

SPRING 2026

WHAT FEEDS US



# the INSIDE SCOOP



STORIES  
POEMS  
ART

created by those  
who are or have  
been incarcerated



# the INSIDE SCOOP

SPRING 2026

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The John Howard Society of Manitoba operates on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Ojibwe, 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.

PUBLISHED BY

# John Howard

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# letter from the editor

Dear reader,

As a foodie myself, some of the first things that really stuck with me when I started working at John Howard were the stories told to me by learners about what you eat when you go to prison. In particular, they told me about the practice of making DIY meals out of ingredients available at the canteen, such as the infamous “jail burrito;” featuring crushed up Doritos mixed with hot water and rolled up tight in a garbage bag with Slim Jims and other savoury fillings. As I understand it, some version of this recipe is probably made in jails and prisons across Manitoba, Canada and even North America.

What the jail burrito example proves is that necessity is the mother of invention: in the highly controlled environment of jail, people find creative ways to innovate using limited supplies. It also proves that food is so much more than fuel: it is taste, pleasure and enjoyment. Food is culture, meaning and memory. Food is nourishment, healing and sustenance. Getting a say over what we eat is self-expression and even a kind of freedom.

So, for this issue, we wanted to know how all those aspects of food are experienced by Insiders. We took a bite into legislation around prisoners’ rights to food, and following the TikTok trend #WhatIEatinaDay, learners in our literacy classes described what was on their tray that day or week at the Remand Centre. This issue also features an interview with Mike—a kitchen trustee—about what it’s like to cook at the Remand Centre. And, taking food beyond the literal, Four Healing Roads Lodge learners used the metaphor of a recipe to write a poem expressing their views about what the “ingredients” are for war.

So, whether inside or on the outs, what is your recipe for a success? How have you innovated with the ingredients at hand when supplies were limited? And what flavours bring fond memories, or soothe your soul? I hope these answers can help you remember what feeds you—body *and* soul.

In literacy and in solidarity,

Anna Sigrithur



Editor, *the Inside Scoop*

*Opposite page:* Myron submitted this Postcard from the Inside— and you can, too! Look at the inside back cover for a place to draw and send in your own. We might just print it in the next issue.

# Freedom Found

BY JEFF K.

Alone in my cell, knowing what I did  
 Alone in this jail, just like when I was a kid.  
 Alone in this world as a child, wondering: What's  
 wrong with me?  
 Why does no one love me? Why does my mom not  
 hug me?  
 Alone in my bed, Alone in my head  
 Meaningful relationships I now have  
 No meaningful relationships that I had.  
 Jail is the worst place to ever be, but it's the best  
 thing to happen to me.  
 An understanding of trauma, emotions like love  
 Sent by Creator from high up above.

Belonging is what I've always looked for.  
 Belonging, what I found, Creator opened  
 that door.  
 I'm no longer Alone, found supports on my  
 own.  
 Everything happens for a reason good or  
 bad.  
 Being in Hell I'm no longer Sad.  
 I've learned skills to live sober and clean.  
 I have supports and love that know where  
 I've been.  
 Never unloved or alone will I be.  
 Coming to Jail gave freedom to me.



*Postcard from the Inside*

Draw a picture in the blank space above and send it to us!  
 We might publish it in the next issue of the Inside Scoop!

Submit your artwork and written submissions along with the waiver (see back cover)

"WORK ON MY FREEDOM" BY MYRON M.

# “I CAN ALMOST TASTE IT”

*Winnipeg Remand Centre learners recall vivid memories brought on by imagining their favourite meals.*

**W**e all need food to fuel our bodies to live, but food is so much more than simply consumption for sustenance. What we eat can feed our hearts and spirits.

*Food is personal—the comforting ties to home, who we are, and who came before us. Ask someone who makes the best bannock, they will say their kokoom. Ask someone who makes the best perogies, they will say their baba. What we eat is often grounded in culture, connection and identity.*

*Food is a key to unlocking our memories. A single bite can transport us back to another time of our lives: our grandparent’s kitchen when we were*

*small, a trip taken years ago somewhere far away, a first date with someone special.*

*Food can also be a reminder of where we are at this moment in time. Perhaps we are somewhere new and unfamiliar, disconnected from those small pieces of home. What we eat can be a reminder of home when our surroundings are strange and maybe even scary.*

*Our learners at the Winnipeg Remand Centre described the best meal they’ve ever had. These meals are incredibly unique and will teleport you to another place in time. We hope you enjoy the trip!*

**DAVID:** The best meal of my life so far was anytime my grandmother would bake. She would make buns, bread, cinnamon buns, donuts and a big pot of stew. Usually the stew consisted of macaroni and moose meat. She would make enough for the whole clan. My kokoom was the best baker that I ever knew. It was also her side-hustle for bingo funds. She would sell out in no time.

**PATRICK:** The best meal of my life so far was the last time I had KD with my kids. We were eating when my one boy started throwing it at his brother and I, and we started laughing.

**DAVID:** The best meal of my life so far was thanksgiving dinner: moose meat, bannock, tea, goose soup, gravy, wild rice, and fish fried on a campfire. The kids and me, the baby crying, lots of salt and pepper on my moose meat.

**VINCE:** The best meal of my life so far was Christmas 2021 with my brothers, sister, mom, dad, my children and my babies’ mom. It was special because all my family was together for the first time in a while, and we ate all the mains. It was good because I almost didn’t make it home

that Christmas because I just about got shot in Winnipeg. Scary and awesome meal.

**JORDAN:** The best meal of my life so far was with my grandparents at their house before they died. It was turkey dinner on Christmas day. It was special because it was the last time I ever ate with them.

**BRADEN:** The best meal of my life will be a Halloween dinner with my mom and family, where I will eat three peanut butter cups, two full Oh Henry’s, ten Butterfingers, one tin of barbeque peanuts, a twenty pack of Jolly Ranchers, a big bag of Hi Chew, and a 2-litre of Pepsi to wash it all down.

**MARC:** The best meal of my life so far was eating pizza with my son. The pizza was amazing and I got to spend quality time with my son.

**SHELDON:** Corn on the cob has to be the best meal I’ve had so far, with broccoli and other types of veggies on the side and some type of meat. It was a meal I had with my first foster family. It usually took the whole day to prepare. We had to go out to some local farm and pick out the corn,

then head home to peel off the husks. It is one of my childhood memories I'll never forget.

**WILLIAM:** The best meal I've ever had was when my family and I had a double birthday for my 2 kids. My brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews were all there. We had pizza, fried chicken, fries and lots of Coke. This was in April 2025, and was special because of the happiness I saw in my kids, and I got to see all my family.

**MARGARET:** The best meal I've had so far was last year with my daughter. We had burgers and fries and soft drinks at Juniors. It was on my 44th birthday, I was so full and I couldn't finish it.

Another best meal was always in the summertime when I went to visit my granny in my reserve. She would make fish and potatoes and corn with brown beans and bannock.

**KERRI:** The best meal of my life so far was rice and hamburger. My granny used to make it for my cousins and I after school when we would watch "The Simpsons." Or, on birthdays, my family would have burgers, hotdogs, chips, drinks, bannock dogs and pizza. After singing "Happy Birthday," someone would always cake the birthday girl or boy. Then we would sit around and play games and have races.

**FENISHA:** The best meal of my life so far was shrimp-fried rice. Tasted awesome.

**ROSS:** The best meal of my life so far was the slice of pizza on New Year's Eve in the jail here. It was only one slice, but it was the best pizza I've tasted in a long time. I was with my cellmates, but they didn't comment on how good it was. Maybe it was just me. It was probably just shitty pizza and I was cooked enough to think it was amazing. I was the only one who liked it so much.

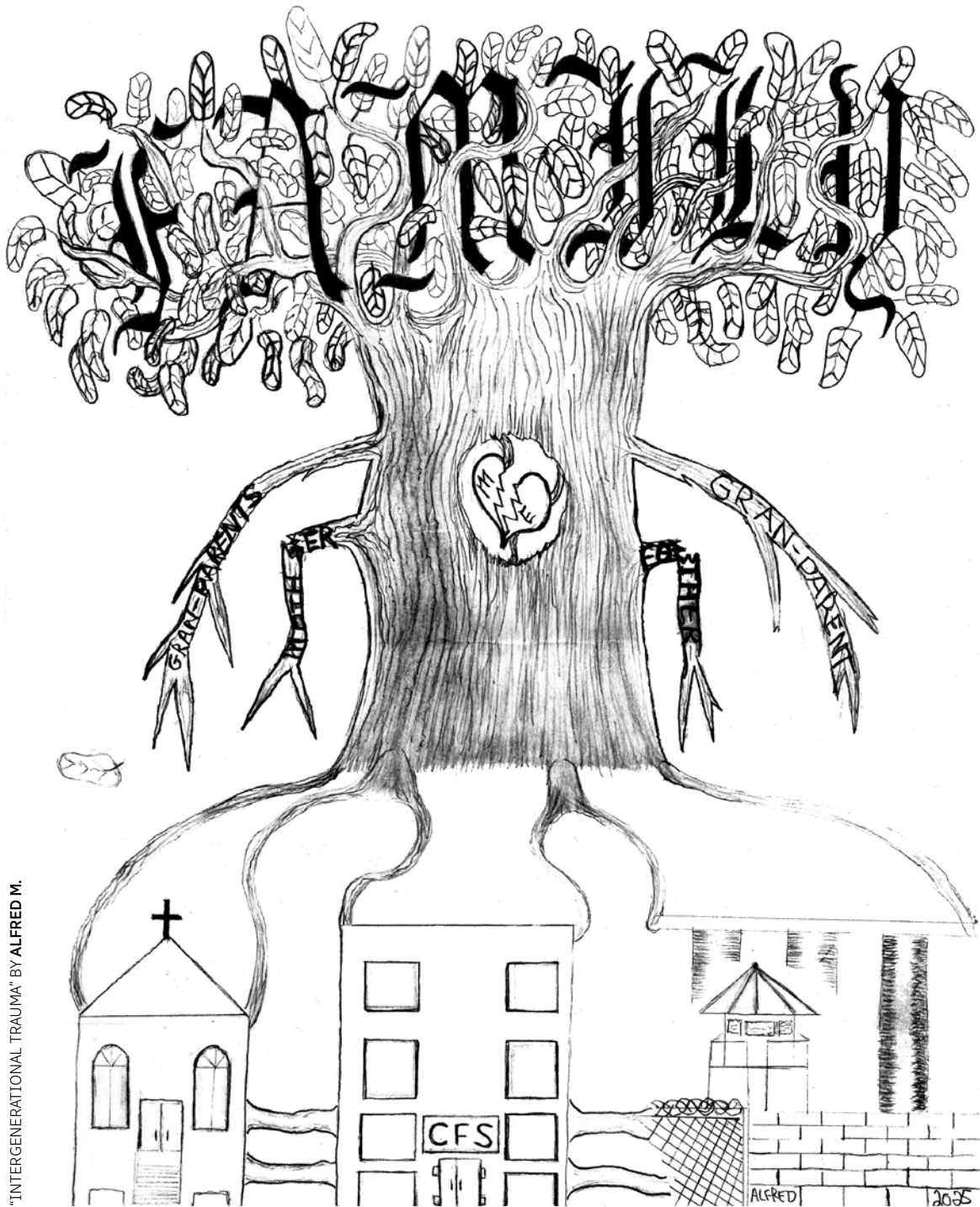
**JAYDE:** The best meal of my life so far, by far has to be my sister Raechel's North End Jambalaya, which consists of KD, ground pork, beef, sausage, frozen veggies, peas, corn, carrots, canned mushrooms, fresh green, red and yellow peppers, celery, seasoning, garlic, pepper and salt, all mixed

together. She would make this not only for her own little family, but for all her friends or whoever was around at the time to enjoy. It wasn't always prepared the same, but with whatever she had at the time. Everyone who ever had it remembered it, and most definitely has it on the top of their list too.

**CORRINE:** The best meals of my life were any holiday dinners made by my mama. She would always work alone in the kitchen and fill the table with dishes of food that were all made with love. She would make turkey, stuffing, potatoes (whipped with a blender), vegetables, perogies, cabbage rolls, gravy and tossed salad. Before dinner, she always put out platters of cheeses, garlic sausages, crackers, pickles and deviled eggs sprinkled with paprika.

Throughout the day my mom cooked Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving meals, the living room was always filled with family members and the special invited guests. My mom always made a point of picking another family or guest to invite to every single one of her holiday meals. It would always be a person or small family that had no other gatherings to go to. They would be welcomed and made to feel like a part of our family. We automatically knew they were deserving and that my mom saw something special in them. Between the kitchen and living room of my mama's there was nothing but love, laughter, sharing and caring. No judgments, no bullshit. Golden rule of my mom's home: leave it all at the door!

**CYNTHIA:** One of my favourite meals in life is my mom's "self-prepared course of mixtuaries" (so she would say to me) is her shepherd's pie! I really love how delicately she prepares the meal. She starts off with a pound of ground beef, frozen vegetables and another pound of cooked mashed potatoes. She then spreads the veggies in her beautiful glass dish, then she adds the pre-cooked beef and the potatoes and puts it in the oven for about 20 to 25 minutes. Then mmmm yummy yummy.



"INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA" BY ALFRED M.

# QUOTES & QUOTIENTS

In Canadian prisons, meals are strictly regulated to follow national nutrition guidelines. On paper, inmates eat healthier than most people. However, the reality is more complicated.

**1 in 4** incarcerated individuals in Canada has filed complaints or formal grievances about food during their incarceration.

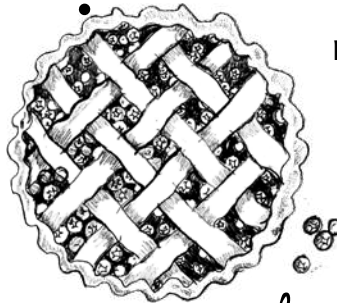
A prison diet lacks fresh fruits and vegetables, and instead relies heavily on reheated, processed foods.

Recently, researchers found Canadian prisons were found to be obesogenic environments, meaning they promote weight gain due to limited opportunities for healthy eating.

**This raises an important question:  
can a diet truly be considered  
healthy if it meets guidelines on  
paper, but fails in practice?**

Sources: Johnson, Claire et al. "The Menu Served in Canadian Penitentiaries: A Nutritional Analysis." *Nutrients* vol. 14,16 3400. 18 Aug. 2022. | Johnson Claire et al. "An exploration of reported food intake among inmates who gained body weight during incarceration in Canadian federal penitentiaries." *PLOS ONE* 13(12). | Wilson, Amanda. "Unpacking the Prison Food Paradox: Formerly Incarcerated Individuals' Experience of Food Within Federal Prisons in Canada." *Studies in Social Justice*, vol. 17, no. 2, Mar. 2023, pp. 280-305.

Ojibway  
Word of the Day



miini-baashkim-  
inasigani-bii  
toosijigani-  
bakwezhigan

Blueberry Pie

## INSIDE JOKE

Did you hear about the man who wanted to make pancakes for breakfast but never got around to it? He kept waffling!

Last night, I dreamed I was swimming in an ocean of orange soda. But it was just a fanta-sea.

*How do pickles enjoy a day off? They relish it.*

*Do you have an Inside Joke you'd like to share for the next issue? Write it or phone it in.*

# Eating Right(s)

**What you eat, when you eat and how you eat comes with rules and restrictions when you're incarcerated, but you have rights, too! The following points summarize some of the provincial and federal legislation around prisons and food. Then, read on to get a firsthand account of what some Insiders actually eat in a day.**

**You're allowed to keep up with religious,** moral and spiritual practices around food while incarcerated. That can include fasting for Ramadan and eating halal as a Muslim, eating kosher if you're Jewish, or receiving vegetarian meals. Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Year's Day come with special menus, too. (Guideline 750-1 – Inmate Religious Accommodations, section 11.)

**If you eat kosher, you have to be allowed** to witness the kosher certification seal on the meal before it's opened. (Guideline 880-3 – Religious Diets, Annex D)

**Religious diets have to be requested in** writing with the help of the Chaplain, and if your religious or spiritual request isn't a practice recognized by Corrections, you can apply for it as a "diet of conscience." (Guideline 880-3 – Religious Diets, paragraph 1(f))

**You're responsible for explaining how** your beliefs require a change in your meals and you will take questions on it from a committee. If you have trouble expressing yourself, you can get help. If you're able to explain in-depth in a way that's "reasonable, convincing and can be accommodated," you should be accommodated. If the committee is inclined to deny your request, you should get another chance to address any concerns they have. (Guideline 880-4: Diets of Conscience, Annex C, section 5)

**If you've chosen to fast and understand** the consequences of fasting, or if you declare a hunger strike, you can't be forced to eat. If you go unconscious or are seriously harmed as a result of a hunger strike, Corrections will step in. (Guideline 801: Hunger Strike: Managing an Inmate's Health, section 2)

**Canada has guidelines for holding** traditional feasts for Indigenous inmates. Traditional or non-traditional food used for ceremonial practices can be brought in upon written request. The food is not always inspected beforehand, so those who partake must sign a waiver. (Guideline 801: Hunger Strike: Managing an Inmate's Health, section 10)

**Food can't be used as punishment**—taking away food, giving too much or too little, or giving a worse quality of food. If you're placed on High Watch, you will only get finger foods, or foods that don't require cutlery to eat. (Commissioner's Directive 880: Food Services, section 9.; Guideline 880-2 – Nutrition Management Program, section 38.)

**The first meal of the day should be** served no later than 8 a.m., and meals shouldn't be more than five hours apart. There should always be at least seven days' worth of food on hand in case of emergencies. (Guideline 880-1 – Food Services Program, section 55)

**The Correctional Service is** required to test for food allergies, celiac disease and lactose intolerance if needed, and Food Service Managers are required to provide meals in line with prescribed medical needs of inmates. This can include getting different meals if you're diabetic or can't have added salt. Refusing to stick with a medically prescribed diet is considered a refusal of treatment. (Guideline 880-2 – Nutrition Management Program, section 10)

**Nutritional supplements can be** prescribed in cases of malnutrition and other illnesses. Supplements can include drinks like Boost, nutrient-dense foods and energy drinks made in-house. Pregnant and breastfeeding inmates receive extra food, be it through main meals or through pregnancy baskets prepared by Food Services. (Guideline 880-2 – Nutrition Management Program, sections 12-17 and 33.)

**Inmates appearing in court or** at appointments that run over meal-times should receive a box lunch. (Guideline 880-1 – Food Services Program, section 57)

**You won't find grapefruit** included on grocery lists for inmates, because it can react very dangerously to a number of medications. (Guideline 880-2 – Nutrition Management Program, section 40)

## #What I Eat in a Day

Following the TikTok trend, learners at the Winnipeg Remand Centre literacy classes share what they eat in a day.

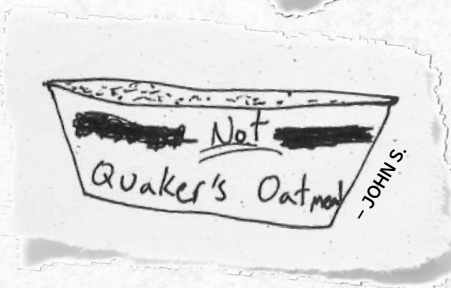
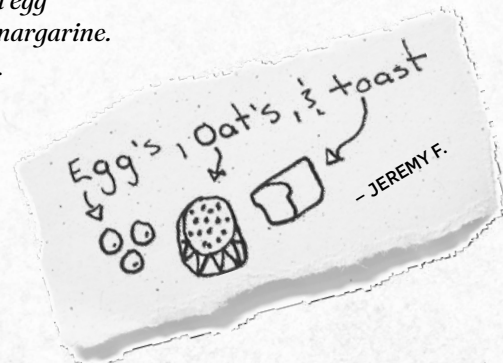
# BREAKFAST

*I enjoy boiled egg sandwiches with margarine.*

– KERRI M.

*My favourite meal is the oatmeal; I mix it with jam. Yummy!*

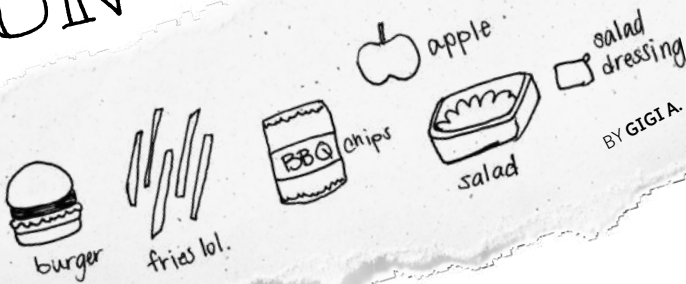
– CHANEL P.



*2 eggs, 2 pieces of bread, 1 small coffee packet with sugar and whitener.*

– DESTINY S.

# LUNCH



BY GIGIA.



beef stew  
and potatoes

*Burger, fries and salad.*

- CORNELIA O.

*Protein (salami) and water, sometimes fruit like oranges, apples or bananas.*

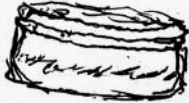
- STANLEY D.

# DINNER

*More protein (chicken and rice), plus red and yellow peppers so my kidneys don't stress.*

- STANLEY D.

SOUP PASSEUR (LAST NIGHT LEFTOVERS)



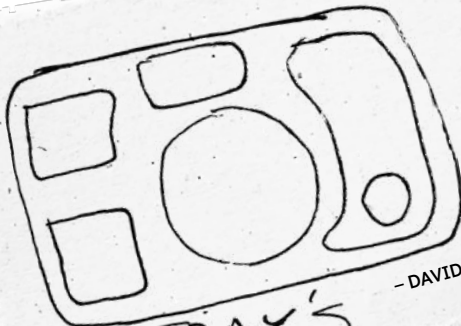
- JESSIE C.

chicken  
Fowl



BAH-Gah  
Burgers

- JOHN S.



- DAVID H.

TRAYS

ALL MEALS NEED  
BIGGER PORTIONS

- CHA

# SNACKS

12 item limit  
canteen, small  
bags of chips :(

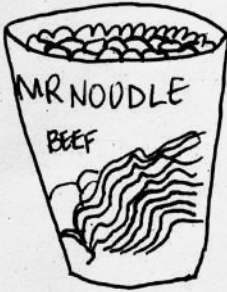
- DARNELL H.

Diet Pepsi, chips,  
chocolate bars.

- KRISTA R.

Canteen snacks, but only if  
somebody decides to send  
funds for the canteen.

- CHASE M.



burrito ♡♡♡

- GIGIA.

## DAILY SPECIAL THE JAIL BURRITO

Sometimes

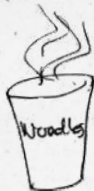
Snacks: extra saved food from lunch, dinner, breakfast

- TAYLOR M.

+ CANTEEN  
Mr noodles  
Chips

AKA saved food to make Jail burritos

Chips, drinks, noodles,



- DAVID H.

Burrito,  
\* 1 hot Rod,  
\* 1 Arriba Nacho,  
\* 1 spicy chicken Noodles,  
\* 1 beef jerky

- DESTINY S.

Perogies and  
garlic bread.

- CORNELIA O.

Potato

Jeffery  
Wahmer  
steak/s

SE M.

IS

# A RECIPE FOR WAR

BY LEE M., ALFIE D., KIRBY B., WILLIAM H.L., JORDAN M., AND SAM A. (THE FOUR HEALING ROADS LODGE)

CARROT	A DASH OF CORRUPTION
POPULATION	DOZEN POLITICIANS
PROPAGANDA, TO TASTE	OPPONENT
AN OUNCE OF NEPOTISM	BARREL OF OIL
A POUND OF GREED	A DICTATOR'S MOUSTACHE, FOR GARNISH

Dangle the carrot in front of the population.

Using the propaganda, sift the population into uniform portions.

Whip nepotism, greed and corruption with the politicians until frothy.

Fry your opponent in the barrel of oil.

When the resistance rises (at least double in size), punch it down.

Cook all together in the fire of tragedy. (Take care not to overcook or it will become genocide).

Garnish with the moustache.

Don't overindulge.

**Editor's note:** Want to try your hand at writing a poem in the form of a recipe? Here is a tip: think of an abstract noun that you will write the recipe for. An abstract noun is a concept rather than a physical thing – something like peace, war, love, friendship, or freedom. What concept do you have the recipe for? If you write one on friendship, we might publish it in the summer issue!

# Mike in the Kitchen

An interview with a prison kitchen trustee

When he's working in the kitchen, with the radio cranked to a country station, Mike almost forgets where he is, and that's just the way he likes it. Ever since his arrival last year at the Winnipeg Remand Centre, Mike's been looking for positive ways to pass the time: he felt right at home working an afternoon shift, loading up trays with all the correct fixings to make lunch fly by smoothly.

The job brings him back to a more joyful line on his customer-service resumé.

When he was a teenager, growing up near Lorette, Man., his family took a cross-border trip to Grand Forks. "We saw a pretzel stand and there was this huge lineup," recalls Mike, who'd been working for his dad's construction company since grade 7. "And then me and my dad got talking, and he and mom started messing around with the family recipe," a classic German-Mennonite take on dinner buns.

In a matter of months, the family had opened a Prairie Pretzel kiosk at the Garden City Shopping Centre, followed soon by stands at two meccas of downtown Winnipeg shopping – Portage Place and Eaton Place – as well as the newly opened baseball stadium for the Winnipeg Goldeyes. With expansion in the rear-view, the family business

was redubbed Those Big Soft Pretzels; Mike sold his stake in the business about a decade ago, before beginning work in financial services.

"What I liked most about working in food services was probably the people I met and worked with. The money was okay," says Mike. "At first, I didn't even really like it. I came from a construction background, and with construction, you build a house, you get paid for it, and you get the self-gratification of what you left behind."

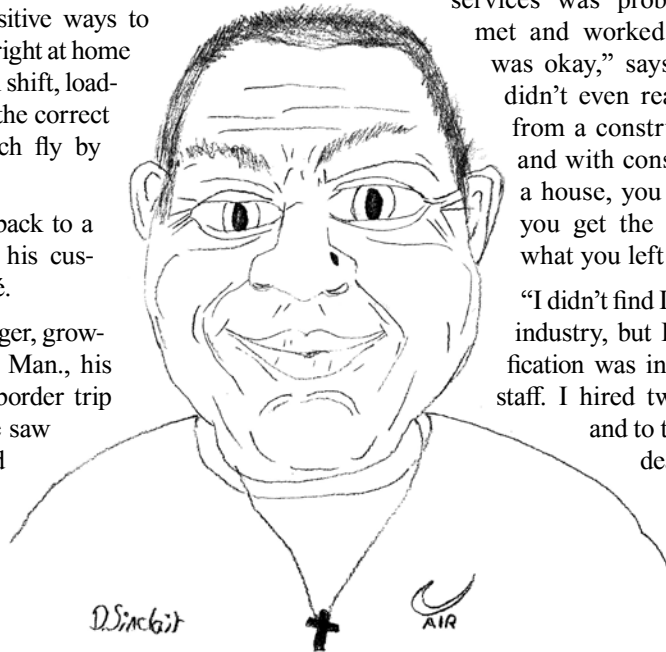
"I didn't find I got that in the snack industry, but I realized that gratification was in my employees and staff. I hired two kids, 13 and 14, and to this day, they're both dear friends of mine,"

Mike adds. "One's an engineer and one runs a brewery out in Vancouver."

Self-gratification is one benefit to Mike's gig on the tray crew in the Remand kitchen, even if the daily pay – about \$5 – is roughly equivalent to what he used to charge for a classic pretzel.

Each day at the Remand Centre, two working groups rotate to take on meal duties in the kitchen. The breakfast and lunch shifts run from 5:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with the dinner shift running from 2:30 p.m. to six. There are six lines of work in the kitchen hierarchy – pot washer, dish pit, serving line, trays, cooking and baking.

*Continued on page 14*



# DREAM CANTEEN

## Dinner Party Edition!

*Since we've been talking so much about canteen food already (shout out to the prison burrito!) we thought we'd make a pivot, and ask: which three people living or dead would you invite to your dream dinner party, and what would you serve them?*

**Jessie C:** I would invite my favourite artist Chester from Linkin Park, Tommy the white dragon Power Ranger, and the former Winnipeg Blue Bomber Khari Jones, who was my first idol at QB and an inspiration. I would serve steak with mashed potatoes, asparagus and sautéed onions.

**Stanley D:** Granny Cookie would have a cold cut combo with just lettuce, tomato, onion and ranch. Aunty Donna, my mom's twin, would have meatball marinara with onion, green pepper and chipotle, and my twin sister Amber would have a tuna melt with everything, salt and pepper and sub sauce. RIP I miss you guys.

**David H:** I would like my late partner to cook fried pork chops in onions with rice mixed with corn. To drink: iced tea, 7up and orange juice. We'd have it together with the whole family.

**George T:** We'd have moose meat stew with bannock, I'd invite my grandparents and get grandma to make a homemade pie.

**Dakota D:** I would invite Lady Gaga, Queen Elizabeth and Dr. Strange. We'd have chicken and rice, donuts and cheesecake.

**Evan:** I'd just have dinner with Nikola Tesla. We'd have meatloaf and cheesecake, and talk

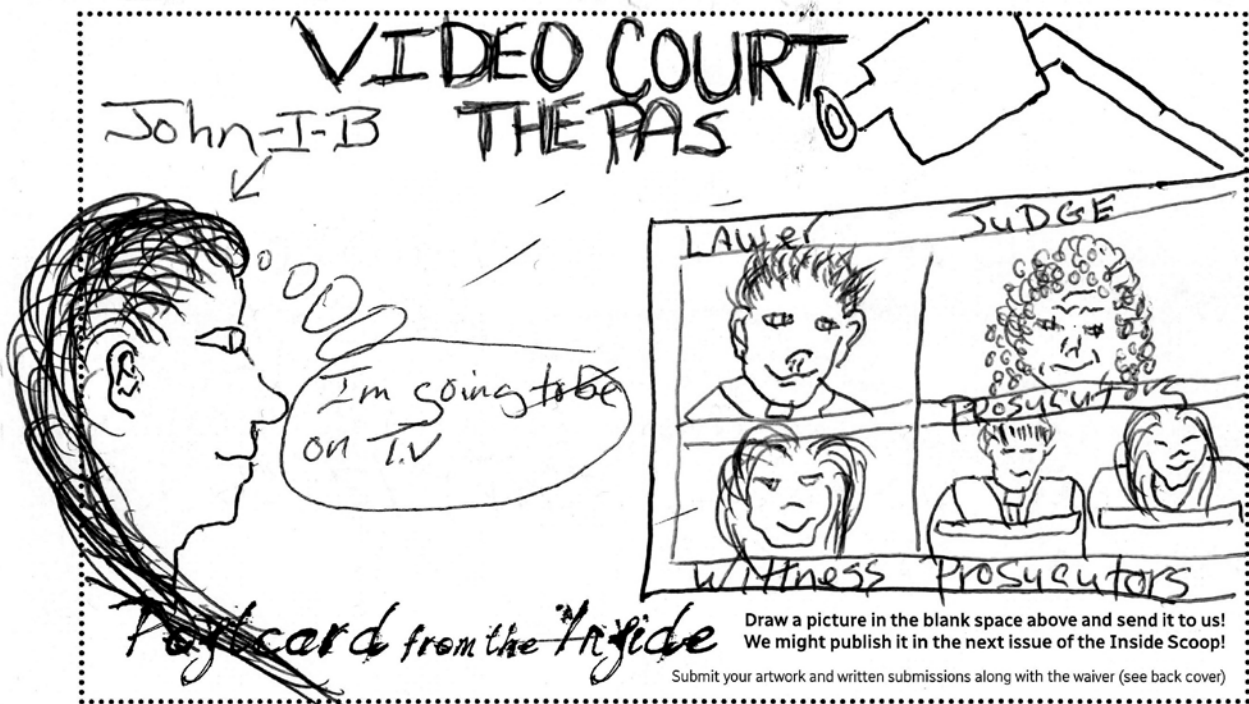
about free electricity.

**David:** I'd invite Hitler, Nero and Ceasar and ask them why they did it. I'd serve some rez food: fish and potatoes, something easy, with a baked pie.

**John S:** I'd invite Homer, Iron Man and Dave Chapelle, and serve them steaks and Scooby Snacks inside the Avengers tower.

**Destiny S:** I'd invite my Auntie who passed away when I was 10 years old (I miss her a lot), my Grandma and Grandpa, because I miss them. They all played a crucial part in my upbringing and who I've become. I would get to say I forgive them, thank them and get closure to move forward with my healing. I would serve them a Thanksgiving turkey dinner – because it was always my favourite family get-together – and cabbage rolls. My auntie made the best ones.

**Jayce:** I'd invite an army sniper, Robin Williams and my mother. I'd choose them because they don't get enough credit, they put our lives in perspective with actions and words and they inspire me. I'd serve them cheese tarts, Korean barbeque with kimchi and fish tacos in bannock.



"VIDEO COURT FROM THE PAS" BY JOHN B.

*"Mike in the Kitchen," continued from page 15*

Everyone starts at pot washing, with a chance to advance up the food chain. After four months, Mike knew he could progress beyond trays, but he felt he was uniquely suited to the task at hand, which required steady communication, focus and readiness.

"It's kind of my own little department," he says. "Basically, there's anywhere between 400 and 500 people in here at a time, so there's 400 to 500 trays that need to be ready for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It's my responsibility to make sure that's done correctly, and I'm left alone to that task. They trust me enough that they know I get it done right."

Though the labour is tough – he has to stand for up to eight hours, which puts pressure on a sore knee. The schedule is relentless – he gets no days off – Mike says he enjoys the opportunity to earn his keep while completing his daily tasks.

"It feels like a regular job: you don't really feel like you're in jail for a few hours of the day. You know, it's not really about money for me," says Mike, whose old habits of boosting efficiencies kick in while on shift. "When I'm given a task, I find myself asking, 'How can I do this in the best, most efficient way? It's not the pay that's making me do this – it's the way I'm built.'"

# The Steak Dinner

BY RAYMOND M.

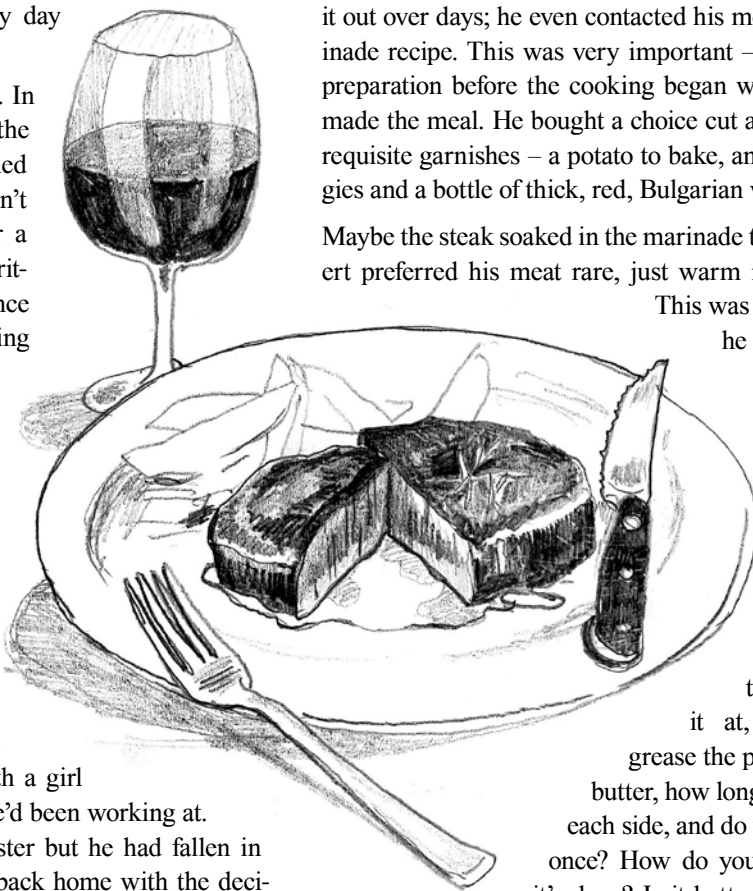
Robert cries nearly every day. Know. No, every day.

It didn't used to be this way. In high school, the only poem the school paper ever published of his was titled "Boys Don't Cry." Later, he would hear a song with the same name written by another Robert. He once wondered if it was something in his name.

Now, he conjectures that everyone has an allotment of tears given to shed. He wonders had he not staunched the flow in his youth, if things would have turned out differently.

Robert had been living in Vancouver. He had flown to Montreal to meet up with a girl he'd hit it off with at a bar he'd been working at. The rendezvous was a disaster but he had fallen in love with the city. He flew back home with the decision to leave everything, everyone. Why not? He gave notice for his apartment, job, and began selling his stuff. In the interim, he moved to his parents' house in Abbotsford. They were working overseas, so he had the place to himself.

One day, while staying at his parents' house, Robert decided to make himself a steak dinner. He planned



it out over days; he even contacted his mom for a marinade recipe. This was very important – he knew the preparation before the cooking began would be what made the meal. He bought a choice cut along with the requisite garnishes – a potato to bake, an array of veggies and a bottle of thick, red, Bulgarian wine.

Maybe the steak soaked in the marinade too long. Robert preferred his meat rare, just warm in the centre.

This was the first steak he had ever prepared, and the cooking method was something he stewed over: what temperature to cook it at, whether to grease the pan with oil or butter, how long to cook it on each side, and do you flip it just once? How do you know when it's done? Is it better to be underdone or over-cooked? O, he thinks, it will be good regardless.

Robert set a place for himself at the family dining table using the fine dinnerware and lit a candle. Even the presentation of the meal on the plate and the plate on the table looked textbook – or rather cookbook – he

*Continued on page 17*



"BREAK THIS CYCLE" BY TATUM R.



*"The Steak Dinner" continued from page 16*

supposed. As he cut into the steak he realized he could have foregone the steak knife – a butter knife would have sufficed! The aroma was tantalizing, the juices flowed onto the plate and then into his mouth. Somehow, he had gotten it perfect.

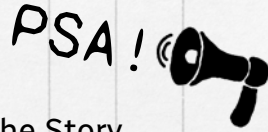
He chewed slowly, then swallowed. But the steak wasn't going down! Robert took a heavy gulp of the red wine – perfectly breathed – to assist. It wasn't that the meat was too tough to swallow, it was that a lump had formed in his throat while chewing. Because while eating the most delicious meal of his life, Robert realized the one thing he forgot: company. There was no one

to share this with, no one to reflect on this with in the years to come. Yes, but remember that steak dinner? And for that any discontent, argument, or apathy would fade in the light of that memory.

How do you celebrate alone? Where is the witness? Robert ate, and he cried.

Years later, Robert finds himself serving a life sentence in a Quebec prison. He no longer has the youthful problem of being unable to cry. Au contraire. Is it because he is always alone now? At least, he thinks, there are no more steak dinners.

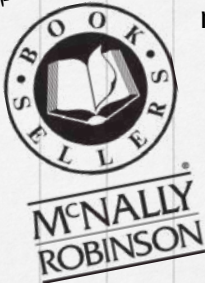
# Get the Story Out!



Read a bedtime story to your kids!

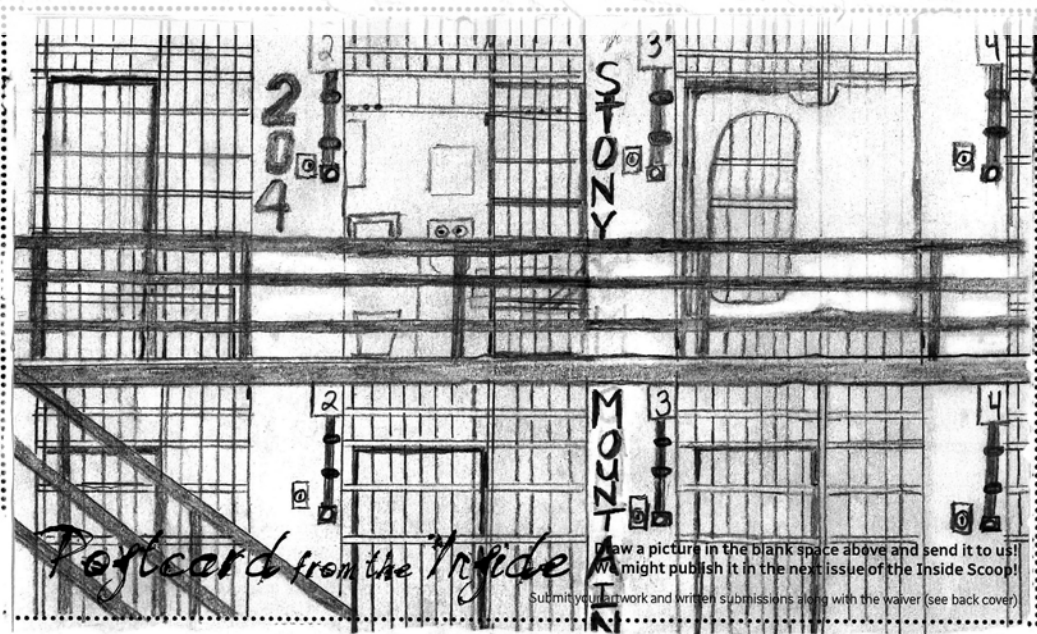
Through the John Howard Society's "Get the Story Out" storybook reading program, you can share the gift of a bedtime story to a special child in your life.

Generously sponsored by



Record yourself reading a storybook, and that recording, plus the book get mailed to your child. (Must not have an NCO with child's caregiver).

GTSO is available at Headingley CC, Milner Ridge CC, Winnipeg Remand Centre, and Brandon CC. Talk to program staff at participating institutions to participate!



"STONY MEDIUM" BY JEFF K.

Draw a picture in the blank space above and send it to us! We might publish it in the next issue of the Inside Scoop!

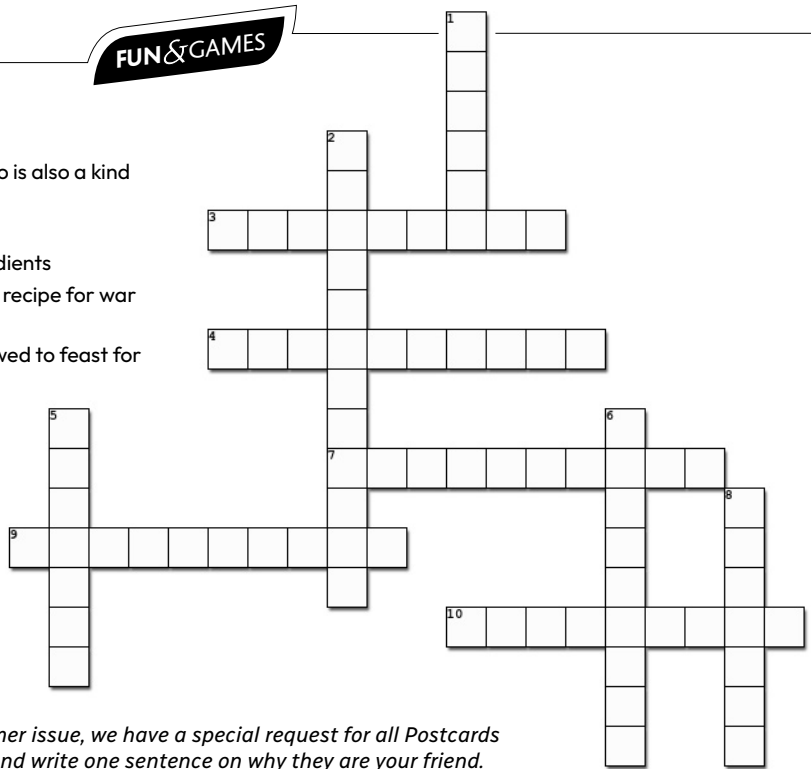
Submit your artwork and written submissions along with the waiver (see back cover)

**DOWN**

1. David's dream dinner party guest, who is also a kind of salad
2. Cynthia's mom's famous 'mixtuary'
5. A DIY treat made from canteen ingredients
6. What facial hairstyle is included in the recipe for war on page 11?
8. The Muslim holiday prisoners are allowed to feast for

**ACROSS**

3. What kind of pie, in the Ojibway word of the day
4. What is the next issue of *The Inside Scoop* about?
7. What Jessie C. eats in a day
9. Which fruit can't be served in jail due to its interference with medications?
10. What kind of wine does Robert drink in Raymond's story?



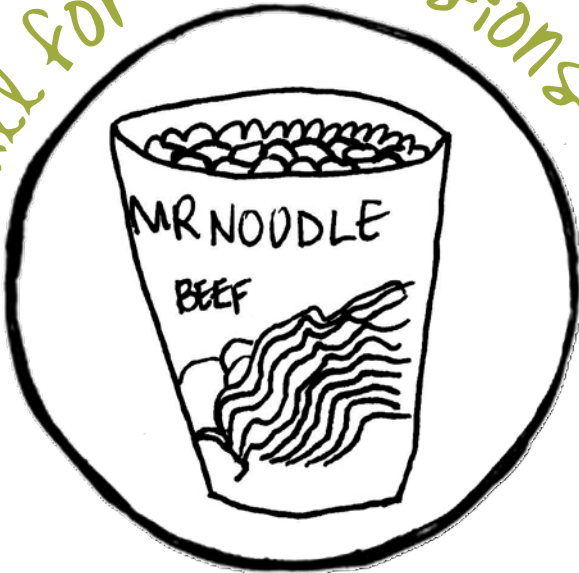
**Postcard from the Inside:** For the summer issue, we have a special request for all Postcards from the Inside: Draw your best friend and write one sentence on why they are your friend.

Postcard from the Inside

Draw your best friend and tell us how you became friends. We will publish your story in the Summer Inside Scoop!

Submit your artwork and written submissions along with the waiver (see back cover)

Call for Submissions



ART BY GIGI A.

We welcome your submissions of writing and artwork! **The themes for the rest of our 2026 issues will be: Friendship (Summer), and Cryptids (Fall).** Submissions not based on themes are always welcome.

Send submissions and a signed waiver (below) to:

**Anna Sigrithur**  
**John Howard Society of Manitoba**  
**583 Ellice Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7**

Or, email them to  
**asigrithur@johnhoward.mb.ca**

**Did you know?** If you are incarcerated in Manitoba, calling John Howard is a free phone call. So give us a shout if you have any questions.

**(204) 775-1514**  
ext. 112 (Anna) or ext. 113 (John or Chanelle)  
Not incarcerated? You're still welcome to call with questions, of course!

## The Inside Scoop Waiver

Please attach this to any artwork or writing you submit to The Inside Scoop.  
Mail to: Anna Sigrithur, John Howard Society of MB, 583 Ellice Ave. Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of piece: \_\_\_\_\_

I am open to discussing edits to my work (circle one):                      Yes                      No

I give permission for my work to be printed in *The Inside Scoop* and confirm that I am submitting my own authentic original work. I understand that my work may also be used in other John Howard Society publications such as workbooks and facilitation materials, as a handout in group classes, or for future promotional or fundraising projects. I understand that all rights to my work remain with me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Where would you like  
edits and/or copies of The  
Inside Scoop mailed to?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: We reserve the right to edit submissions, and may contact you about edits to your work. We will not print anything containing sexism, racism, homophobia or transphobia, gang symbols, or that glorifies violence, drug use, or gang involvement.*