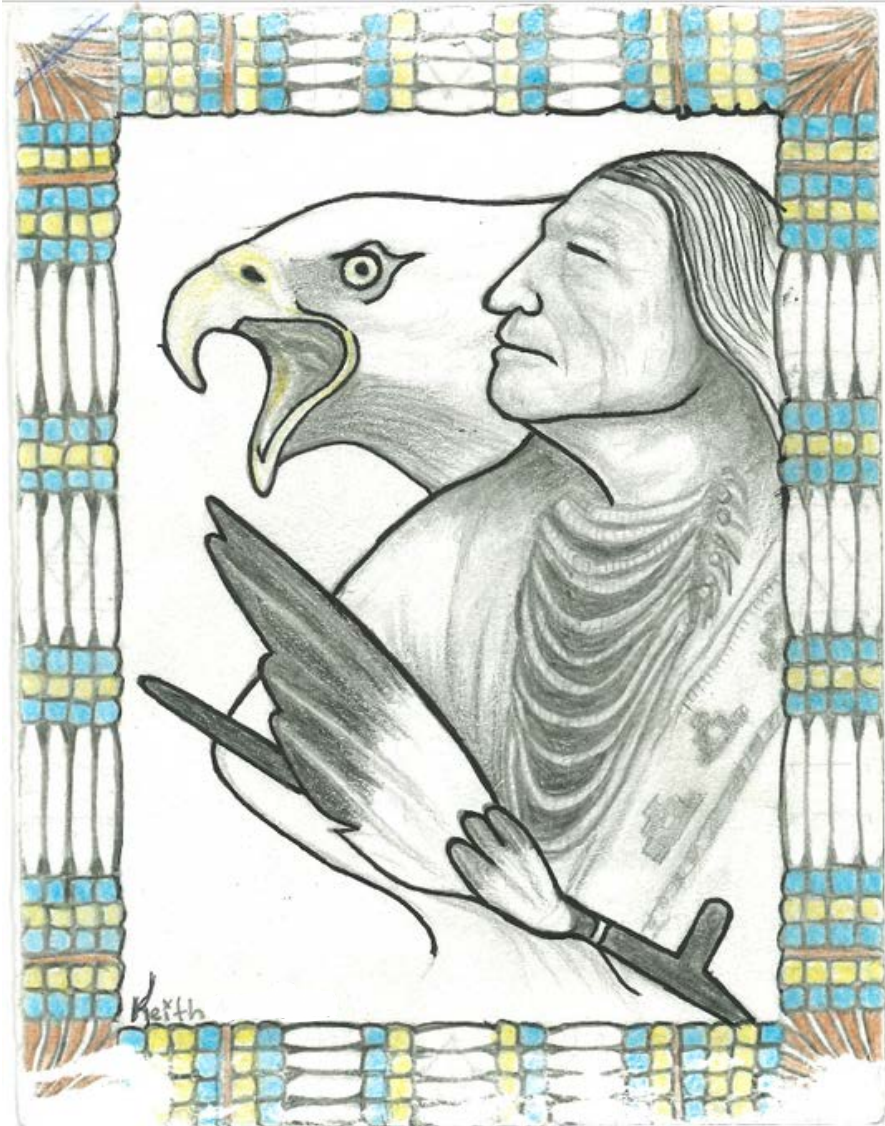


The Inside Scoop

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

Spring 2024

Community Edition



Change from the inside

Boozhoo, Aaniin, Tansi, Hello!

Welcome to the Spring 2024 issue of the *Inside Scoop*. Before we get into this special issue, there are a few announcements I'd like to share.

Workbook Certificate Program

Just a reminder that all JHSM workbooks are available for free on our website at:

<https://johnhoward.mb.ca/workbook-series/>

Upon completing a workbook, participants are eligible for a certificate. To get a certificate, the exercises must be verified. Learners can submit their workbook to a staff member at the institution, who can then email me to request a certificate. Or, Learners can send their workbook directly to our office by emailing it, dropping it off, or mailing it to 583 Ellice Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1Z7.

For more information, please contact me at:

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. This program allows 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,

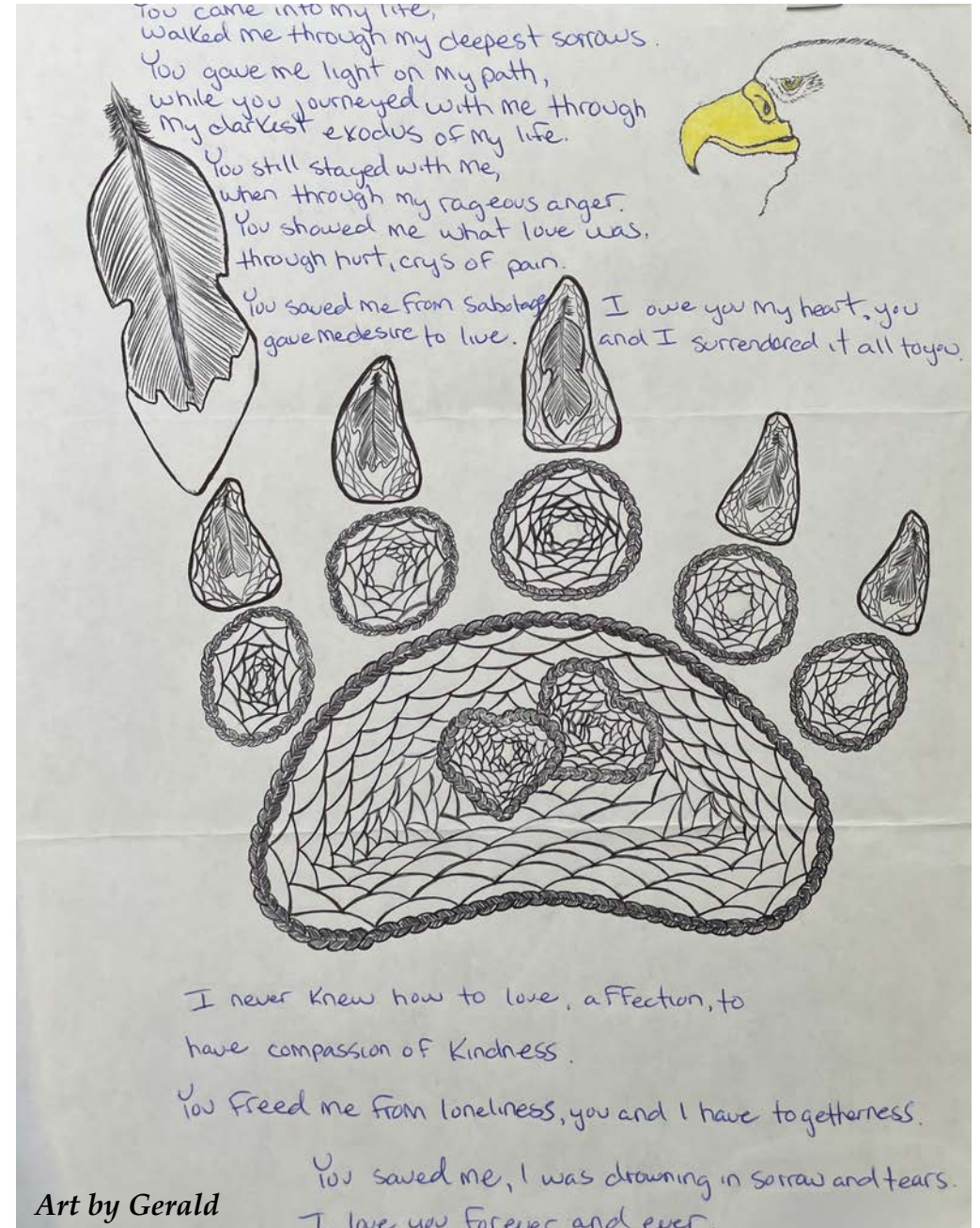
Annica

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.



My Life

The life I live is nothing compared to to yourz
 At least you got your actual family around
 Instead of strange people showing fake love.
 Not the way I was expecting it to be.
 I put myself last before anything.
 If I put myself first
 I'd only make it halfway through my journey.
 I have a good heart and respect
 For those who need my help
 And NO is not acceptable in my language.
 I give in to the ones who need me the most.

What I know is:
 Being in a foster home isn't the same
 As an actual family.
 What hurtz the most is not knowing
 If your siblingz are okay.

-Kelly

Poem

I'm a bo\$\$ where I'm from
 LA to the \$lumz
 Really from the \$tates
 Got cro\$\$ed through the border
 A\$ an infant, raised in Manitoba
 Cause my parents were never \$ober
 My mom was tryna kill me
 So I wouldn't be here today
 Thank god I was saved
 I shouldn't have been
 Now that I'm going through a lot
 I'm tryna make a change in my life
 Just to show you all that I'm doing alright.
 Never really need no one by my \$ide.
 I've been pushed away one too many times.

-Kelly

2 poems, by Jonathan

Bees nudge the flowers
 Babies peep out of the nest
 One fine crisp morning

And then I realized that to be more
 alive I had to be less afraid
 so I did that and lost my fear
 and gained my whole life.



Life in Prison, by Patrick

Concrete plains and horizons
 Over which the birds chant their taunts
 And the season is seen but
 Once or twice a day
 Clouded blue or black flicker above
 A chainlink canvas
 Painted with pastels of wrong
 Weighted by the shadow you cast
 Hung from her scale



2 Haikus, by Les

Soft steel greasy green
 Century of suffering
 Bars never get cleaned

Addiction real need
 Sold soul serenity lost
 The struggle I face

Seven Grandparent Teachings



Turtle: Truth
Speak the truth,
don't lie to yourself.

Eagle: Love
Love is a powerful medicine.
Love your self,
your inner self.



Bear: Bravery
It is bravest to
do what is right.



Beaver: Wisdom
Use your gifts.



Wolf: Humility
Be humble and
help others.

Raven: Honesty
Don't lie or
or gossip about
anyone.



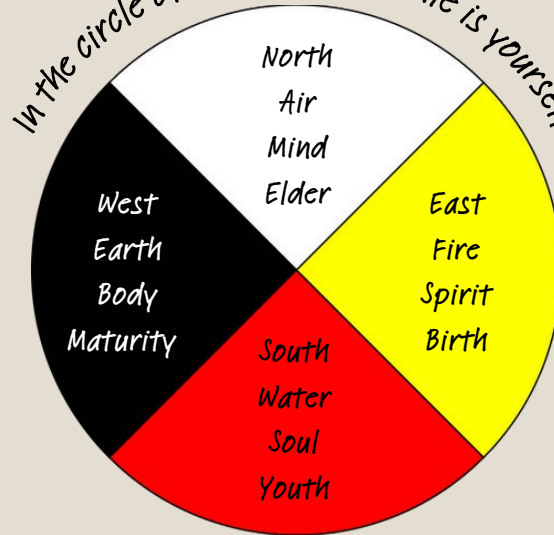
Buffalo: Respect
Respect
yourself and others.



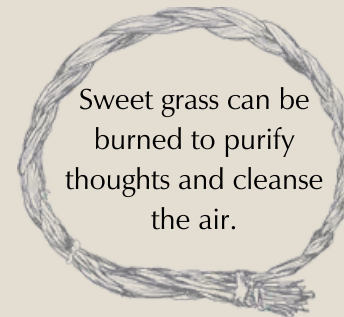
Writing by Kevin

In the circle of life, in the middle is yourself

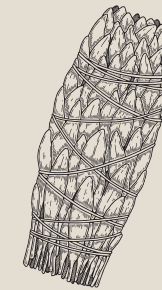
Writing by Kevin



Four Sacred Medicines



Sweet grass can be
burned to purify
thoughts and cleanse
the air.



You can use
sage to make a
medicine tea for
sore throat,
cough, and
congestion.



You can burn
cedar or make
a medicine tea
for fevers and
colds.

Tobacco is a
powerful
medicine used
in ceremonies
for healing.



What I Said to the Judge Today

Your Honour, ever since November of 2021, I have been dealing with a crack and cocaine addiction. I still feel shame from saying this, but I'm turning that shame into motivation to stay clean, even though it gives me a moral sting to admit it. Earlier this year, my focus at Teen Challenge was to figure out the root of this addiction. I started exploring it in weekly sessions with a counsellor. What I've come to determine are 2 things: trauma and undeveloped skills dealing with negative emotions.

I grew up in Bosnia. At the age of 8, civil war broke out in my hometown of Sarajevo. My family and I moved to Canada 4 years later. As we were all going through a culture shock, it was easy for early signs of trauma to go undetected. The undetection would go one-step further when I started

smoking pot at the age of 15 to mask it all, the age where most of us develop ways to deal with negative emotions.

Having to relive the war and thinking through this newfound knowledge about myself, the sober walk became uncomfortable and overwhelming. I wanted to deal with my stress the best way I knew

I'm turning that shame into motivation to stay clean.

how. Even though I was educated on addiction, I was still oblivious and in complete denial about how much power these drugs have over me. I rationalized my use; I minimized the risk, and

bamboozled myself into believing I can handle it. I now know that I can't, not even once.

I can openly admit that I'm your textbook addict. The consistency, shame, and guilt develop extremely fast because I'm the type of user who does drugs avoid feeling bad. I'm not the user who does it to be

sociable or to trip out; I do it to feel good about being myself. A vicious cycle is inevitable for users like me.

I read in a sobriety manual that the sooner we fail, the more time we have to improve ourselves. So what have I improved? What have I learned from my failure? Where did I succeed and not fail?

I persistently began to analyze myself. I started searching past lapses, thoughts, behaviors and events that led me to relapse. I recognized similar patterns in every one. This gave me a clearer understanding of the negative self-talk that drives me to relapse. I've started learning how to put a stop to that talk before it builds into an error in judgment. I'm continuously developing new ways to stop it as I catch it in day-to-day life. I truly believe this new insight will help me reach my highest sobriety potential.

I'm in front of you today, Your Honour, accepting responsibility for what I've done in the worst moments of my drug use. I'm not using my tales of woe as an excuse or to give a skewed version of the truth about what I've done. I can't hide the fact that I'm a drug addict and these incidents all happened while my judgment was impaired.

The sooner we fail, the more time we have to improve ourselves.

The person the Crown Attorney described who did this is in front of you. But, the person inside is ashamed of what he's done and greatly regrets doing it. It's not who I was raised to be nor whom I want to be. Nonetheless, I've shown disregard for the law and disrespect for the community. I should know better than to victimize innocent people. It was done to me as a child, and it's not part of my morals.

This brings me guilt and shame. The guilt contributes to my desire to use drugs again, diminishing

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What I Said to the Judge Today*continued from previous page*

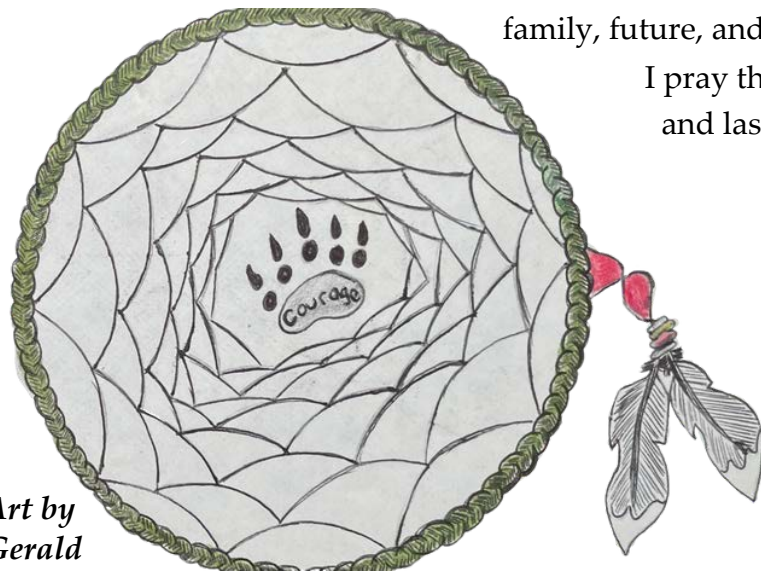
the path I'm on and damaging my life, my goals, and my relationships. I'm taking control of myself and thinking about the consequences my future actions carry.

I'm grateful the Crown and the courts gave me an opportunity to go to Teen Challenge. My stay there appears to you as a failure today, but I can assure you a great lesson has been learned from all of this. They've helped me under-

stand myself and simplified my life. I've created stricter expectations that lead my positive ambitions. Someday, I hope to help someone who is struggling in the same way as me.

I've also earned my old, well-paying mechanic position, provided I'm sober. I've down scaled a lot of things around me that really don't matter—people and things that contributed to robbing me of things that really do matter to me, like my health, family, future, and freedom.

I pray that this is my first and last time explaining myself and my selfish criminal behaviour to a judge.

-Bojan

Art by
Gerald

My Intentions

I find myself once again,
Within these block walls,
Nothing to cling on to, no calls
Seems that love I'm 4ever chasing,
Has my weak heart pacing
Many, many said to just walk away,
But like a lovesick fool, once again I chose to stay
Put pride in my back pocket,
Patched up this broken heart
Praying one day soon, she steps out from the dark
And she sees my true intention
Is to bring her back in the light,
That special girl I've always loved,
To finally say I'm right...

-Devin

Art by Gerald

Hello Fellow Inmates,

My name is Devin.

In January 2024, I found myself on the streets of the north side, close to hypothermia. I was weak, hurt, and wounded. I knew that I had had enough and I did not want to feel “left out in the cold” by anyone anymore.

I decided to distance myself as far away as possible from things such as distrust, disloyalty, dishonour, and betrayal

Even though it hurt like hell, the biggest thing I left behind was methamphetamine hydrochloride.

Like one of the most inspiring phrases that relates to this lifestyle change, goes to one hell of a man, Ted Nellis:

“Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future.”

-Devin



Art
by
Devin

WORD SEARCH

W B Y I T Z T N B M P D J S X
 P E E I W N I J R Q E K V I G
 A A Q T F G T U R T L E S E W
 B R H U M I L I T Y A F S Y I
 R V D G R T R H D Q L O V E S
 A A D D G Y X W B B N P L R D
 V M V M A H Q O I U S E U R O
 E T G E I D B L U E F P N D M
 S H X O N W E F E R A F S M G
 S T O G F U A Q F G M G A O B
 A B R N J B V L M F J Z L L V
 G G N U E X E O R Z J P U E O
 T R G M T S R E S P E C T M W
 I A X J Y H T Y I C F G K A Y
 R N L D E N Q Y O M E U H J N

- Bear Love
- Beaver Raven
- Brave Respect
- Buffalo Truth
- Eagle Turtle
- Honesty Wisdom
- Humility Wolf

To find out what all these words have in common, head to page 6!

JHSM COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

END TO AGGRESSION

Helps participants understand how thoughts affect our feelings and actions.

NOBODY IS PERFECT PARENTING PROGRAM

Provides information about child development and behaviour (kids under 5).

INTRO TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Provides information about healthy/unhealthy relationship habits and tools for change.

COMING TO TERMS

Assists participants in evaluating alcohol and drug use, 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, Headingley, and Milner. For more information, ask a staff member or contact:

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

*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

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.