



captured
words

FREE THOUGHTS

Writings from America's Prisons

Volume 14
Summer 2017

Openings & Thanks

Captured Words/Free Thoughts offers testimony from America's prisons and prison-impacted communities. This issue includes poems, stories, letters, essays, and art made by men and women incarcerated in California, Colorado, Indiana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington. To expand the scope of our project, we also include works made by folks on the "free" side of the prison walls whose lives have been impacted by crime, violence, and the prison industrial-complex.

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Special thanks to the visual artists featured in this edition. We are proud to include images by the world-famous photographers Richard Ross (on the cover, and pages 10-11) and Zora Murff (pages 16-17), the Denver based sketch artist Melissa McKee (pages 6,12, and 22), and the North Carolina based oil painter Eric Grant (page 7).

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Back Issues & Access

For those of you who would like to use *Captured Words/Free Thoughts* in your classes or for other political purposes, you can access volumes 7 through 14 by logging on to the Academia.edu webpage of Stephen Hartnett (<http://ucdenver.academia.edu/StephenHartnett>). Additional materials related to the topics considered herein are available on the PCARE website (<http://p-care.org>).

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free thoughts

I Am

By Leandra Bumpas

I stand tall, proud
Of my big lips
My bell pepper nose
My hourglass hips
My shaded toes
Skin the color of molasses, thick and rich
Kinky hair, soft like barrels of cotton
Curled from the root like vines
Awakened by the voice of the sun
I stand ready for a world
That was never ready
For me

I am
Born into this world with
One strike for my feminism
One strike for my hue
One more because I come from
A neighborhood
With no yellow brick roads

But I press on
Honoring those who've
Gone before me
Been beat down before me
Lynched
Hanged
Raped
Silenced before me
As if I carry a magical cloak of armor
Made of steel
Shielding my skin that's as tough as leather
A crowbar for a spine
Tears frozen like streams in winter
I refuse to cry
Instead, like Maya Angelou
I stand, I rise
It's my time

I am
My natural beauty you think can be bought
Without the soul that has no price tag
You tell me you want to own everything
Except the burdens on my shoulders
He had skittles and tea
I can't breathe

Speak my name
He whistled
He ran
She knocked on a stranger's door
His music was too loud

Screams and cries of the motherless and
Fatherless child
Horrors of the mothers and fathers
Burying their child
A nation
Uncertain of their tomorrows

Someone, tell me
Where can I be free?
Where can I be me?

Mental whips and verbal lashes
of who you say

I am

You looked at me wrong
Yet I saw what was right

I say I am a proud woman
I say I am a free woman
I say I am a black woman

I say I am
Me



Portrait by Melissa McKee

Expression

By Aaron Fait

The conflict I have is with myself.

I wonder why I feel so scared to write something that only I'll read, or why I feel it has to be perfect writing? In fact, it's my biggest fault, because this fear stops me from even writing at all.

How can I challenge myself if I can't even trust myself to express my thoughts to only one person — MYSELF? Do I not know the meaning behind my own words? Or maybe, is it because I worry that others won't understand what I'm trying to express?

I want to have some value.

I just want my words to have a voice.



The Struggle
Eric Gant
Oil on pillowcase

Home

By Melissa McKee

Home is the Denver Women's Correctional Facility, where green is the new black. Short sleeve shirts and pocketed trousers come in multiples of three. The black boots are worn all year long and eat holes in your socks. Casual wear is a yellow t-shirt. All clothing is made in the on-site sewing sweatshop. Laundry monograms everything with your government name and number. But, the real fashion statement is the shower shoes with holey socks.

At home, your neighborhood is identified by the color of your wrist tag.

Unit 7 are those who are days away from going home.

Unit 6 are the real crazies. No caffeine allowed there.

Unit 5 is maximum security or closed custody. Those are the ones who can't be trusted with themselves.

Unit 4 are newbies and the hole. They cuff you up and lock you down 23 hours in a cell for fighting or cheeking meds.

Unit 3 is medium custody and the potty pit. Where cops are in a bubble and the inmates run wild.

Unit 2 is low custody. Where doors have keys. The re-entry program has prime real estate on the third floor.

Unit 1 is for the truly entitled. Most are considered "real killers." They walk in the yard in sweat suits, sunglasses, and tennis shoes. They host the dog program, eat ice cream, check-out DVDs, and have crocheted blankets.

Home is where the kitchen serves you large portions of depression and discontentment, with a side of gossip, and abandonment for dessert. Vegetables are never an issue, because we all have green beans.

At home, the grey sweatsuits hang-out at the gym. This is the same place where hundreds of women celebrate God Behind Bars every Sunday evening. Occasionally, for a small fee, there is a movie night with popcorn and real hot dogs, not just lips and ass.

Home is where we create makeup if we can't buy it. Shoe polish, colored pencils, chalk, coffee, and baby powder. They buy curling irons, hair straighteners, and blow dryers, all to look good for other women. In Cosmo, there are no favorites: all haircuts are equally bad. The real fashionistas do glitter. It's mailed in on greeting cards, scraped off and applied to faces to attract new girlfriends, wives, and baby mamas. Every day you hear "I love you" non-stop. When they can't say it, they sign it with hearts and blowing kisses. Unfortunately, some of these affection-starved women will leave with PREA* charges and become sex offenders. All in the name of love.

At home, our grocery store delivers every Monday. We eat fat bastards, hard noodles, burritos, and prisoner pie. We stand for counts and make 72 cents a day. Our currency is stamps and noodles. We play spades for pop tokens. We iron creases in our shirts and pants. We rake gravel, sneak sugar past checkpoint, and pass notes in the dish pit. Security keeps the men out and the bunnies in.

The most entertaining is the med line races. Don't participate unless you are serious about your medications. You can get run over by a wheelchair or shoulder checked by a woman with a cane. Come taste the rainbow: tegretol, trazodone, neurontin, wellbutrin, elavil, seroquel, and paxil. Just like a bag of skittles.

At home, time is measured in years, not minutes. Some of our residents are lifers, the long term residents spend decades. The vacationers come for a few years. Drive-bys are under a year. Drop-ins come to see old friends because they can't stay out long enough to get on a visitor's list.

**The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed in 2003 to "provide for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in Federal, State, and local institutions and to provide information, resources, recommendations, and funding to protect individuals from prison rape." (Prison Rape Elimination Act, 2003).*

Self Portrait

By Charles Ross

There is something protecting me from myself

something must die so these pages can be felt

consumed by fear shame and guilt

I put this pen to paper in hopes that I be rebuilt

by definition or by statistic I am not to be compared

to anything or anyone else

in the deepest depths and darkest chasms of my mind

there is a thought, a plan of some kind

an idea of a family, of a love that has never been expressed

a thought of genuine and real innocence

and understanding and compassion for others

that brings a tear and chokes the thought

pure and unnurtured it sits guarded and protected in these depths

guarded by lies, fears, and regrets

these depths are where my love and innocence reside

where did the innocence go? Did I lose it?

was it taken from me? Did I ever have it?

I can't recall what it felt like

I can identify and see it in others but can't get myself to a point to remember

the fear and unfamiliarity wraps itself around my mind

constricting and suffocating my ability to find

the courage and strength to delve to the deepest

darkest depths of the circumstances

that make my life something I regret.

Editor's Note: *One of the most challenging things about working with our imprisoned partners is how fleeting our time together can be. It is not uncommon to work with a student for weeks, or even years, only to return for a workshop to find that an individual has been transferred to another facility. Charles was a perceptive, supportive, and highly dependable member of our workshop at the Colorado Correctional Center for over a year. When this piece was chosen for publication, Charles had yet to choose a title. Unfortunately, we have since lost touch with Charles after he was moved to another facility. Rather than leave this poignant piece unpublished, we have taken the liberty of titling it for him.*

Untitled
Richard Ross



Misery

By Donnita Allen Hickox

Gotta be careful of the company we keep
Cuz misery loves our company
Behind our backs she plots and laughs
Making us believe
She's what we need
And she'll be our friend
'Til the end

She's plotting and scheming
Some say she's a demon
Surely she's deceiving
A misleading temptation
This bitch ain't our friend
It's all pretend!
I tell you they're lies
It's her act of demise
In this game we're playing
Here no one sleeps
And our days are infinite battles

But when we're in the ground
She's nowhere to be found
That bitch was never a friend
just a synthetic seduction
There's nothing left to say
cuz at the end of our stay
Misery was only a spoon and a needle



Portrait by Melissa McKee

What's The Matter?

By Terrance Harris Jr.

Recently I was asked
What I thought of Black Lives Matter
My thoughts raced back to when black lives were scattered
Bruised
Battered
Beaten to within an inch of my life
Choked to death from being force-fed through a crude iron pipe
Flesh ripped off bones from the lashes of the whip
But nothing was more painful than being ripped from my home

Through searing tears
I saw so clear
Without fear
My brother jumped with his last breath
To escape an uncertain death
Rusted manacles cut into raw blistered skin on my wrists and ankles
Our collective psyche is forever mangled
Webs of chains have us all entangled
As we wept and wailed
The ship went on and sailed

Day and night are parallel hells
My soul wants to rebel
In the dark and in the light
But my body is too weak to fight
I've begged the Scared Ocean Goddess to take my life
But she has turned her back to me since I was forced to worship "Jesus Christ"
An entire religion's corruption making way for a nation's construction
All while allowing for native people's destruction
Making Hiroshima and Nagasaki seem like nothing
Half a million dead at the push of a button
Jack and Bobby, Malcom and Martin
All lives matter... I beg your pardon?

I'll digress and answer the initial question
Who's lives matter
Is all a matter of perspective

Rhonda's Rules

By Melissa McKee

When Rhonda was a little girl, her mother taught her care.
The world is full of crazy people and our family has our share.

It's our choices that make the difference. Our choices tell who we are.
So speak the rules and know them well and they will take you far.

Rhonda had many cousins, twelve to be exact.
She was the only girl. How was she to act?

Boys will be boys. They fight, wrestle, and are rarely clean.

But they always kept their private parts covered and unseen.

Rhonda had to teach them the way to treat the girls.
Smiles, waves, and winks, not fists and kicks and pulls.

Rhonda couldn't hide the beauty she was given.

She learned about attention and affection that's forbidden.

Even Rhonda's family members had to learn the rules.
I may be just a little girl, but I still get to choose.

Resources for those who have experienced or are currently experiencing sexual abuse:

National Sexual Assault Hotline:
(808) 656-4673

National Sexual Assault Online Chat:
online.rainn.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
800-656-4673

To find support in your local community:
RAINN
rainn.org

I Have Time

By Dudley J. Rue III

I have time...

A sentence on my judgment of conviction
and free time on my hands
Time to do my bid
or time to let my bid do me

I have time...

Time to feel sorry for myself
and focus and complain about all my troubles and woes
or time to be appreciative that I am still alive
and acknowledge the blessings I still have
such as a sound body and mind
my friends and family who love and support me

I have time...

Time to think about what I could've, would've, should've done
What may have happened if I had gone right
instead of going left
or time to accept the mistakes of my past, make a change
and do what I can to prevent history from repeating itself

I have time

Time for reflection

Time to do some introspection

Time

To utilize a different way of perception

Time is evident

As long as I am alive I have it

but it's what I do with it

that can and will make all the difference



Jaeshawn at 16
Zora Murff

What Do I Have to Do?

By Lester S. Alford

What do I have to do to prove to them I've changed? What do I have to do to show that I've given my life over to God? I'm not the person that I want to be, but clearly I'm not the person I once was. Everyone can see that. Why do I bother? Why do I continue to try?

The prison's investigators walked away from my door today. The one-sided, short conversation left me feeling drained, angry, and my faith on the verge of collapsing.

* * * * *

As I looked at the new pictures on my tablet, sent to me by my family, two investigators suddenly appeared at my cell bars without warning.

"Mr. Teflon?"

That's not my name anymore, I think, but I remain calm and respectful.

"We're not here about your name, Tef. I just want to make sure my officers and staff aren't in any danger."

I have no clue what they're talking about. Why would they be asking me whether or not anyone was in some sort of danger?

"We know that you're aware of what happened down Rahway."

No, I have no clue what they are talking about, I reply to the investigators with complete honesty.

"Come on now, Tef. Let's not play these games."

They continue to use my old gang name, trying to get me to react. My name is Lester or Alford. Damn! I feed right into their nonsense. But, if they would just tell me what they're talking about, then I'd be upfront and honest.

"The incident down Rahway yesterday. Someone got hurt really bad and I want to know whether or not you're going to retaliate."

I swear I have no clue as to what they're talking about. How would I know what happened in another prison yesterday?

"Listen, if you want to continue this game you're playing, I can just put you on lockdown until we investigate."

I'm not playing any games. I really don't know what they're talking about. Why can't they believe me when I tell them that I've changed my life around, that I've given my life to God?

"Because people like you don't change, Tef. Have a good day. I'll be seeing you around."

The very same people who are supposed to help me up are the main ones kicking me down.

* * * * *

As I sat on my bed, my faith wavering, sulking in defeat, I began to question God, myself, and the investigator all at once.

Why are you making change so hard for me?

What do I have to do to make you believe that I'm a changed man?

Why do I continue to try?

Why won't you help me?

Aren't you supposed to help me?

Why do you continue to hold my past against me?

Maybe the investigator is right and I'm wasting my time. Maybe people like me never change.

The key word being "people" . . .

I know I am a changed man.

Dallas

By Jameel R. Coles

It had to happen in Dallas

It had to happen in Dallas
Because the police chief, through personal tragedy
was like Joseph of the Bible sent before us

His son with mental illness was shot by police officers too
He not only identifies with the struggle
He is the struggle!

And within the struggle, he tries to juggle
Two identities that are authentically him
For he is a man whose skin is black and uniform is blue
To which self does he remain true?
It's sad when both sides say he must choose
But does he not have the right and duty to choose both?
To be the bridge that brings both sides close?
Oh how I wish he could be the one to destroy the divide
But the divide is centuries long
And by having only one bridge, far too many will be stranded
So, I too choose to be a bridge
Though it may cost me everything

It had to happen in Dallas
A place strong enough to endure such tragedy

It had to happen in Dallas
Or I may never have been inspired to make
the necessary sacrifice to end the divide

When I see the heartache, pain and tears
Of mothers, wives and daughters
Fathers and sons
Those who will never see
Their loved ones again

It makes me question
Why did it have to happen in Dallas?

Dearest Silence of the Heart

By Shalene Figueroa

Dearest Silence of the Heart,

You've been my best friend for a number of years. I mean, I'm all grown up and we still hang out. I still remember when we first met. It was in the stillness of one night, back in 1985. I was about five years old, and told to "shh!" and "keep a secret." Glancing over in the corner, I saw you. Just as quiet as I can be. Wow, memories.

For about 22 more years, I thought that I had found some new best friends in drugs and promiscuity. I mean they seemed much more fun and exciting than the mere Silence that I had been with all that time before. No offense. I couldn't have been more wrong, though. Finally, when it was all said and done, my new "friends" had all gone, I was still left just empty at my core. You, on the other hand, my dear Silence, remained strong and stayed. I appreciate you.

But, I'm writing this letter because I've found a new friend. Her name is Voice. Much like you, she's been around for a while. She's a real do-gooder type, and I'd love for you to meet her. She's really addicting to be around, though. And I guarantee that it will be hard for you to quit her. I'm sure she'll lend some useful insights, maybe just show off a piece of her art. She propels in me a strength I never knew I had. While Silence is golden, Voice is a conqueror.

Even next to Silence, so encompassing, Voice shines brighter, and she overcomes. Now, Silence, I know that you'll never leave me. But, I think Voice is here to stay, too. And I beg that you don't get mad at me for including her. Silence, I ask of you, to please examine your function, and recognize where Voice is needed.

With that said, I invite you to a rendezvous, where we can all come to an agreement.

Invitation extended, this letter is now ended, until pen and page meet again.

Lots of love,
Your Dearest Friend

Plumbing

By Bertha Martinez

Plumbing—who does it? Well, I do it. In a facility of incarcerated men and women. Think it's cake? Nope. Plumbing, in some part is . . . shit. It is fun and frustrating. Fun, when your coworker gets sprayed in the face with water. Frustrating when it's you, and when it's not just water.

Being a plumber in here has its ups and downs. The ups: when we walk into a pod or unit, we are like rockstars. The fans are screaming and shouting like crazy. Amazing. Feels good. The downs: when reality hits and I realize that they're screaming and shouting about how their toilet doesn't flush or their sink is clogged. But, I am a dreamer.

This is a good job. Especially if you would like to learn a good trade. In here the only qualification is the willingness to get dirty.

My two bosses are scholars. They also remind me of Mario and Luigi. A Romanian who takes the time to teach me great people skills. I practice on the pipes and tools, who do not talk back or interrupt. The other, an Italian, who gives me every reason to pursue plumbing when I get out. A plumber can make good money. Here, I do it for 84 cents, yet I am rich with knowledge. Then, there's my coworker: a Caucasian who has been doing this for a year and is planning her next career move. Because this one turned out shitty. And there's me: a 5'1" Hispanic. That is the box I will need to check on my next job application, along with a sentence or two on what my experience is.

Plumbing is not the cleanest job. But it builds character. So, when employers ask why they should hire me, since I am a felon (the other box I will need to check), I will say:

I don't take no shit.



Portrait by Melissa McKee

Unity

By Jonathan Gordon

I believe humans are social creatures
We seek out people based on appearances, interests
Hobbies, jobs, faiths, religions, values
We crave socialization, to belong and to be accepted

While incarcerated, you meet people from all over the state
From small towns you've never heard of, like Concrete, Washington
You meet people from all over the U.S.
From the coast of California to the coast of New York
You meet people from all over the world
From places close like Mexico all the way to India
You meet people from all different types of faith and religions
From Muslims to Christians to Buddhists to Sikhs
You can learn all types of amazing things
From new cultures and traditions to new languages and beliefs
When you are open, and don't close yourself off

I believe in unity
We meet people to dispel myths and stereotypes
To debunk prejudices, hatred and separation
We cross boundaries
To erase lines and break down barriers

Can I Sing for a Nation?

By Roderick Finley

Can I sing for a nation, “my country ‘tis of thee”
Please feel the melody and harmony of a self plea
Using God’s mighty words of integrity and liberty
So the at-risk youth and minorities can see
All the struggles in our country and community

Can I sing for a nation, and stand up as a helping face
To organize through positive things and dreams
To help others understand what chances and changes life can bring
So we can grow to embrace knowledge and wisdom
And learn from history and philosophy
How to become the leaders for a new day

Editor’s Note: *This work features an excerpt of lyrics from a song written by Roderick Finley and Nicole Palidwor. The featured verses were composed by Roderick Finley.*

The Definition Of You

By William S. Graham

A will to eat
A love to find
A voice of peace
A word to speak
A sun that shines
A fountain of water
A glimpse of hope
A soul of light
A beautiful person

The definition of you.

True Forgiveness

By Angelo Burgos

The door to the visit hall finally opened up. I immediately became nervous. Nervous may be an understatement, because I have never experienced a feeling quite like this before. My hands were instantaneously sweaty. Just a minute ago, I felt so prepared for this moment. Thought about what I would say, worried about how she would react. Is this the right thing to do? Constantly pushing negative thoughts to the side. Had enough of those thoughts to last a lifetime, and I refuse to go backwards. The moment is here. Time to stand tall and really be a man. No more running.

I scanned the visit hall for her face. Only seen it twice, and that was about fifteen years ago. Knowing I would never forget what she looked like. The last time I saw her face there were tears in her eyes. I spotted her, and slowly moved towards where she was waiting for me to reach her. My mind is racing, heart pounding. What is she thinking? How do I greet her? Should I smile? Honestly, I cannot help myself, I smile even more when I'm nervous. Our eyes lock, and she smiles. I'm thinking, alright Jab, that's a good sign. Keep it together. As I get within a couple feet of her, she opens her arms to embrace me with a hug. She can probably feel me shaking. At this point, I am so confused. Never have I been so off-balance, so out of my element. I feel relief, but lost at the same time.

We sit down. She looks at me smiling, my hands in hers.

I begin to speak, "I am so sorry."

Before I know it, tears are rolling down my face. I don't even know what's happening right now. I don't think I've shed a tear since the last time I was trying to convince my mother not to give me a whooping. And yet, here I was. A feeling inside of me that I had no control over. Filled with so much remorse. How can I have caused so much damage without a second thought? Now I sit in front of a woman whose son I murdered.

"I forgive you," she says. "I forgave you a long time ago. I just want to thank you for reaching out to me, and telling me you're sorry. I wanted to tell you face to face, I forgive you."

After what seemed to be the longest twenty minutes of my life, we went on to have a beautiful visit. Once the visit came to a close, we stood up and she gave me a big hug one last time.

Then she looked at me and said, "I love you, Angelo. Please be safe. And never forget that I forgive you."

Never could I have imagined that such forgiveness existed in this world. Remarkable strength inside such a frail body. I realized that up until that moment, I was walking through life with blinders on. Always made excuses for my actions. Always had a rational explanation as to why I needed to do what I did. Rules of the street, I'm doing it for my family, I love this money, I refuse to work for somebody else. Funny how that worked out. Street rules gave me a life in prison, away from those who needed me most. Those whom I claimed I was doing all that crime for, and the only thing they ever needed was me. The only money I love now comes from my hard working family. And sad to say, I am now a full-time employee of New Jersey State Prison.

In life, we learn many lessons. The biggest lesson of my life came to me at the age of forty. From a woman who did not owe me anything, but gave me so much. I can only hope that one day my heart will be as big and forgiving as hers. That my story will change the way that many of us think about life. I have caused too much damage, and wasted too much time idolizing corrupt morals. It is now my only hope that one day I can attain just half of this woman's forgiveness and strength in my own heart.

Boundless

Dudley J. Rue III

Shackles and cuffs
Not enough
To keep me bound
Elusive brain waves
Daily escape dis compound
Constraints and restraints
Implemented to limit
My physical ability
Yet I see beyond all walls
By exercising versatility
Trapped in a box
With padlocks
Call me Houdini
I refuse to fail!
Submerged in water
Still breathin'
My thoughts continue to prevail
Able to reach new heights
Barriers or concrete
Erased when my pen writes
Free, is me!
Restricted, restricted
Intellectually lifted
I refuse to be confined
Chains may hold my body
But nothing can imprison my mind!

2016-2017 Events

"Ethics, Arts, and Activisms of Discussing Justice"



On October 1, 2016, the CU Denver Department of Communication, the Democratic Communication Workshops, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences hosted a panel discussion entitled "Ethics, Arts, and Activisms of Discussing Justice." Featured speakers were, moving left to right, Dr. Mia Fischer; renowned photographer Zora Murff; Dr. Stephen Hartnett (moderator); Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition leader Alex Landau; and the distinguished photographer, researcher, and professor of art, Richard Ross. Special thanks to Samantha Johnston, Executive Director of the Colorado Photographic Arts Center (far right), for collaborating on bringing the photographers to Denver! Please see the photographs included herein from Zora and Richard.

Democratic Communication Workshop Spring Family Showcase

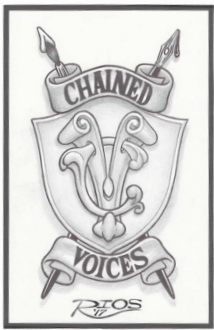
After a year of communication and planning with DOC officials, the Democratic Communication Workshop at the Colorado Correctional Center was able to organize the first annual Spring Family Showcase on March 10, 2017. This event focused on celebrating the creative work produced by the men in the facility over the past year and sharing it with their loved ones. Family is a consistent theme that comes up during class discussions and in individual writing. However, some feedback we consistently get from our students is that routine visitation limits their ability to have quality family interaction. Our goal was to give our students the platform to practice communication skills that we work on in class while also being able to interact with their loved ones in a fun, relaxed, and welcoming environment.

On the day of the event, we had family from across Colorado arrive at Colorado Correctional Center to share a catered lunch, play yard games, and hear letters, poems, skits, and short stories prepared especially for them. This day was successful in part due to the incredibly helpful staff at Colorado Correctional Center — most notably Lieutenant Daniel Roberts and Pre-Release Coordinator Lindsey Tierney, whose sincere and dedicated assistance in handling the facility logistics helped to make our event a success. Also, a huge thank you should be extended to Officer Benjamin Carver who stepped in on the day of our event to take photos, offer assistance and guidance to family, and even found time to play a few rounds of ladder-ball. Lastly, we want to warmly thank each of the family members in attendance for their commitment, strength, vulnerability, and support of both their loved ones and our program. We were honored to be a part of your family for a day.



Remerg

We love remerg (remerg.com), a state-of-art website offering the latest information on jobs, health care, housing, and the other resources former prisoners need to start over and succeed. Thanks, Carol, for all of your support!



Chained Voices

Check out Chained Voices on Facebook to see their latest offerings of art made by Colorado prisoners.

Dances for Solidarity-Denver

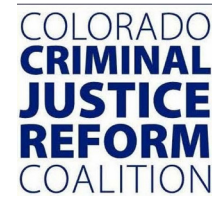
Check out Dances for Solidarity-Denver, the Denver chapter of a national organization that shares dance and collaborates with people in solitary confinement through letter writing. The Denver chapter is working on their first collaborative dance performance in 2018. If you're interested in being involved, or learning more about the project, write to:

Dances for Solidarity-Denver
PO Box 300562
Denver, CO, 80218



Words Beyond Bars

Kudos to Karen, Marjorie, and our friends at Words Beyond Bars (<https://www.wordsbeyondbars.org/>), another Colorado-based program bringing the joy and wisdom of literature to imprisoned men and women and prison-impacted communities.



Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition & Colorado Photographic Arts Center

From our events page, love and solidarity to Alex, Christie, and our colleagues at The Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (<http://www.ccjrc.org>) for all of their work on behalf of social justice, and to Samantha, Megan, and the fabulous team at the Colorado Photographic Arts Center (<https://www.cpacphoto.org>) for their support of cutting-edge arts.



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