

OREGON CURE

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

The mission of Oregon CURE is to support the incarcerated and their families and friends by advocating for effective criminal justice policies and procedures.

Summer 2022, Volume 69

A Newsletter for Incarcerated People and their Families and Friends
P.O. Box 80193, Portland, OR 97280 | (503) 844-9145

RESOURCES

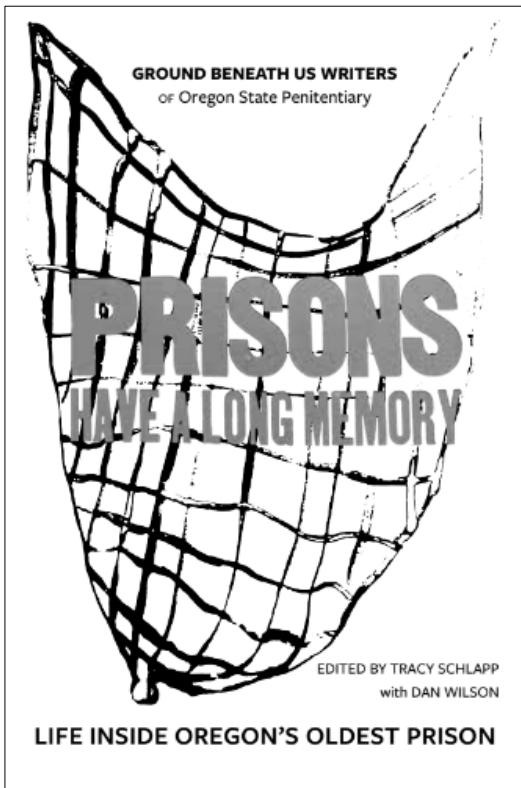
According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics 1 in 3 adults in the United States has a criminal background. And we know that the vast majority of incarcerated persons will be released back into society, and upon release, they need resources. Those resources can include housing, employment, health care, addiction issues, transportation, educational and financial resources, and the list goes on and on. Perhaps because of that 1 in 3 statistic, there actually are many resources available here in Oregon. Here is a listing of just a small number of them and we encourage you to do what you can to look into these **before** you need them so that you are prepared **when** you need them.

- **211info:** You can find a large variety of resources here by either calling 211 or finding them online at 211info.org.
- **De Muniz Resource Center:** A one-stop center for a variety of resources to help the formerly incarcerated located at 3940 Aumsville Hwy SE, Salem, OR 97317. Their phone number is 503.588.8418.
- **Reentry Guidebook – Mapping the Future:** This guidebook can be found on the Oregon CURE website at oregancure.org under the Transition-Reentry tab and will give you information on how to go about finding some of the resources you may need.
- **Easterseals:** Here you can receive help with many things including clothing and transportation for your first job. Easterseals is located at 7300 SW Hunziker Street, Suite 103, Portland, OR 97223 and can be reached at 503.228.5108 or at easterseals.com.
- **All Star Labor & Staffing:** A staffing agency where all employees are valuable and have an equal chance to succeed, specializing in helping persons with barriers to employment find long-term or short-term employment opportunities, with offices in Portland, Salem, Eugene, Bend, and Albany. If incarcerated, send for a starter application by writing to All Star Labor & Staffing Attention Karen at 2290 State Street, Salem, OR 97301. If you have internet access, visit allstarlabor.com.
- **Goodwill Job Connection:** You can contact your local Goodwill Store and ask them where the closest Goodwill Job Connection is. They are oftentimes right in or connected to the Goodwill Store. Here you can have a resume made for you that will reflect your experience and skills by staff who know how to do so without making it obvious that you have been incarcerated. They can also help you with your job searching and will have employers they can refer you to that are second-chance employers.
- **Secured Credit Card:** This is probably the easiest way to build credit, which can be very helpful as you seek housing upon release from prison. Once you are free you can contact your local bank or credit union and ask them about opening a Secured Credit Card. While incarcerated, if you have a trusted loved one who you have given power of attorney to, they can do this for you while you are still incarcerated, so that you will already have built good credit before release. This can be done by making purchases and paying the credit card bill on time or early each month. This is perhaps the fastest and easiest way to build credit from the ground up and a good credit score will help with securing housing, purchasing a vehicle, and giving you access to loans with the most favorable terms.

There are many, many other resources available for persons with criminal backgrounds, and we hope this small number of examples will encourage you to seek the resources you need as you are able.

PRISONS HAVE A LONG MEMORY

Life Inside Oregon's Oldest Prison



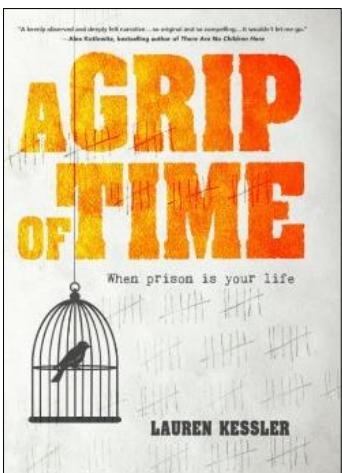
"Like a fish in a net, but still in water..." LE'VAR HOWARD

Writer/artist Tracy Schlapp and musician Dan Wilson assembled the storytelling group Ground Beneath Us at Oregon State Penitentiary in May 2019. For three years, they mentored men who have been writing about life inside based on questions posed by middle and high school students. Over 70,000 children in Oregon are impacted by incarceration. These kids have questions they may be afraid to pose to their family members who serve time: fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters... Prison life requires a person to do difficult personal work, and redefine one's self. The writing is testimony to that work. The result is a rich anthology filled with poetry, essays, and memoir that present a picture of life at OSP and the internal struggle to atone, find peace, and create community. Editorial board Nolan James Briden, Jimmy Kashi, Cameron Hayes, Kyle Hedquist, and Le'Var Howard demonstrate their ability to lead within the prison community and have powerful stories to be shared in the world outside the walls. Schlapp and Wilson have provided editorial support and guidance to the writers. *Prisons Have a Long Memory* will be presented within prisons and neighboring communities throughout Oregon thanks to support from Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Oregon Humanities, Oregon Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Releasing in August 2022 | Contact us at bridgeworksoregon.org or on Instagram @Folsom50

A GRIP OF TIME & FREE by Lauren Kessler

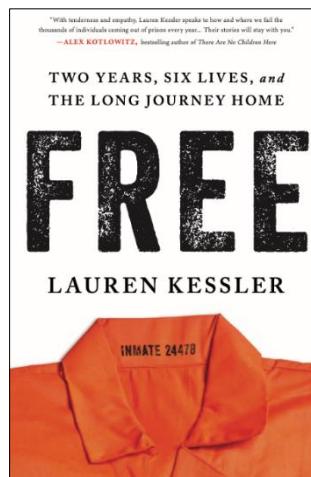
We highly recommend these two books by our own local Oregon Author, Lauren Kessler, written from firsthand experiences with incarcerated and released individuals.



A GRIP OF TIME: This book takes readers into the world of Oregon's maximum-security prison and into the hearts and minds of the men who live there. Based on the author's three years running a writers' group inside, it reveals the alternating drama and tedium of

incarcerated life as it shines a light on the fiercely competing ideas of rehabilitation and punishment, forgiveness and blame.

Amazon: [amazon.com/Grip-Time-When-Prison-Your/dp/1684350786](https://www.amazon.com/Grip-Time-When-Prison-Your/dp/1684350786)



FREE: What awaits the hundreds of thousands of men and women released from prison every year? How do they navigate the rocky path from caged to free? This book follows six long-incarcerated men and women as they struggle to remake and reclaim their lives. These diverse stories paint an intimate portrait of strength, persistence, and resilience

while highlighting the extraordinary challenges--from the legal to the deeply personal--faced by those reentering our communities.

Amazon: [amazon.com/Free-Years-Lives-Long-Journey/dp/1728236517](https://www.amazon.com/Free-Years-Lives-Long-Journey/dp/1728236517)

THE HARMS OF BEING SUBJUGATED AND DOING THE SUBJUGATION

This is an excerpted version of an article by *Lisa Weisz-Lipton* in *JSTOR Daily*. The link to the original article can be found on our Facebook page.

Incarcerated folks and prison staff share a great deal in common.

Research shows that the criminal justice system leaves an imprint on the body and the psyche. The effects linger long beyond release for the incarcerated person or the end of a shift for those working in prisons. One of those effects that are well-documented is learned helplessness.

Martin Seligman first observed learned helplessness when he was doing experiments on dogs.

When dogs had been conditioned through exposure to believe that electric shocks were preventing their escape, they no longer even attempted to escape, instead, remaining confined. They had learned they were helpless and acted as if they were, even when they were no longer exposed to the shocks. This 50-year-old theory has been used to explain a wide swath of human behaviors that seem counterintuitive, often resulting from either confinement or trauma.

While people that are incarcerated are often depicted as fundamentally different than the correctional officers tasked with overseeing them, they have more similar backgrounds than many realize. Being a correctional officer is not a high-paying job, and many officers come from the same neighborhoods and socio-economic circumstances as the incarcerated folks they supervise.

One thing is abundantly clear. How readily people conform to the social roles, they are expected to play, especially when said roles are as heavily stereotyped as those of corrections officers and inmates. While the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment has been heavily criticized in recent years, it is only one piece of research that shows the power of group dynamics and internalizing roles. Just obeying authority and “rules”, especially the arbitrary rules of prisons, can lead people to profound personality changes.

We have all seen correctional officers and other prisoners behave in ways that can only be understood through these theories. The roles that have been defined with decades of pop culture references and deeply engrained stereotypes in a circular reinforcing pattern. As if we had been randomly selected by the flip of a coin instead of a judge’s gavel, the people assigned to the role of correctional officer seemed to internalize it.

They were told, through external cues, that they had power over other human beings. For those of us in prison khakis or blues, others had power over us. Situation after situation confirmed that inmates are helpless to effectuate change in their lives and need to subjugate themselves to those who hold power.

In prolonged confinement, like the dogs who were conditioned to accept the shocks in Seligman’s study, people instinctively internalize a learned sense of inferiority, helplessness, and weakened ego strength. Meanwhile, correctional officers internalize having power over human beings, however artificial. Philip Zimbardo, the researcher behind the Stanford Prison Experiment, the said that circumstances would motivate people to act in the way they do more than their baseline personality.

The pervasive culture of the prison and its environment encourage correctional officers to adopt the prison identity. Once that identity has been adopted, so has the violent culture that can accompany it. Yet our minds cannot cleanly be divided in two distinct halves, the “work half” and the “life half.” Internalizations about power and authority over others bleeds through a correctional officer’s whole life, even as they cycle “inside” and “outside” of prison as their shifts begin and end.

Research into domestic violence offers some insight into the behaviors of correctional officers. They have disproportionately high rates of intimate partner violence, suicide, substance abuse, and alcohol use disorder. Research suggests that this is more likely a result of the psychological impact of their job than the personalities of those who go into the profession.

Studies into the psychology and circumstances of domestic violence provide surprising insights into this behavior. Evan Stark, author of the book *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life* provides an analysis of domestic violence far more nuanced—Stark argues that the abuser's behavior is better understood as preventing the other from attaining freedom and autonomy (i.e., in relation to others).

Hanna's summation of Stark's theory proves informative analyses of correctional officers' behavior. "Stark advocates redefining abuse from specific acts to 'an ongoing and gender-specific pattern of coercive and controlling behaviors that cause a range of harms and injury. Physical violence is the most visible system of an interlocking web of harmful behaviors designed to subjugate. How does it affect your psyche when the primary function of your job duty is to subjugate others?'

A core duty of any corrections employee is to impose coercive systems of control on the people confined to their institution. And yet it is that very concept that may form the basis for later incidents of domestic violence in their homes. As their workplace role of dominator or controller of people gets internalized more and more deeply, it seeps into the other aspects of their personal life.

The process of neural plasticity (changes in the neural nets), designed to optimize our brain structure to suit the needs of our circumstance, will therefore optimize to embrace the circumstance of either being the "incarcerated person" or the "correctional officer."

Unlike leaving prison—which is an utter binary, in/out—neural plasticity (the brain being shaped by our experiences) occurs gradually and over time. This plasticity reinforces the power differentials projected upon us.

Despite the best efforts of the incarcerated, it is likely that one is going to internalized subjugation. We become conditioned to eat exactly what was given to us without question or complaint. Upon release, I found myself at restaurants and adopting the implicit pattern of accepting what I was given.

Despite the fact I was a paying customer, I couldn't bear to complain when my meal showed up and was not what I ordered. I simply ate it, even when it was a food that disgusted me; I didn't even perceive an alternative. My neural net changed, my powerlessness internalized, and I had become the helpless prisoner the correctional staff had told me and reminded me daily, in many ways, that I was.

Problems arise when there is a mismatch between the synaptic structure and the situation in which someone currently finds themselves. Whether an officer has left work after their shift or a person has been released after serving their sentence, their mind does not suddenly revert to the pre-prison state.

Their neural network continues to be primed for the role imposed upon them. Whether they have been conditioned to exert dominance or conditioned to expect subjugation, both states manifest in behaviors that follow the person far beyond the gates of the prison.

Mismatches also occur between how we present to the world and how we feel inside. Correctional officers often need to present as "tough," In a 2015 *Guardian* article titled, "'Prison guards can never be weak': the hidden PTSD crisis in America's jails." If inside, these men and women feel afraid or plagued by insecurities, the mismatch alone can cause a sense of psychological and emotional exhaustion.

The rate of PTSD in correctional officers is double that of military veterans. Their suicide rate is double the national average. Incidents of domestic violence are grossly elevated. And yet, receiving psychological treatment is heavily stigmatized within law enforcement communities. And they must keep returning to work, no matter what has occurred the shift before.

Research shows that re-entering society after incarceration is challenging and rife with barriers.

People coming out of incarceration usually lack housing, employment, money, and health insurance. Depending on how long they were incarcerated, they could have severely hampered technological skills in what is increasingly a tech-dependent society.

The learned helplessness they were forced to acquire throughout their incarceration is exactly the opposite of what is needed to surmount barriers. (PTSD, it should be noted, is dramatically over-represented in the incarcerated population, too, many of whom are exposed to violence and have disproportional rates of sexual trauma. It also contributes to diminished functioning, making people more susceptible to succumb to hurdles.)

The extreme power differential perpetuated by US prison systems could be one reason the recidivism rate is so high. It could also explain why correctional officers experience so many adverse health outcomes. Humans cannot rapidly toggle modes in their minds to align their psyche with their circumstances.

Dr. Kaia Stern is the co-founder of the Prison Studies Project who stumbled almost accidentally onto the connection between poor outcomes for people sent to prison and poor outcomes for those who work in prisons. In her piece, *'The Keeper and the Kept'* she quotes a "self-described U.S. Marine and Black man" who worked as a correctional line officer for 11 years:

I'm slowly being poisoned over a 35-year period, and no one tells me. You think it is you when it manifests in your life: obesity, domestic violence, suicide, alcoholism... we don't have a name for trauma because there's no training, so people associate [their own trauma] with deviant behavior. And then the [state] agency tells you that the injury you suffer can't be solely identified to work... If the public really knew the kind of disconnect between humanity.

Unlike military veterans exposed to trauma who can later be compensated by the VA, correctional officers and incarcerated people are less likely to be diagnosed and treated with exceedingly rare compensation.

These adverse psychological effects of incarceration are not inevitable. Norway's Halden prison offers a model for prisons where power differentials are lessened, the emphasis is on education and rehabilitation, and all people, no matter their crimes, are treated with basic levels of human dignity.

As the punitiveness of their prison environment decreased, so did their recidivism. As less recidivism means less crime and less need for further incarceration, states from North Dakota to Oregon have sent delegations to Norway to learn their model of corrections and attempt to implement it back home.

While the Norway model sets a precedent for treating people in prison, the model dramatically improves the mental health and general wellbeing of the staff. In the officers' training school, the governor (warden) of Halden prison, Are Høidal explains that guards are taught that treating inmates humanely is something they should do not for the prisons or prisoners, but for themselves.

The theory is that if officers are taught to be harsh, domineering, and suspicious, it will ripple outward in their lives, affecting their self-image, their families, and even Norway as a whole. Høidal stated a line that is usually attributed to Dostoyevsky: "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRISON BOOK PROGRAM

Prison Book Program out of Quincy, MA will send a package of free books to **any incarcerated person who writes to us** at 1306 Hancock Street, Suite 100, Quincy MA 02169. They serve 45 states; unfortunately, they are not allowed to serve Texas, California, Michigan, Nevada, or Illinois. Requestors should include 3-4 categories of books they would like (history, science fiction, westerns, romance, gardening, etc. - they carry a little of everything, but it changes all the time, so they don't have a catalog). Turnaround time is 45-60 days. They have been sending free books to people in prison for 50 years. At the moment they are pretty caught up, so they are seeking more requests! You can place up to three requests per year.

Prison Book Program, 1306 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169 | 617.529.3442 | kelly@prisonbookprogram.org

QUALIFY FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

New regulations will allow incarcerated students to qualify for federal financial aid for college in the form of Pell Grants beginning in July of 2023, and the new application forms are scheduled to be available for incarcerated students beginning on Oct. 1, 2022. This will have tremendous benefits for those seeking higher education behind bars. Bringing Pell Grants back to the incarcerated means giving prisoners more job opportunities upon their release. It's going to offer more hope for a future outside of prison — this is known to really help with recidivism. Eligibility for federal Pell Grants removes barriers and opens doors for greatly increased college programming for incarcerated students. Last fall, the Department of Education (ED) assembled a subcommittee of education stakeholders to develop rules for the expansion of Pell Grants to incarcerated students, including regulations governing participating colleges. There is a lifetime limit on the number of Pell Grants a person can receive, which may affect some who attended college prior to their incarceration. If you have someone on the outside that can go to www.fafsa.online, they can print the application for you. Also, there is a number that can be called to request an application 833.563.4237 or call USDOE college aid number 800.433.3243. To request an application by mail, write to the Federal Student Aid Program, PO Box 7650, London, Kentucky 40742-7650. Simply ask for the Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid.

HELP SUPPORT OREGON CURE WHEN YOU SHOP

Amazon: Help us earn .05% for all of your Amazon purchases by selecting Oregon CURE on Amazon Smile. Visit smile.amazon.com and search for Oregon CURE. Select Oregon CURE and start shopping using the smile.amazon.com URL every time!

Fred Meyer: Link your Fred Meyer rewards card with Oregon CURE and Fred Meyer will send us a quarterly donation. It's easy! Visit fredmeyer.com/communityrewards then Link Your Rewards Card Now. Login to your account or sign up and then search for Oregon Cure (Org# BN477). Neither of these options results in a higher price for your purchases. Amazon and Fred Meyer simply send us a small portion of the sales for persons who make purchases that are linked to Oregon CURE. A great way to help as you shop.

LIKE & SUBSCRIBE

Oregon CURE is excited to announce that we have a new Facebook page that is updated frequently. Please LIKE our page: facebook.com/groups/oregoncure AND subscribe to the free "News Inside" newsletter published by The Marshall Project specifically for incarcerated individuals. Please contact "News Inside" for your printed copy at 156 W. 56th, Suite 701, New York City, NY 10019. For any questions, you may call 212.803.5200.

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE IN PDF

Oregon CURE now has the capacity to email you the newsletter. If you would like to receive your newsletter in PDF format via email (and save us a little postage) please email oregoncure@gmail.com and put in the subject heading, "Newsletter by Email Please" And we'll fix you right up. Although there is no postage or printing fees associated with our emailing of the newsletters, we would appreciate a subscription donation which we would use to help offset the cost of printed newsletters that are sent to incarcerated individuals. We appreciate your tax-deductible donations, and we thank you for helping us to cut costs of printing and mailing paper newsletters when you subscribe to receive them via email.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your membership renewal date is on the address label of this newsletter. If your renewal date is expired, we ask that you please renew today to continue to receive this newsletter and to continue to support our organization.

You can also make a donation for someone you know to become a member. Your support is important to our mission and your donation is tax-deductible.

Send your membership tax-deductible donation to Oregon CURE, PO Box 80193, Portland, OR 97280.

Please fill out the member donation form below to receive our newsletter. Adult in custody subscription donation is \$3 and Individual Non-Incarcerated subscription donation is \$15. **All tax-deductible donations are greatly appreciated and can be made in any amount. Visit our website at oregoncure.com.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____
(optional)

City/State/Zip: _____

Name of incarcerated loved one / SID & facility: _____

PUBLICATION NOTICE

This newsletter is a publication of Oregon CURE. Oregon CURE is a 501 (c)(3) organization whose goal is to reduce crime through criminal justice reform. The opinion and statements contained in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Oregon CURE.

Contributions of articles, letters to the editor, notices, etc. are welcome but may be edited or rejected for space. Articles may be copied in their entirety with credit to the author or to the publication. Oregon CURE is an all-volunteer organization that is not a service organization. Do not send us any legal documents, we are not a legal service. We are not qualified to assist you with legal matters.

RELEASE ORIENTATIONS

Release Orientations are co-facilitated by Community Corrections and Oregon CURE. Find out how you can help your recently or soon-to-be-released loved one successfully re-enter our communities. Before attending, please phone one of the county coordinators' departments listed below to confirm the date, time, and location.

Washington County Dates

Contact: Marcus Ford (503) 846-3494

Multnomah County Dates

Contact: (503) 988-3081 press "0" for TSU

Marion County Dates

Contact: Kayla Thompson
(503) 540-8017 (call to confirm)

INTAKE ORIENTATIONS

Intake Orientations are co-facilitated by the Oregon Department of Corrections and Oregon CURE. Find out about Oregon's prison system, the intake process, phones, mail, and visiting requirements. You will receive a packet of informational brochures. There will be opportunities to ask questions and learn how you can get through your loved one's incarceration.

Portland Metro Dates

Location: Varies, please call Oregon CURE to confirm: (503) 844-9145
or email oregoncure@gmail.com

Salem Dates

First Christian Church in Salem
6:60-8:30 PM on 3rd Thursdays Quarterly
Call (503) 378-0050 (call to confirm)

Oregon CURE
7805 SW 40th Ave.
PO Box 80193
Portland, OR 97280

ATTENTION:

Your address label has printed your renewal-date, below your name. This will be your last newsletter if your renewal date has passed. [Renew today to remain informed!](#)



SUPPORT GROUPS

Oregon CURE support groups are intended for adult family members and friends only. Some topics of discussion may not be suitable for small children or pre-teens. Attend a support group and network with family members who have "been there".

NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH ZOOM

Reach out to the meeting contacts and ask if zoom meetings are available. Many of the support group meetings are held via Zoom and we recommend attending as many of those as you can. They can be attended from anywhere you may be; each meeting offers different insight and valuable information and you are not required to share anything if you wish to simply listen.

Portland East Side Support Group

3rd Wednesdays: 6:30-7:30pm

Please email Ray to confirm location.

RayAllenFox@gmail.com

Eugene Support Groups

1st Thursdays and 3rd Tuesdays: 7:00-9:00pm

Please call to confirm location.

(541) 344-7612 (Dave) or (541) 342-6817 (Don)

Beaverton Support Group

1st Wednesdays: 7:00-8:30pm

Please call to confirm the location.

(503) 844-9145 or email oregoncure@gmail.com

Salem Support Group

1st Saturdays: 9:30-11:30am

The Keizer Senior Center

930 Plymouth Drive NE, Keizer, OR 97303

(503) 409-3329 (Wayne)