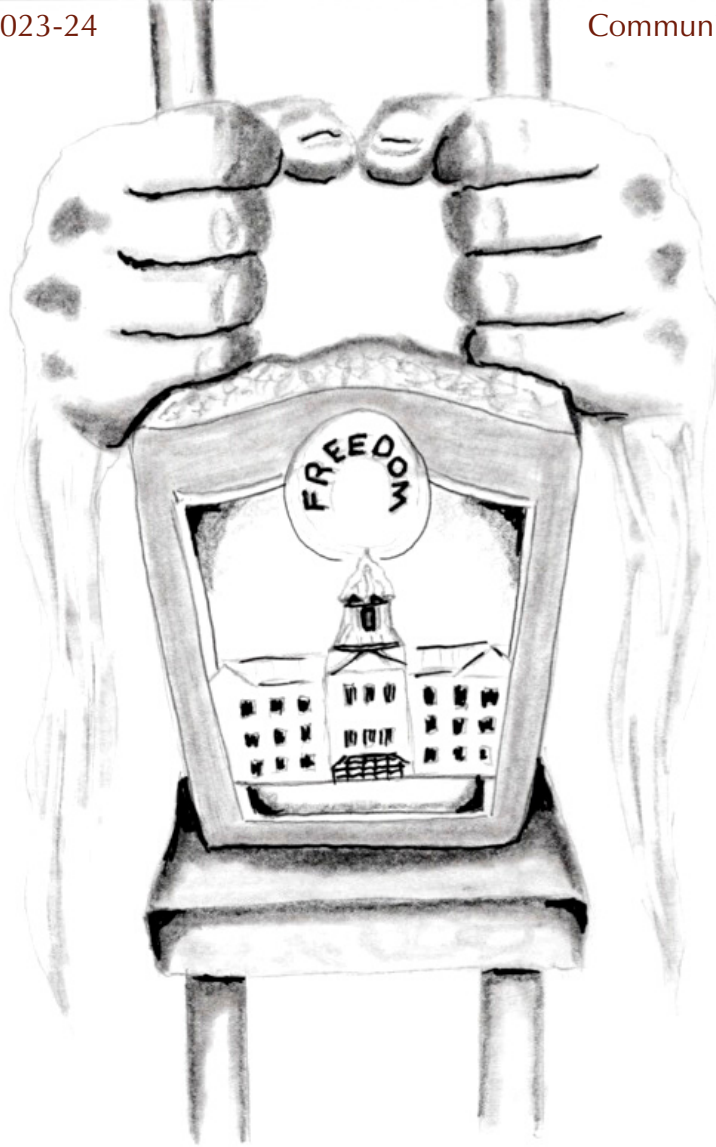


The Inside Scoop

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

Winter 2023-24

Community Edition



Art by Donald

Change from the inside

Boozhoo, Aaniin, Tansi, Hello!

Welcome to the Winter 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

After a long hiatus, we were granted access to the Remand Centre again this past June. Since then, we have been offering literacy programming every Tuesday night.

Workbook Certificate Program

Last year, we began awarding certificates to people who complete a JHSM workbook. To get a certificate, your workbook exercises must be corrected. If you're in prison, the staff there can review your workbook and request the certificate for you. If you're in the community, you can either drop off your workbook at our office or email it directly to me. If you have questions, feel free to contact me using the information below:
adickens@johnhoward.mb.ca
phone: 204-775-1514 ext. 112

**Note, we cannot facilitate a recording without the caregiver's consent or if there's a no-contact order in place.*

Read to Your Kids!

We still offer our Get the Story Out program at Stony, Headingley, and Milner Ridge. This program allows parents/caregivers to stay connected with their loved ones. You can choose a book, record a reading, and we'll gift-wrap it and send it to the recipient as a gift from you!*

Your Voice Matters!

Share it with us and become part of the next *Inside Scoop*!

Until next time,

Annica

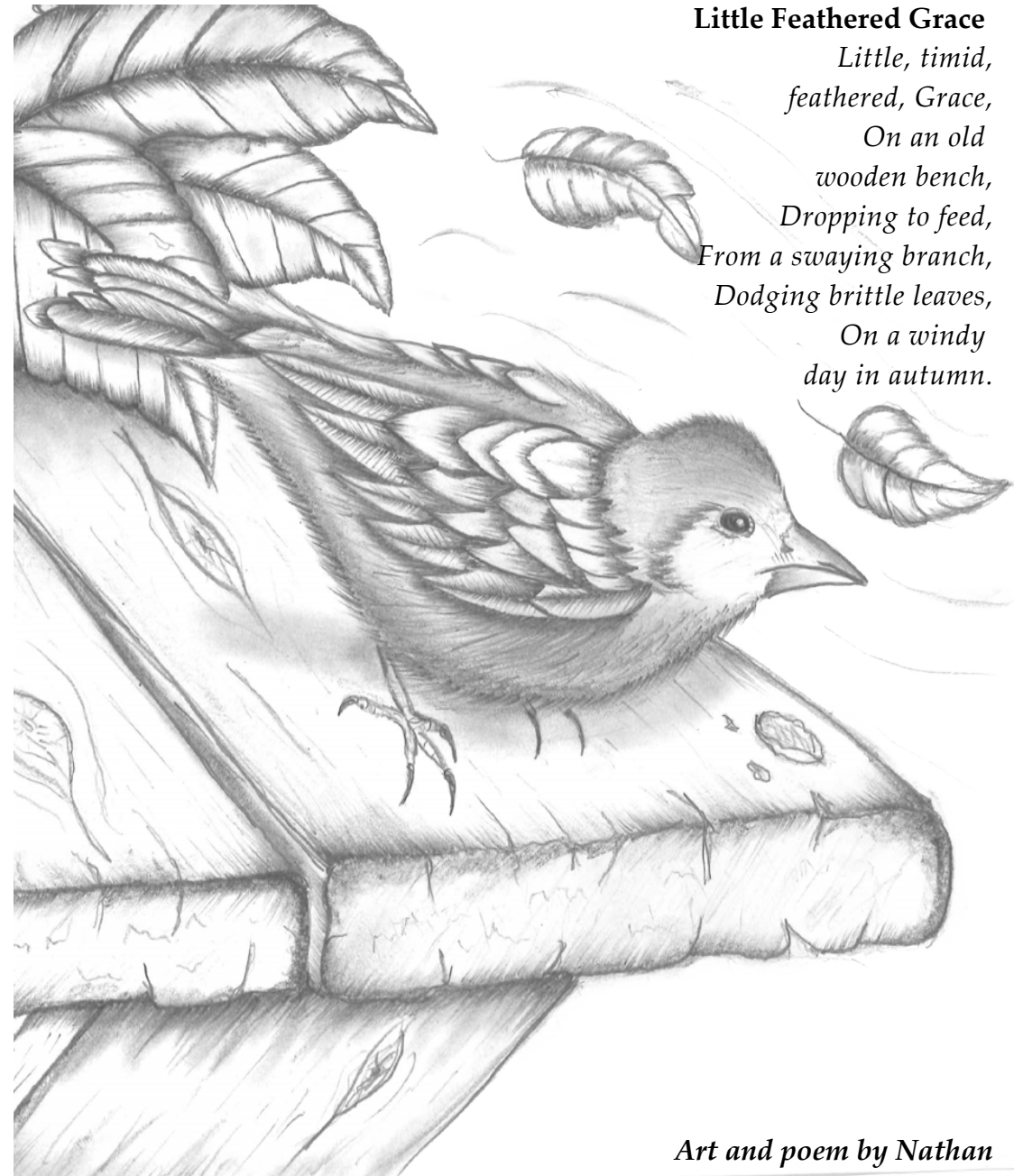
Inside Scoop Editor

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

JHSM operates on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We acknowledge that the ongoing effects of colonization have resulted in the criminalization and over-incarceration of the Indigenous community. As an organization, we recognize that understanding this connection is essential to our work as we move towards reconciliation.

Little Feathered Grace

Little, timid,
feathered, Grace,
On an old
wooden bench,
Dropping to feed,
From a swaying branch,
Dodging brittle leaves,
On a windy
day in autumn.



Art and poem by Nathan



Art by Eddy

How to Destroy an Indian

I have now been incarcerated for more than a week. I have never felt so disconnected to my culture, my nature of being.

My soul aches, this is the ultimate punishment: being ripped away from the land; my soul, my heart, and roots torn Mother Earth. My roots are exposed, I no longer feel connected.

I can only dream now, dream of the stale smell of snow crushing beneath my feet collapsing. Collapsing like these walls that bind me now. I long to hear the cracks, the snaps of our sacred fires.

I hear the cracking lips of my Mother's Mother telling me the stories of our ancestors. That oh so familiar smell of birch, pine, and ash. I no longer hear the songs of

our ancestors, just the knicks and knacks of modern man's creation.

I yearn for the sound of my drum, that now only resonates with my pounding heart that is creation. I long for the sweet smells which carry our prayers to creation. I long to see the shadow of my feathers, which once fanned my pride.

The warmth of my points blanket I feel naked without; my feet sore and cold due to the lack of hides and furs that once hugged my feet.

This is a way to destroy my people. Our pride fading to the cold enclosure we must now call home! Truly, this is the way to destroy what Christopher Columbus called the Indian!

-Clinton

Residential School Poem:
Can You Hear Us Calling?

Can you hear us calling? For we are still here. Can you tell Mom and Dad that we are still waiting? Can you tell Mom or Nokom to come searching, for we are still waiting? It's dark, it's cold—it has been since we were stolen.

We don't know where we are. We have searched for Creator, but there is no light to see. We are many, but still scared cause we can't find our way home!

We are but children. Have you told Mom to come searching? Tell Mosom where you last saw us; maybe he'll track us down. Tell Nokom we still hear her sobbing. Tell Mom and Dad we felt the same pain, and we have not forgotten!

Hello, can anyone hear us crying? We miss Mom and Dad. Has Mom started searching? We hear Nokom wailing, and feel Mom and Dad's unbearable pain.

They dragged us away by the hundreds, then buried us in one hole. They cut off our pride, then beat us like cattle, and put our tongues to shame! We cried to come home but were ignored each day. Can you hear us calling and crying?

Hello, can you hear we are still here? We want to come home! I now fear black and white for they were the colours of pain. Please don't give up searching, for I will not stop calling.

-Clinton

One Day

Here I am 3am once again
 Can't see the clock
 Wait in 4 the doors to pop
 Everything I know is upside down
 Around here it's status to have the bottom
 Not the top so here's your crown
 Everyday is supposed to be bunk
 Ever since the cops pulled me over
 Said what you got in the trunk
 I got another lawyer from legal aid
 So the crown thinks they got a slam dunk
 Today
 But the Lord gave me the patience
 To appreciate & all my life I've
 Been practicing to hurry up & wait
 Time goes on as I count down to my
 release date
 I'm humbled time & time again
 Hoping this time I catch a break
 And don't end up in the pen

Countless calls to my mom & pops
 While my mom prays that her
 baby boy stops
 So 4 all the trouble beneath all the
 rubble
 I'm proud to say I never once
 yelled help to the bubble
 So if I take one lesson away from this
 sentence today
 I will stop hanging my head to pray
 I will look only forward and up as if to say
 When the light dims at night
 I can mark another day

-Colin

The Man in the Mirror

It was another morning like the rest, nothing different than the last two months. Slamming footsteps outside my door, yelling, and screaming from the range beside me. But something was oddly strange with me this morning. When I woke to the same old noises in the same old place, something felt off.

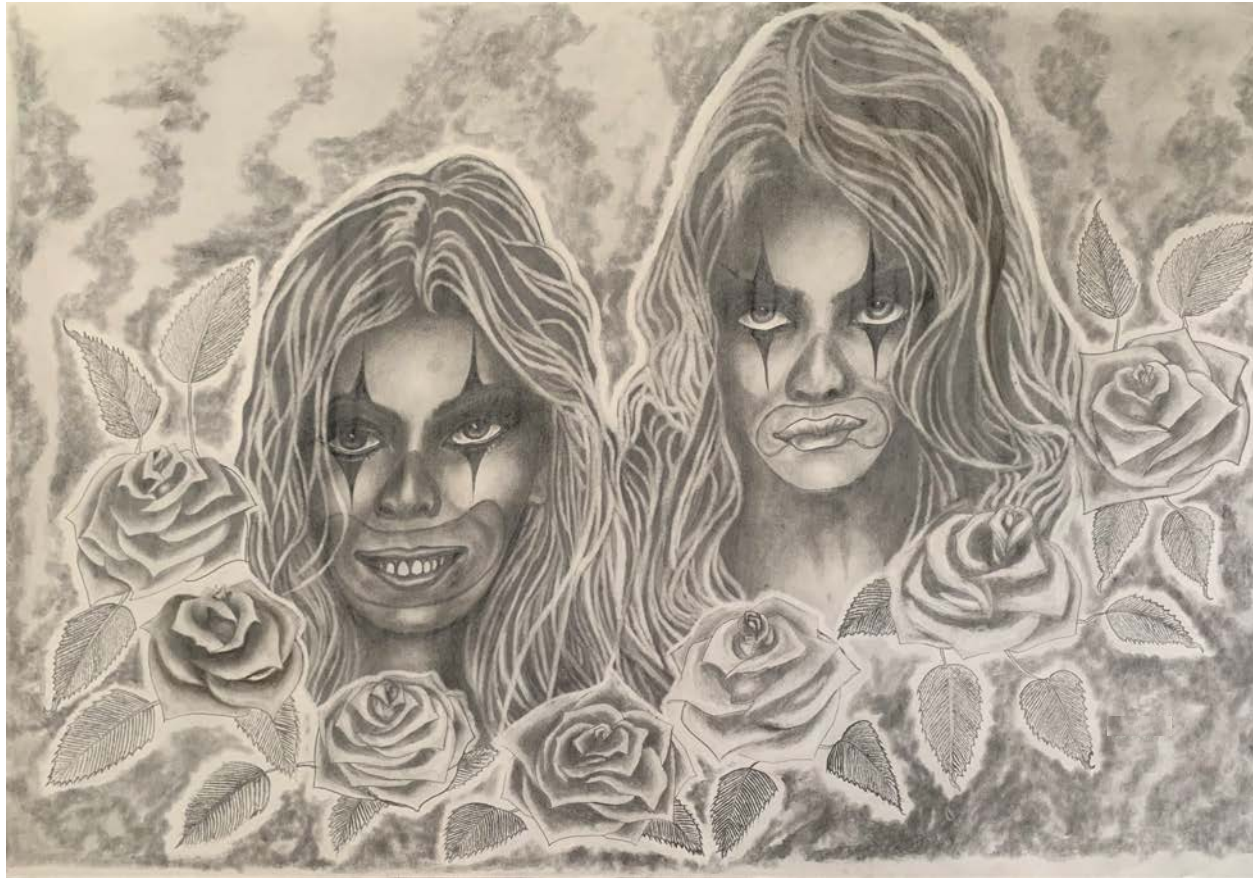
I got up, and put on my prison workwear, but this time, I stopped. I took a look at the man in the mirror.

When I looked upon the face staring back at me, I didn't like what I saw.

When I looked upon the face staring back at me, I didn't like what I saw. The person

looking at me had changed. He was older, more grey, and for the first time in his life, he felt defeated and lost. He didn't know what he had become or what he should become. I say "not liking what he had become":

this 54-year-old drug-addicted, lying thief had destroyed everything and everyone that had come into his life. He finally realized that he needed to do something with the life that he had wasted for so long.



Art by Eddy

As he felt the sun coming through the cell window, warming the left side of his face, he knew it was time to change his path in life. He had to start walking in a new direction. He knew things were going to be difficult, but in this moment, he knew it was time.

Something needed to happen, or it was going to be the end of him.

He didn't have another chance in him, he knew it was time to take the Lord into his life and ask Him to help show the way.

This time, for the first time, he had hope and was starting to like the man in the mirror.

As he waited for the doors to open to start his new day, in this life-changing moment, he breathed a sigh of relief. He knew, somehow, it was all going to change for the better.

As he glimpsed back as the doors popped open, he saw the man in the mirror again. This time, for the first time, he had hope and was starting to like the man in the mirror.

-Robert

Inmate Pay in Federal Institutions

The Annual report of the Correctional Investigator 2022-2023 explains that federal inmate pay was set at a maximum of \$3.15 per day in 1981 and has not increased since. Rates of pay were incorporated up to a maximum of \$6.90 a day but were tethered with so many restrictions and expectations that only 4% of all inmates qualify.

Pay levels have never been adjusted or indexed to inflation or cost of living, even though everything inmates purchase now costs so much more. Since the 80s, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has risen 225%. A maximum pay of \$6.90 a day should equal (in today's economy) \$22.50 a day. National Catalogue items are offered at current market prices, but

inmates only receive 1980s wages.

In my opinion, providing fair pay incentivizes inmates to develop skills, budget money, spend their time productively, and contribute to supporting families at home. With so little pay to supplement diets and hygiene items, those serving time rely on loved ones, which brings their morale and self-respect down and makes them feel like a burden.

Developing a positive work ethic now can only reduce recidivism. Destitution on the inside propels an underground economy, and even small debts can have large negative implications inside the walls. I agree with the recommendations of the Correctional Investigator: remove all mandatory deductions; allow easier *continued on next page*



Art by Claudemier

continued from previous page

qualifications to top pay levels; ensure goods are more affordable and accessible, and give inmates substantial pay increases at all levels.

Correctional Services Canada has responded that it would cost \$30 to \$35 million per year and states there is no current funding for such a move.

During the Covid-19 outbreaks, CSC locked down inmates and hired cleaners at up to \$20 per hour, where prisoners were making \$1.15 at the maximum level. One can only imagine what it would cost the government if all inmates decided not to work for even a short period of time.

-Donald

Looking Back

Content Warning: This story discusses sexual assault and may be triggering to some readers. Please read with care.

They say looking back on things in your life, people would change things they had done. Myself, for instance, where would I begin? It probably would be 1978 when my life changed for the worst. I can tell you exactly the month, the day, and the year: the day was the 13th, the month was November, and the year was 1978.

I was a young kid with a lot to live for. I had the best parents anyone could ever want, an older brother and one sister. It was going to be a great day; I was turning ten.

That night, I was going out with my parents to one of my most favourite spots, the Curling Club in Thunder Bay. I used to love watching my mom and dad curl every weekend. It was strange for a kid my age, but I just loved the alone time with my parents.

When they would be on the

ice, I was allowed to run freely throughout the rink, bar, and locker rooms, helping the staff and just being a kid.

It all changed in one minute; one sad minute that would screw up my life for the next 43 years. A man, who was a trusted friend of everyone, was working as usual. One of my most favourite things to do was help him behind the bar: pouring pop, getting ice, washing cups, and cleaning the place before the next group would roll in for their time on the ice.

As I did so many times before, I picked up glasses, wiped tables, and started washing cups because I knew there were going to be endless cups of pop and chips when I was done. But there was no warning for what was about to happen to me. As I walked into a change room to help clean it, he followed behind me, and in a very short time, the life I had so greatly loved changed forever.

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As I walked into the sauna area to clean, I felt someone's hands on me and I froze, not knowing what to do. I stood there, scared and shocked. I won't go into great detail, but you can imagine what came next. For me, it was only about 15 minutes. 15 minutes that would change the next 44 years of my life.

As it was happening, I put myself somewhere else. I felt dirty, scared, alone, and lost. I would have given anything for someone to come in and help me. But no one came. He looked down at me, and I heard him say, "If you tell anyone, I'll hurt your parents." I believed him, so I said nothing for the next several days, months, years.

I acted out and got into trouble. When I became old enough, I landed in jail because I had no respect for people or authority. My parents tried everything: grounding me, taking me to doctors and shrinks - the

whole nine yards.

The worst thing was seeing them upset, thinking they had failed, when in reality they had done nothing but tried to help.

I wish that over the years of pain I went through, and the years of hurt I put my parents through, I would have reached out earlier and asked for help. Then, maybe I wouldn't be here today. Or in fact, my parents, friends, and family could have had me growing up as I should have, instead of letting this worthless piece of crap ruin everything in my life.

Looking back, I would have reached out earlier and sought help for the demons this man had caused in my life. I hope by trying to share a little bit of this, it will help someone seek help sooner than I did, so you don't have to go through what I did for so many years. In the end, I would like to thank someone with just two words:

Thanks Doc

Thanks Deb

-Robert

FREE TUTORING

Online and in-person sessions that fit your schedule!



Build Skills for Jobs

- Make a resume
- Practice for job interviews



Improve Basic Skills

- Reading
- Writing
- Math



Improve Computer Skills

- Typing skills
- Emails
- Research

Sign up with John at 204-775-1514 ext. 113 or literacy@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 Wednesday from 6:00-8:30pm.



- One-to-one support from a caseworker
- 22 open-group sessions (you 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

READ TO YOUR KIDS!

Join JHSM's Get the Story Out program!

Pick a book, record yourself reading it, and have it gift-wrapped and delivered as a gift from you!*

Available at Stony Mountain, Headingley, and Milner Ridge. Ask a staff member to find out how to participate.

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



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.



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

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