

The Inside Scoop

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

Spring 2023

Community Edition



Art by Eddy

Change from the inside

Boozhoo, Aaniin, Tansi, Hello!

Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of *The Inside Scoop*. Before we get into this special issue, there are a few announcements I'd like to share.

Winnipeg Remand Centre

Readers of *The Scoop* will know that the Literacy Program we offered at the Remand Centre was paused indefinitely in March 2020 due to the pandemic. We are happy to share that the restrictions at Remand have been lifted, and we will be returning next month!

Community Classroom

I am excited to announce that last year we received a grant to upgrade our literacy office (thank you to The Winnipeg Foundation)! Our bright, new space includes several laptops, a printer, and a phone for student use. We welcome those of you in the community to come say hello, grab a coffee, and borrow a book! To make sure that the classroom is available, we just ask that you call or email us before coming. *

*Contact Deb: 204-775-1514 ext.113 or dcapitano@johnhoward.mb.ca

New Workbooks!

We are in the process of updating four old JHSM workbooks. These new workbooks will focus on healthy eating, Indigenous culture, grammar, and mental health.

These, along with the rest of our workbooks, are free to download from our website at:

<https://johnhoward.mb.ca/workbooks>

Indigenous Languages

On the next page, you will see some facts about Indigenous languages. In an effort to support and encourage the use of these languages, there will be a couple Indigenous vocabulary words included throughout this issue and our future issues!

In closing, I hope you enjoy the wonderful writing and art that is featured in this issue. Remember, you can become part of *The Inside Scoop* by sending us your own contribution!

Until next time,

Annica

Inside Scoop Editor

70

There are close to 70 Indigenous languages in Canada.



About one in five First Nations people can speak in an Indigenous language.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Many Indigenous languages are endangered because of past policies put in place by the government.

The number of people who can speak an Indigenous language has grown by 3.1% since 2006.

Now, the number of people who speak an Indigenous language is bigger than the number who have an Indigenous language as their mother tongue (first language).

This means that a lot of people are learning Indigenous languages!

What does revitalization mean?

Revitalization means giving new life or energy to something.

Language revitalization means reversing the decline of a language or bring back an extinct language.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The John Howard Society of Manitoba operates on Treaty 1 Territory and is located on the traditional lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We also acknowledge that our water is sourced from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

An acknowledgement (ac·knowl·edg·ment) is a way to express appreciation of gratitude. Land acknowledgements are a way of recognizing and expressing gratitude to the First Nations, Inuit, or Métis land that you are on. They are an important step towards reconciliation.



Art by Eddy

Indian Residential School Days
 Where did it take place?
 We do not know where the young children
 were taken... Our young generation, who didn't
 get a chance to say good bye to their mothers and
 fathers. Parents and families robbed of their
 loved ones. Their languages and community
 harmony disrupted. Caring, loving, humble
 communities lose their joy and happiness as
 they watch the beautiful children disappear.
 Their pride and joy taken without their
 permission... The little heart beats taken far
 away that they are not able to hear or experience
 life as it was meant to be... Too far to connect
 or to bring them closer to home, as a matter
 of Canadian Policy.

Oh Canada, bring back the children you stole...
 Bring our children home. Our grand parents and
 parents who were taken as children are still
 hurting. As well as the children like myself,
 who never got to experience the stability
 that unconditional love nurtures inside the
 human soul and spirit...

This is dedicated to those who are missing
 and those still missing loved ones. With love,

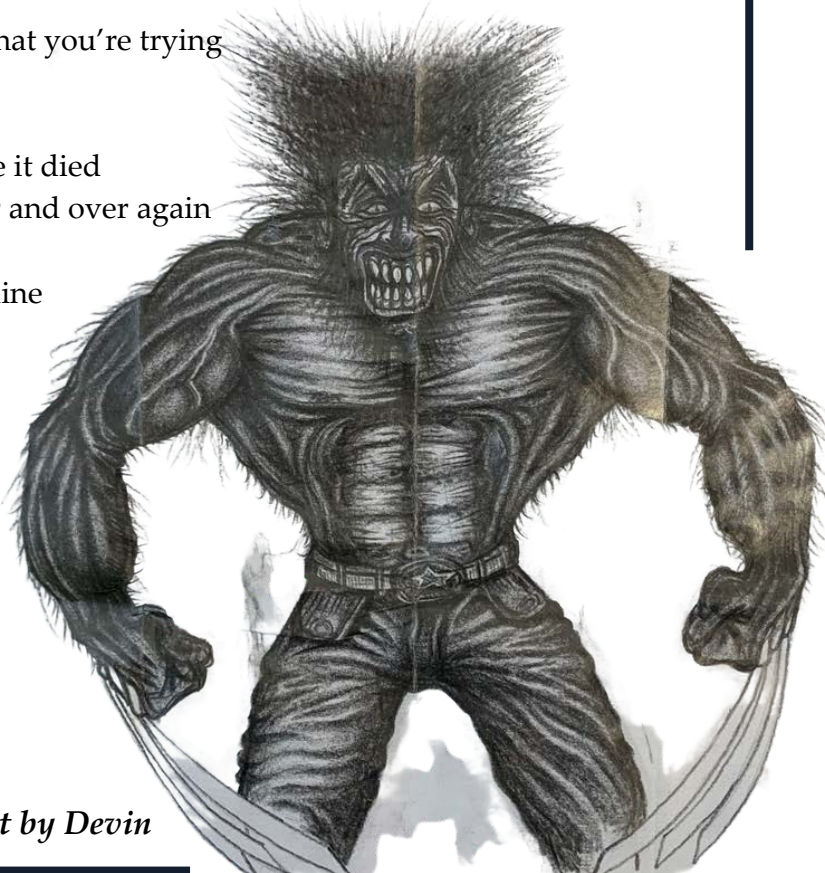
Ni/n Winston
 2023
 Caribou Clan

Rougher Thoughts

Do you want to see me fall?
 All for what spiteful thoughts, reasons for your crazy thinking
 What you don't know is I'm in a jail cell staring at the wall
 So there's your answer to why I never call
 I wonder if we're together, after all this time have we lost our thunder?
 Would either one of us shed a tear, if one of us slipped and went under?
 I can never make up for lost time,
 Just know when you see me and
 look in my eyes
 I'm looking for what you're trying
 to find
 And believe me,
 my spirit feels like it died
 Not once but over and over again
 In this cell,
 I can't even call mine
 So call me a thief
 and think about
 what you want
 Just know I lost
 more than a stack
 of cash
 Lost in a jail cell
 trying to find a
 reason to hold on

-Marlin

Art by Devin



Umm

I can write these poems
 Fill a page, fill a blank
 Make them flow
 Make them work
 Craft them
 But when I talk on the phone
 With my homie
 Or my sister
 Or the girl I like
 All I can think to say is,
 Umm
 Because fifteen minutes is a long
 time
 To fill with mouth noise
 Fifteen minutes is never enough
 And there's this feeling of
 expectation
 To say something worth saying
 But all I can come up with is
 Umm
 And I have so much to say
 And you're so far away

-Andrew

Coffee

I was living in Osborne Village on
 River
 She was living in Central on Spence
 We walked downtown together
 For coffee and fresh air
 Late morning in spring
 City workers planting new flowers
 After a long cold winter
 We decided – to check it out
 A coffee shop on the corner
 Of Donald and Broadway
 Or maybe it was Smith and Broadway
 We had to walk through a lobby to
 enter the shop
 I ordered an XL chocolate iced frappé
 and cookies
 I can't handle sugar like that anymore
 That was one of our first dates
 Now, we don't speak
 She's moved away, moved on
 I look and catch glimpses of a city I
 once knew
 Through a dirty window, sitting on a
 metal bench
 Handcuffed, shackled
 The life I knew, a dead memory
 As I sit in the back of the jail transport
 On the way back from my trial

-Andrew

POETRY

A Rainy Summer Day

The sky is weeping he said
Mother Nature cries for us
Locked away from loved ones
We crawled into the lodge
The tent, the womb
Under the buffalo, clockwise
One entrance, one exit
Crawled into the dark
Bring in the grandfathers and
grandmothers
The red hot rocks
Close the door
Was it dark before?
It's pitch black now
Only the glow of the rocks
Our faces are lit up briefly
Cedar on the rocks flares

Cup after cup of water
Let the steam rise
Fill the air, fill the tent
Around the circle, we pray
Thank Creator
The spirits of loved ones
Who have passed, with us now
Open the door
Let the steam out, sweating already
Breathe the cool air
Rocks, more rocks
More grandfathers and
grandmothers
Close the door
The flap, the buffalo hide
The glow of the rocks
Darkness of the womb

POETRY

More cedar, more water
For grandmothers, for mothers
Aunties, sisters, nieces, and cousins
Bang the drum
More water, more steam, sweat
Sing with me for Creator and the spirits
Sing our strength, sing our unity
More water, more breathe,
breath like fire
The sweat pours from my body,
stings my eyes
Open the door
Steam rolls out like mist
Close the door
Rocks, cedar
Water, steam
Sweat, prayers
For grandfathers and fathers

For Uncles, brothers, nephews, and
cousins
Sing, bang the drum
Cup after cup, we lie on the floor
To escape the steam that fills the womb
Open the door
Breathe, drink water
Cool water, back in
Close the door
Rocks, cedar
Water, steam, sweat
My skin burns, my breath is fire
Pray for strength, sing for strength
Bang the drum
As we sweat with the grandfathers
Grandmothers, helper spirits
And Mother Nature cries for us
-Andrew

rock

asin
Ojibwe

ᐱᓂᓂ
asinîy
Cree

Just a Little Inspiration, Changed my Life

Hello, my name is Rudy.

My hometown is north of Winnipeg. I was raised by my Mother alone. My father was often in federal prison throughout my life. He offered no support to my Mother. My first memory of them together was my Mom getting beat up by my dad at a party – a memory that won't fade away. Alcohol and drugs were definitely present.

I spent some years growing up in Winnipeg. I lived in the North End where I went to school with my sister. The next six years I spent on Reserve with my mom, sister, and brother. At twelve years old, I moved to Selkirk for schooling. This was the start of all my mistakes, lessons in life, girlfriends, crime, drugs, jail, treatment attempts, education attempts, failures, and broken relationships. This went on and on until almost the present time.

It was during my last term in jail when my cellmate inspired me by saying: "It's never too late to finish

your high school." At the time, all I had was a few Grade 9 credits and one Grade 10 credit. I had pretty much given up on my education until that day.

I decided to put a request form in to the teacher and she sent me an assessment pack. The teacher was very persistent, as was I. I figured since I'm going to be in jail for about six months, I should try to make the most of it. I needed six more credits to obtain my mature student diploma. Around the same time as this was happening, I got a job working in the kitchen. I was really busy with work and school, but I put the pencil to the paper and didn't stop until it was completed.

I noticed that I could obtain two high school credits through the student apprenticeship program. So I asked if I could do this while in jail. After some research, my teacher lined it up for me. I was the first student at my prison to attempt this. I was the pilot project.

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I would apprentice under the cook while working in the kitchen. After all, the cooks in the jail are red-seal chefs! So after 100 hours, I could receive one credit. So, I did it. Then after 200 hours, I got two credits. After the paperwork and a few signatures, it was done. I even got my own "Apprentice of Manitoba" card as a "Cook." I could now use those hours in post-secondary towards my red seal if I continued to apprentice under a chef – and I will.

So, I completed my high school credits while in jail. I decided to put pencil to paper. In the end, after seeing my diploma, I was so happy. I was proud to put it up in my Mom's living room, beside my brother's and sister's diplomas.

So to all of you trying to pursue your education, don't give up, it's never too late. There are people out there to help. You don't have to be in jail to do this either. Good luck and focus on your goals.

-Rudy

A Negative to a Positive

It's a never-ending revolving door of
heartache
But I survive...
I am sick and tired of the emotions
that I fake
But I will endure...
I am sick and tired of living this life
But I will live on...
I hate being kicked down and beat up
The wounds will heal...
I have lived a life of hardship and pain
My heart will mend...
The people who raised me all wrong
I can forgive them...
The lessons I learned
from the wrong people
I can re-learn...
The hell I grew up in as a child
I can be happy...
The wolf I was raised to be
I am timid and strong...
All the bad things I have said
Can all be corrected...
The people that I have hurt
through life
Could they ever forgive...
I am me because I had to be
A negative to a positive can't you see?

-Kenny

Waits for Weights

In my brain it's always the same - a game, now I'm doing time
 Every day I'm caged like an animal, a heart waiting for release
 I go hit the gym to stay fit, not a wimp, so I may never quit
 Lets me step back and evaluate, my sets, lifting stacks of weight
 Each rep thought's shifting, how I feel it's great

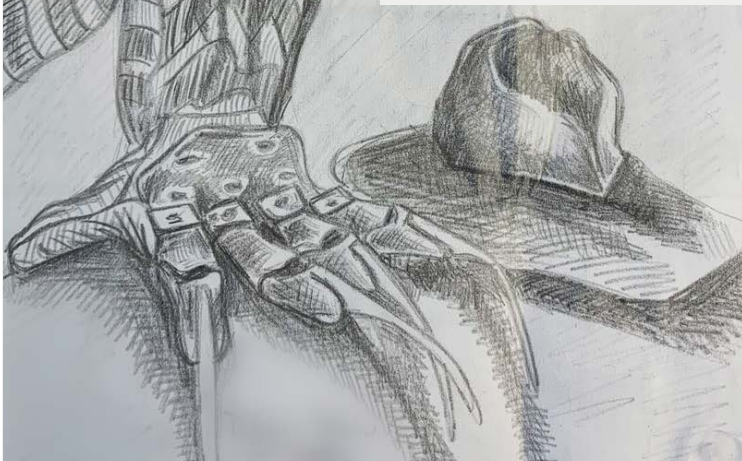


I thrive, another set I learn there is no
 debate or trump
 Knowing I'm alive, the pain, the burn, the
 pump
 Next turn I forget everything and focus,
 more reps
 I search my core on all days,
 force myself to heal
 I'm sore,
 I know whatever I found and feel it's real

My deal put
 the stick to my
 heart
 Try my best,
 put my mind
 and body to
 the test

-Kyle

Art by Devin



The Path of Me

I was not born a criminal
 Instead of mentors,
 I had haters
 From the time I could
 remember,
 I suffered abuse
 And that's what I was taught
 first, how to abuse
 I never knew right from
 wrong
 Back then, when I couldn't
 remember
 All I remembered was my
 grandmother
 Who showed me the most
 love
 Out of every single person in
 my life
 Why it turned out that way
 I'll never know
 She has now passed on
 Instead of learning how to walk
 I learnt how to run, to run from the pain
 I often ask myself, was I the only child that
 felt this way?
 My spirit was dead, as I ran into the darkness
 I ran until there was nowhere left to run
 Hate, anger, and confusion set in
 I have been fighting all my life
 When can I hang up my armour?



And end this battle that
 I fight alone?
 How can everyone feel
 good but me?
 It seems I have been
 doomed right from the
 start
 To endure a life of pain
 And cursed with a
 hardened heart

-Kenny

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Improve Basic Skills

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- GED prep



Improve Computer Skills

- Writing emails
- Typing skills
- Creating documents

Sign up with Deb at 204-775-1514 ext. 113 or dcapitano@johnhoward.mb.ca

Are you struggling with substance use and looking for supports?

Our *Healing & Harm Reduction Substance Use* Program offers in-person AND virtual programming on Monday from 6:00-8:30pm.



- One-to-one support from a caseworker and access to a Knowledge Keeper
- 22 open-group sessions (participants can join anytime!)
- Harm-reduction model
- Incorporates Indigenous culture and spirituality

JHSM COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

END TO AGGRESSION

This program helps participants understand how our thoughts affect our feelings and actions.

NOBODY IS PERFECT PARENTING PROGRAM

This program (for parents of children under 5) provides information about child development, health, and behaviour.

INTRO TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

This program provides information about healthy and unhealthy relationship habits, and tools to promote behaviour change.

COMING TO TERMS

This program assists participants in evaluating their use of alcohol and drugs, and potential consequences of use.

Contact Tania at 204-775-1514 ext. 110

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.

READ TO YOUR KIDS!

The *Get the Story Out* program is offered at
Stony Mountain, Headingley, and Milner Ridge

Participants choose a children's book and record themselves reading it. The recording is then transferred to email or CD and sent to the child along with the gift-wrapped storybook!*



*Packages can only be sent if the child's caregiver does not have a no-contact order against the participant.



Call for Submissions

We are looking for

- poetry,
 - stories,
 - artwork,
 - letters,
 - tips, and more
- to feature in an upcoming issue of The Inside Scoop*

The Inside Scoop is available free upon request from institution staff, the JHSM office, or on our website johnhoward.mb.ca/insidescoop.

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

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.

Send submissions and a signed copy of the waiver to:

Annica Dickens

583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1Z7

Or, email to adickens@johnhoward.mb.ca

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

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 to face the barriers that keep them from succeeding in various areas in life.