

# The Inside Scoop

*Stories, poems, and art created by those who are or have been incarcerated*

Spring 2022

Community Edition



Art by residents of Manitou House

**Change from the inside**

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# FROM THE EDITOR

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## Greetings Readers,

My name is **Annica Dickens** and I am the new editor of *The Inside Scoop*. It is my honour to invite you to discover this new “community edition” that isn’t quite like the ones before.

## Recent changes

Those of you in the **Remand Centre** will know that the Literacy Program was paused indefinitely in March 2020. Unfortunately, since we weren’t allowed into the prison we had no way of continuing the program. This change led us (my colleague **Joel Simkin** and I) to expand our focus to also include men in the community.

We started offering one-on-one tutoring over **Zoom** for those living in halfway houses or treatment centres. While we haven’t re-entered the prisons yet (but hope to), we’ve started offering in-person classes. We now offer a weekly drop-in class at **Manitou House** and have hopes of doing the same at other halfway houses in the near future.

## New and expanded

Readers of *The Inside Scoop* will know that traditionally, publications are composed entirely of submissions from men in prison. In an effort to reflect our current work, we’ve expanded submission guidelines to also include those who have been incarcerated in the past.

While our students in halfway houses are no longer in prison, their voices still deserve to be heard. Their art reminds us that everyone has their own story.

So, I present to you our first “community edition” of *The Inside Scoop*, made up of poems, stories, and artwork from those who are cur-

rently incarcerated or have been in the past.

## Read to your kids

For dads, we are still offering the *Get the Story Out* program out of **Stony Mountain** and **Headingley**. Designed to help connect dads in prison with their children, this program allows you to choose a book and record yourself reading it. We then gift-wrap the book and CD and send it to the recipient as a gift from you.\*



*We gift-wrap the books for Get the Story Out!*

In closing, I hope you enjoy this special edition of *The Inside Scoop*. Remember, you can become a part of *The Scoop* by sending us your own contributions!

Until next time,  
**Annica**  
Inside Scoop Editor

\*Note, JHSM is unable to do a recording for you if you have a no-contact order from the child/ the child’s caregiver or if the caregiver does not give their consent to receiving the gift.

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## POETRY & ART

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### Untitled

I'm on the inside looking out, watching my life pass by

Sitting in a prison cell asking myself why?

Why I've done the things I did to wind up in this place

While you my love sit at home with tears upon your face

I try to write you letters to tell you to be strong

I try to write I'm sorry but the words came out all wrong

How can I even expect you to even want me

After all the things I've done that left you all alone?

I asked God for his guidance and he reached into my heart

He said with faith and honesty is the only way to start

So let me start off by saying I'm sorry for hurting you

And my love once I get out we will start our lives anew

We will build our lives in honesty with faith in God above

For with God watching over us we will have the purest love

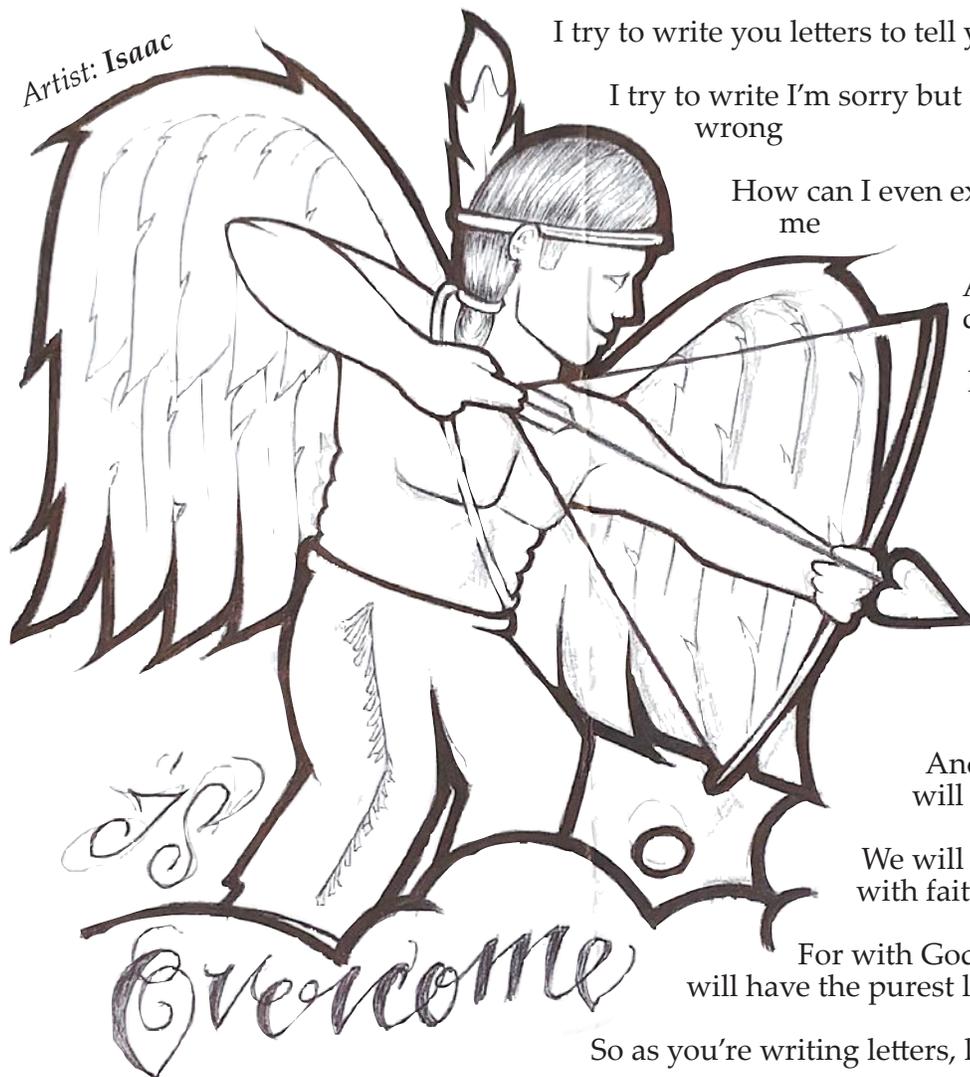
So as you're writing letters, listen for the phone

For some day I will call and say "honey I'm coming home"

Until that day arrives there's one thing you must do

And that is to remember how much I LOVE YOU

—Dylan



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# THE ROUND HOUSE

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Linda Campbell on this Native Clan Organization Initiative

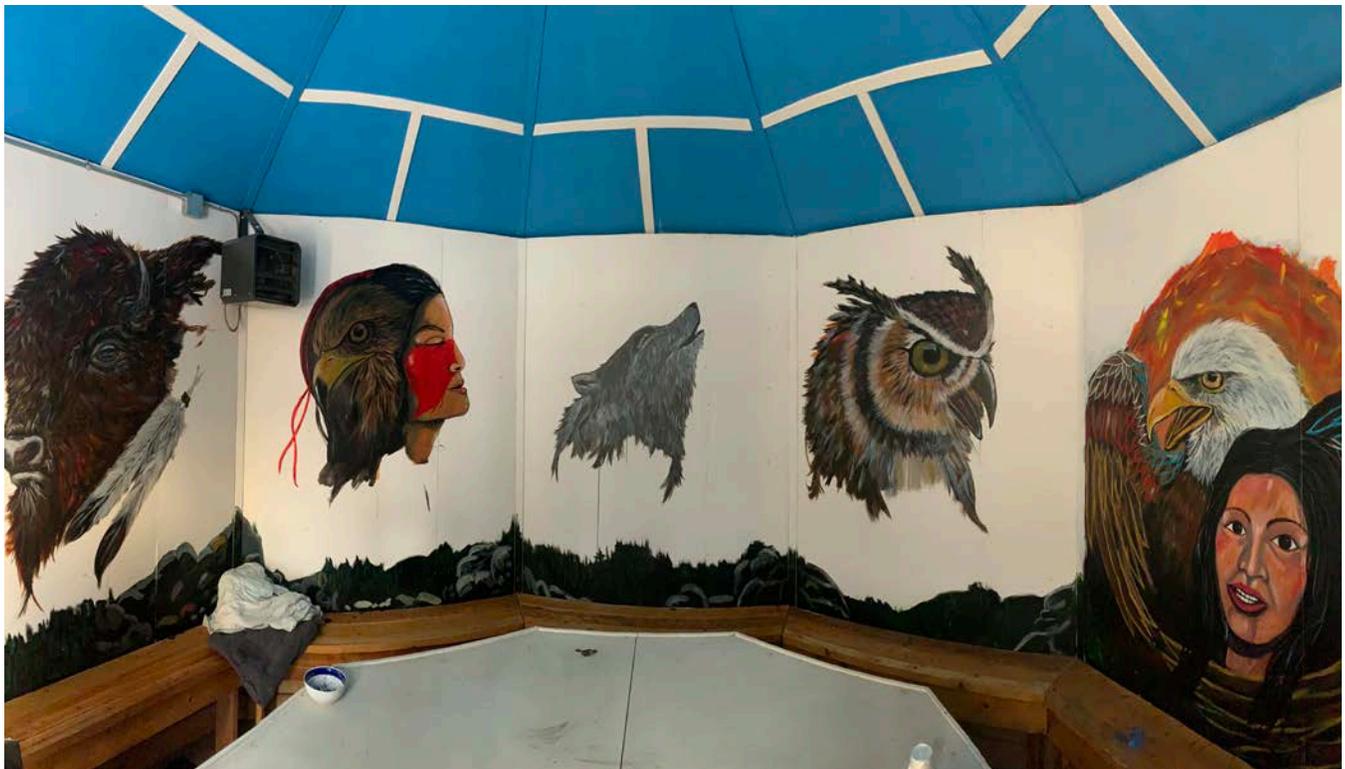
*In 2021, the Literacy Department started offering a weekly drop-in class at Manitou House. After spending some time with our students, we learned that many of them enjoy the on-site Round House. Linda Campbell, the Reintegration Pathfinder of Native Clan Organization, provided the following information about the Round House and its origin story. Linda also invited me into the Round House and allowed me to take some pictures so that in turn, I can now share this special place with you. —AD, Editor*

## Origin

The building of the Round House at Native Clan Organization began in 2018. It was an idea that stemmed from a visit to Ochicakkoaiipi Healing Lodge (OHL) in Crane River. Materials were purchased to start the project and the many residents who have lived at Native Clan donated their time in this initiative. The construction of the Round House has been an ongoing project.

## Construction

The materials were not only purchased, but were also donated by a past resident. This past resident had found employment at a warehouse and he was able to donate wood for the benches that were constructed. The beautiful inside wall murals were painted by an artist who was also a past resident. Each year, the residents refresh the outside of the Round House with a coat varnish to preserve the wood.



*The roundhouse displays beautiful artwork, a table, and benches that were all painted or built by residents.*



*Photos by Annica Dickens*

### **Purpose**

The Round House is an ongoing project for residents to participate in during their residency at Manitou House. It's a great opportunity to expand on our cultural services for those in residency and provides a private support area for those on their healing journeys.

### **Recent Upgrades**

Heating and lights have recently been added to the Round House, which makes this sacred building even more welcoming. In 2021, another resident built the centre table where healing circles and other cultural ceremonies are held.

*Submitted by Linda Campbell: She is the Reintegration Pathfinder and Section 84 Coordinator at Native Clan Organization.*

Community Group:  
Monday evenings

Dazhi-Mino'ayaawin  
*A place of good health*

**John Howard**  
THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA



Interested in attending this program while in MAX or MIN at SMI?  
Speak to your CMT!

## Healing & Harm Reduction Substance Use Program

*This is a safe place for men to talk about their substance use, build healthy supports and create individualized case plans specific to fit their needs.*

*We offer one-to-one support from a caseworker and access to a Knowledge Keeper.*

- 22 open-group sessions
- Harm-reduction model
- Incorporates Indigenous culture and spirituality
- Participants receive a progress report and certificate upon completion of all sessions

**Change from the inside**

**Time:** Monday evenings  
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**Format:** Sessions are currently facilitated online over zoom (due to current covid-19 restrictions). Participants require a device with a camera and access to wifi

**Brochure:** [johnhoward.mb.ca/healing](http://johnhoward.mb.ca/healing)

For more info, to make a referral, or to book an intake, contact:

**Melissa Nolin** BSW, RSW  
204-775-1514 ext. 108  
[mnolin@johnhoward.mb.ca](mailto:mnolin@johnhoward.mb.ca)

or

**Robert DeCoste**  
204-775-1514 ext. 107  
[rdecoste@johnhoward.mb.ca](mailto:rdecoste@johnhoward.mb.ca)

02.2022

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# WORD SEARCH

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All the words are hidden vertically, horizontally or diagonally — in both directions.



*Created by JHSM staff*

**Bannock**  
**Dakota**  
**Fire**  
**Metis**  
**Sage**  
**Tobacco**

**Beading**  
**Dene**  
**Inuit**  
**Ojibway**  
**Smudging**  
**Wisdom**

**Cree**  
**Elder**  
**Land**  
**Powwow**  
**Sweetgrass**

# LITERACY CLASS & LIFE STORIES

A conversation with George on poetry, life, and finding inspiration

*Submissions for The Inside Scoop usually arrive on my desk through the mail. However, in this case, the submissions were presented to me by the artist himself, George, during our weekly drop-in class at Manitou House. My conversation with George threw his work into a different light, making it impossible to exclude the stories behind his contributions. With his permission, I invite you to discover, the world of George.*  
—AD, Editor

## Can you tell me what it was like growing up in Nunavut?

My province has the highest suicide rate in the country. I want to battle that and make a difference. The past I've been through is not one

*I know that in order to change the world, I need to change myself first.*

I want for others. But, I know that in order to change the world, I need to change myself first. Right now, I'm working on myself and getting back on my feet. Once I'm able to, I want to pursue more education.

## Why did you choose to study abnormal psychology?

The reason why I'm studying abnormal psych is because I myself understand the residual effects of my childhood. My main goal is to give back to the community and have a voice for those that have experienced what I have. I know I've had a rough experience, I understand how it feels to not have a voice. I know that by giving back, it won't just benefit the community, it will benefit me too. It would be healing for me.

## When did you start writing poetry?

I used to write when I was younger, as a kid. Now, once in a blue moon, I'll grab a pen and paper, and write down my concerns. It helps when I put words into paper. When you bottle it up and put it on the shelf and forget about it, it starts to decay. I've learnt that the more you

procrastinate, the harder it is to deal with.

## What inspires your poems?

It's like an iceberg; when you see an iceberg, there's more story to it than what you see at first. The poetry I write comes from inside. I won't know what I'm going to write until I get a pen and paper. I guess it's based on my feelings and dreams.

*Instead of dwelling on my past and not dealing with it, I let it out on paper.*

I want to open up and to speak up. When I was a foster child, I never had the chance to

## About George

George, an Inuk man born in Nunavut, was taken into foster care at just two years old. He was subsequently moved around the country many times throughout his childhood.

More recently, George has been devoting his time to learning about abnormal psychology. Determined to familiarize himself with the materials in advance, he ultimately hopes to pursue his studies at a post-secondary institution.

ask for help. I've been physically, mentally, and sexually abused. I hated my childhood growing up. It was hard for me. I came to the realization that instead of dwelling on my past and not dealing with it, I should let it out on paper. In the moment that you write it down, that's the first step to healing.

**Do you want to return to Nunavut one day?**

On my grandmother's deathbed, she made me make a promise. She wants me to travel the world. She'd prefer me to see the world instead of staying back home.

I do miss home though. I miss hunting and

being out on the land. I miss community and connection. Once I'm back on my feet, I plan on visiting home.

*In the moment that you write it down, that's the first step to healing.*

**Do you have any advice for others?**

What I recommend for others is to be themselves and to be true to themselves. No matter what you're doing, whether it's writing, drawing, or painting, follow your heart. Find an inner peace that will not just benefit you, but also those surrounding you.

*George's poetry and art can be found on the following three pages.*



Artist: George

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## POETRY & ART

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### Four Solid Walls

My mind is racing,  
I think I'm going crazy.  
Another day wasted,  
another day gone.

I look outside these windows,  
just wishing I was gone.

I wake up again and again,  
stuck within these four solid walls.

I miss my love and my kids,  
I just wanna give them a call.

Tell them I love them,  
and I miss them all.

I pray here and there,  
but I still feel abandoned.

What shall I do,  
when there's no one to even turn to.

Lord forgive my sins,  
while I forgive those who sinned against me.

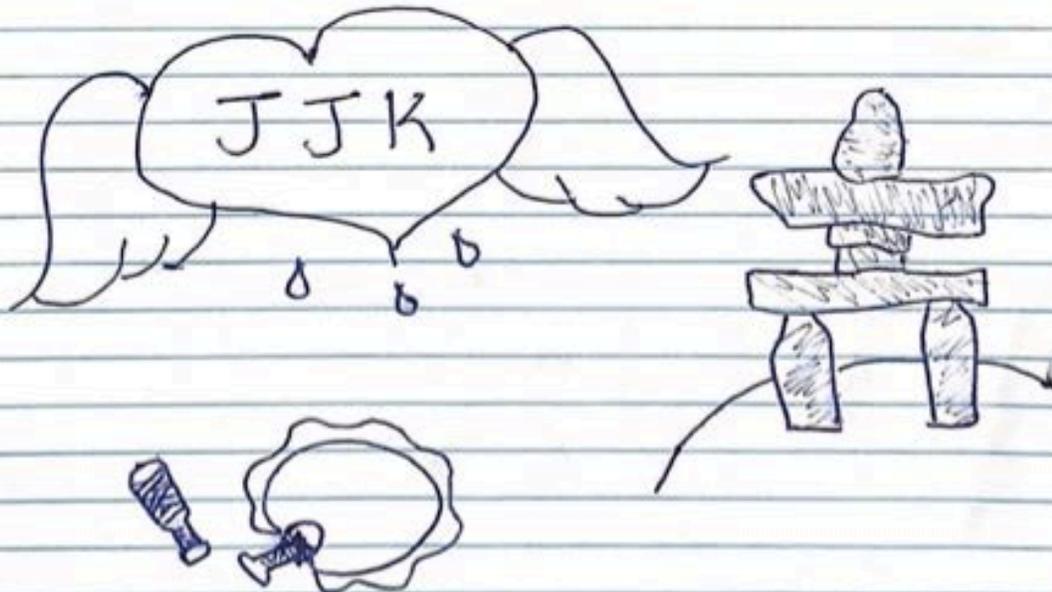
Like I said before and say again,  
I wake up again and again,  
Stuck within these four solid walls.

—*George*

## I should've known

Deep down within our consciousness,  
we both knew what shimmers inside constantly,  
we're yearning to admit our conscientiousness,  
but blinded from the truth of our consequentiality.  
I should've considered trying to diminish my illness,  
I should've asked for help in seeking consolatory.  
If only reality wasn't consistent against meekness,  
we both would've stood up and prevented infelicity.  
Now that I'm inevitably alone where I'm standing in darkness,  
I'm infatuated with your fearlessness to face death too early.  
I should've known our illness can turn into blissfulness,  
then I would've prevented you from leaving us too early.  
I should've known that our mental illness can make us careless.

R.I.P



*A page from George's journal*

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## POETRY & ART

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### All I Ever Wanted

God please keep my head above waters,  
Feels like I'm suffocating shifting underwater.

The deeper I go offshore I am reclaimed,  
By the past that taunts me, I am ashamed.

Every time I lay myself to fall asleep,  
My childhood I remember alienated as can be.  
When I focus myself to see what surrounds me,  
I see nothing but walls caving in all around me.  
When I look within the man inside these mirrors,  
I find a boy that's lost and scared within terrors.

They say time always heals all wounds,  
But it seems like these wounds they will not heal.

God what have I done for you to forsake me,  
When all I ever wanted from you is to take me.

The sorrow and burden I seem to be carrying,  
Reminds me of your beloved son we're sharing.

— *George*



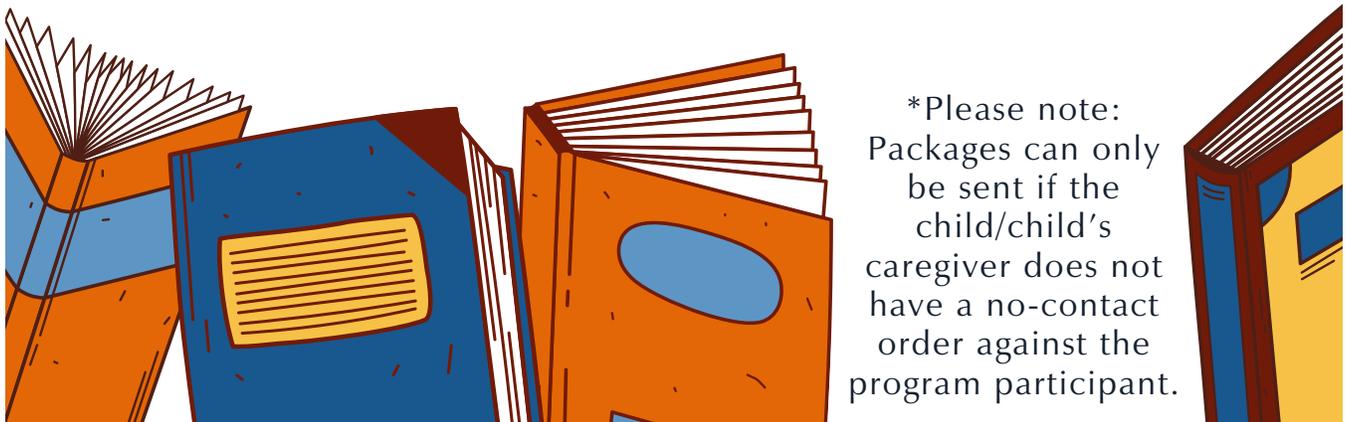


# READ TO YOUR KIDS!

Participate in the John Howard Society's Get the Story Out program!

Choose a children's book and record it for your child! The recording will be transferred to a CD that will be sent with the book as a gift-wrapped present to your child.\*

To find out how you can participate, contact the staff at your institution or call Joel Simkin at (204)775-1514 ext.113

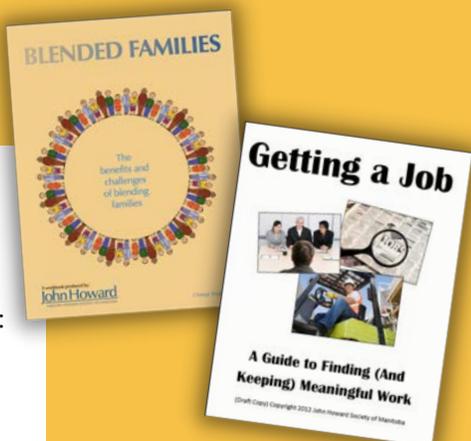


\*Please note: Packages can only be sent if the child/child's caregiver does not have a no-contact order against the program participant.

**Did you know the Literacy Department at JHSM has their own workbook series?**

Our workbook series is designed to give learners information about topics of interest while at the same time helping them to develop their literacy skills! Here are some (but not all) of the workbooks available:

- Getting a Job
- Getting Along
- Eating Right
- Stress, Anxiety and Depression
- Blended Families
- Get Out & Stay Out
- Staying Sober
- Living with Pain and Loss



To receive a PDF copy of a workbook, contact Joel Simkin at [literacy@johnhoward.mb.ca](mailto:literacy@johnhoward.mb.ca)

**COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS**

**END TO AGGRESSION**

- This program helps participants avoid assaultive and aggressive behaviour by understanding how our thoughts affect our feelings and actions. (Gov. of MB, 2011).
- Ten 3-hour long group sessions; Held twice a week for five weeks.



**INTRO TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

- This program provides information about healthy and unhealthy behaviours within relationships, and tools to promote behaviour change. (Gov. of MB, 2015).
- Two 3-hour long group sessions; Held twice a week for one week.
- This is an informational program and not a treatment option.

**NOBODY IS PERFECT PARENTING PROGRAM**

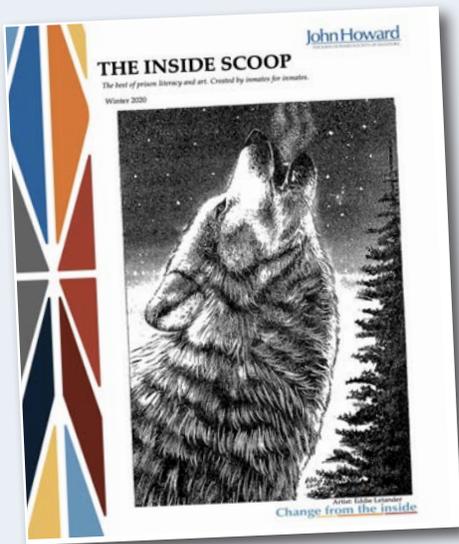
- This program (for parents of children under 5) provides information about child development, safety, health, and behaviour.
- Four 3-hour long group sessions; Held twice a week for 3 weeks



**COMING TO TERMS**

- This program assists participants in evaluating their use of alcohol and drugs, and potential consequences of use (MB Corrections, 2010).
- Ten 2-hour long group sessions; Held twice a week for five weeks.
- This course is information only, it is not a drug treatment program.

**CONTACT**  
To register for any of these programs, contact Tania at 204.775.1514 ext 110



We are looking for poetry, stories, artwork, and more to feature in an upcoming issue of *The Inside Scoop*.

**The Inside Scoop** showcases the writing and artwork of those who are or have previously been incarcerated.

This project is made possible thanks to funding from the Government of Manitoba's Adult Learning and Literacy program.

Send submissions and a signed copy of the waiver to:

**Annica Dickens**

adickens@johnhoward.mb.ca | 204-775-1514 ext. 112

583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1Z7

**Please note:** We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. We will not print anything containing racism, sexism or homophobia, has gang symbols, or that glorifies violence, drug use or gang involvement.

## The Inside Scoop Waiver

Please attach this to any artwork, stories, or poems you submit to *The Inside Scoop*.

Name (print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of poem/artwork: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my permission for the John Howard Society Literacy program to print my work in *The Inside Scoop* and confirm that I am submitting my own authentic and original work.

I also understand that my work may also be used in other John Howard Society publications, such as workbooks and facilitation manuals, as a handout in group classes, or for future promotional or fundraising projects.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Artist Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: We will not print anything containing racism, sexism or homophobia, has gang symbols, or that glorifies violence, drug use or gang involvement.

**John Howard**  
THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

**The John Howard Society of Manitoba**  
T: 204-775-1514 583 Ellice Avenue  
F: 204-775-1670 Winnipeg, Manitoba  
E: office@johnhoward.mb.ca R3B 1Z7

## Call for Submissions

### THE INSIDE SCOOP

The best of prison literacy and art. Created by inmates for inmates.

Winter 2020



Artist: Eddie Letander  
Change from the inside

We are looking for

- poetry,
- stories,
- artwork,
- jokes,
- letters,
- fitness tips, and more

to feature in an upcoming issue of *The Inside Scoop*

**The Inside Scoop** showcases the writing and artwork of those who are or have previously been incarcerated.

It is available free upon request from institution program staff, the Literacy department at the John Howard Society of Manitoba, or on our website [johnhoward.mb.ca/insidescoop](http://johnhoward.mb.ca/insidescoop).

This project is made possible thanks to funding from the Government of Manitoba's Adult Learning and Literacy program.

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**The John Howard Society of Manitoba**

**T:** 204-775-1514

**F:** 204-775-1670

**E:** office@johnhoward.mb.ca

583 Ellice Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3B 1Z7

The John Howard Society of Manitoba offers support and resources for men inside provincial and federal institutions in Manitoba and for clients in the community. Our Literacy program equips participants face the barriers that keep them from succeeding in various areas in life.