submit the Application to the Governor. The application process in Iowa takes about two years, because once received by the Governor, a copy of the request is sent to the Iowa Board of Parole for investigation and recommendations.

- (1) Go to your Counselor and request the Application Form.
- (2) If he/she does not have the Application. Ask the Counselor to go to <https://governor.iowa.gov/documents/commutation-application-2> . At this site the Counselor can download and print the PDF Application.

AGING PRISON POPULATION COMPASSIONATE RELEASE & PRISON REFORM

A letter to State Representative Ako Abul Samad from Dennis Lamar incarcerated at Iowa State Penitentiary. I am a lifer and also a veteran and have 33 years on a life sentence. Yes I do believe life without parole should be changed to life with the possibility of parole as the courts have done with juveniles. A person could be sentence (with the change in the law) to 25 to life, 30 to life, and so on, especially when that person is not the one who actually did the killing. When more than one person is involved in a crime, each one should not be given a life sentence. (Life Without Parole.) I know the law of aiding and abetting comes into play, but the law also takes into account what role each played in the crime. That guilt is passed on what part each did or did not do and this should be the reason for a sentenced 25 to life, 30 to life and so on and not giving all persons life without parole. The Federal Bureau of Prisons has new guidelines for compassionate release that has four categories. 1. Medical conditions that include terminal illness or a serious medical condition, serious functional or cognitive impairment or deteriorating health due to aging and the inability to care for oneself. 2 Age applies at 65 and if you have served 10 years or 75% of your sentence. 3. Family circumstances including the death or the incapacity of the caregiver of your minor children. 4. Other circumstances which BOP may determine exist. CURE has played a major role in including these most important guidelines. Hopefully the law makers of Iowa and other states will look into and adopt what the Federal Bureau of prisons are using for compassionate release.

INSIDE OUT REENTRY COMMUNITY

Community Meetings

Inside Out holds weekly group mentoring community meetings every Thursday from 6:30 to 8 pm. Every meeting features a check-in where members share successes and challenges with one another, and give and receive support. Meetings include discussions related to reentry, workshops on life skills, small group activities and presentations from community speakers. Community meetings are open to allies in the community.

Coffee and Connections

Friday mornings from 10:30 – 11:30 am we host a peer led support group for those in all stages of recovery who have also been involved in the criminal legal system. Inspired by Johann Hari's famous Ted Talk, the group is based off the belief that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is show peer support for others in the group.

Like us on Facebook 

Contact:

insideoutreentry@gmail.com

<https://www.insideoutreentry.com/>

(319) – 338-7996 or (319) – 621-6263

500 North Clinton Street, Iowa City, IA 52245

Voices to be Heard

Mission

To support and comfort those who know too well the grief that comes to those left behind when someone they love is incarcerated

About

Voices to be Heard is a statewide support group for families, friends and children that have a loved one incarcerated. We meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 6.

vtbhiowa@yahoo.com

Like us on Facebook 

Friends of Iowa Women's Prisoners

Our Mission

To bring together and inform individuals and groups concerned about women in the Iowa correctional system and to act on their behalf.

Who We Are

Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners (FIWP) is an informal group welcoming all interested persons. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month from noon to 1 pm at:

Wesley United Methodist Church
800 East 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa.

Bring a brown bag lunch and join us as we learn about women in the Iowa correctional system.

Website

<http://www.friendsofiowawomenprisoners.org/>

Living Beyond the Bars

P.O. Box 835

Marion, IA 52302

www.livingbeyondthebars.org

Like us on Facebook 

Angel Tree

"Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree is a life-changing experience – for everyone involved" – Chuck Colson

Angel Tree is a Prison Fellowship program that gives parents behind bars a way to restore and strengthen relationships with children through a tangible experience of God's love – especially at Christmas.

<https://www.prisonfellowship.org/campaigns/atchristmas/>



Iowa C.U.R.E
P. O. Box 41005
Des Moines, IA 50311

Do I like visits?

I usually know I'm going to have a visit a couple day in advance. My anticipation for the day of my visit grows as it gets closer and closer. Throughout this waiting period, I think of the questions I'm going to ask my parents and my brothers, I imagine how great and funny my mom is going to sound as she makes jokes about silly things my dad has done recently. I wonder what new stories my dad is going to have about his life as a truck driver. I ponder how awesome it's going to be to see my brothers and I rejoice at the thought of them all smiling as they see me enter the visiting room.

On the day of my visit, my anticipation is so high that I have to use the restroom two, three, and to be honest, sometimes even four times before making my way to the visiting room. My anxiety along with the bad feelings, thoughts and hurts this prison environment brings on me dissipate the moment my mom hugs me. I could remain in her hug forever, but, of course, I have to let of her to hug my dad and brothers.

The joyous feeling their presence brings to me is empowering. All through my visit, I bask in the abundant love and affection my family bestows upon me. No word, no silent moment, no anything is dull for me during this time. As my visit nears its end, I wonder how the clock moved so fast. We then proceed to thank and pray God for his goodness. Nothing strengthens me more than sharing prayer with my family. When our moment to part ways arrives, I am saddened to see them leave, but I'm thankful they leave me with renewed energies and a stronger desire to do and be better.

I was asked by my friend Richard, how I feel about visits from friends and family. I do not think there is a prisoner who hates visits. If there is, I do not think he or she is being honest. In prison, there is only one place in which you get to experience the loo, the touch, the presence, and the love of somebody who truly cares about you. That place is the visiting room. There I am reminded that I still matter. That I am loved. What a difference that makes!

Sincerely,
Rene Zarate

