

SUMMER 2026

DRAWING US CLOSER



the INSIDE SCOOP

STORIES
POEMS
ART

*created by those
who are or have
been incarcerated*

the INSIDE SCOOP

SUMMER 2026

EDITOR
Anna Sigrithur

COVER ARTWORK
Marshall D.

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Brendon Ehinger

LAYOUT
Aquila Samson Design

CONTRIBUTORS	Dylan L., Dennis G., Raymond M., Lawrence M., Michael L., Dave B., Isaiah R., Jordan M., John S., Darren B.,	Stephanie D., Michelle D., Shelby T., John L.S., Jarod R., David M., Christopher F., Kashtin R., Marshall D., Carlita V.,
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The John Howard Society of Manitoba 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.

PUBLISHED BY

John Howard
THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

583 Ellice Ave. T: 204-775-1514
Winnipeg, MB F: 204-775-1670
R3B 1Z7 E: office@johnhoward.mb.ca

letter from the editor

Dear Reader,

For a moment, think about your best friend. How— or why— did you two become pals? Whatever the answer may be, I am sure your story proves the fact that among human relationships, friendship is special. While family members can also be friends, and friends can feel like family, friends are unique. They are made along the ups and downs of life's journey, making that journey all the richer for it. The author C. S. Lewis summed this up well when he wrote that friendship is not necessary for survival, but rather makes survival worthwhile.

And so, who are the people who make your survival worthwhile? And how has incarceration affected those friendships? We heard a lot from contributors about this particular issue. Maybe you lose touch with friends on the Outs. Sometimes, you make the hard choice to end a friendship that kept you stuck in bad habits. Or, maybe, you make new friends on the Inside only to be separated by release and parole or probation conditions.

But don't let these barriers stop you! Friends can help us get through hard times, and indeed, at times, they're the only thing that will. Illustrating this point are the stories in this issue. We share the history of the very first Friendship Centre, which was created out of strong bonds of friendship and community. Then, a poetic ode to a sick friend, artistic tributes to BFFs – both human and animal – and this month's Legal Scoop that gives you the 101 on your rights to have friends (or anyone) visit you while you're in jail. Wherever you are reading this, I hope this finds you with a friend (or at least a friendly face) nearby.

In solidarity and in literacy,

Anna Sigrithur



Editor, *the Inside Scoop*



What do you
call a genuine
friend?

A legiti-mate.

I like people who tell
me to be myself.

*That's a lot easier than
becoming someone they
would like.*

Why did the two best
friends carry a pencil
with them everywhere
they went?

*In case they needed to
draw closer.*

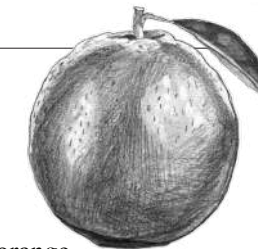
*Do you have an Inside Joke you'd like to share for the
next issue? Write it or phone it in!*

Inside Scoop, % John Howard Society of Manitoba,
583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1Z7 OR
(204) 775-1514 and ask for Anna.

ART&POETRY

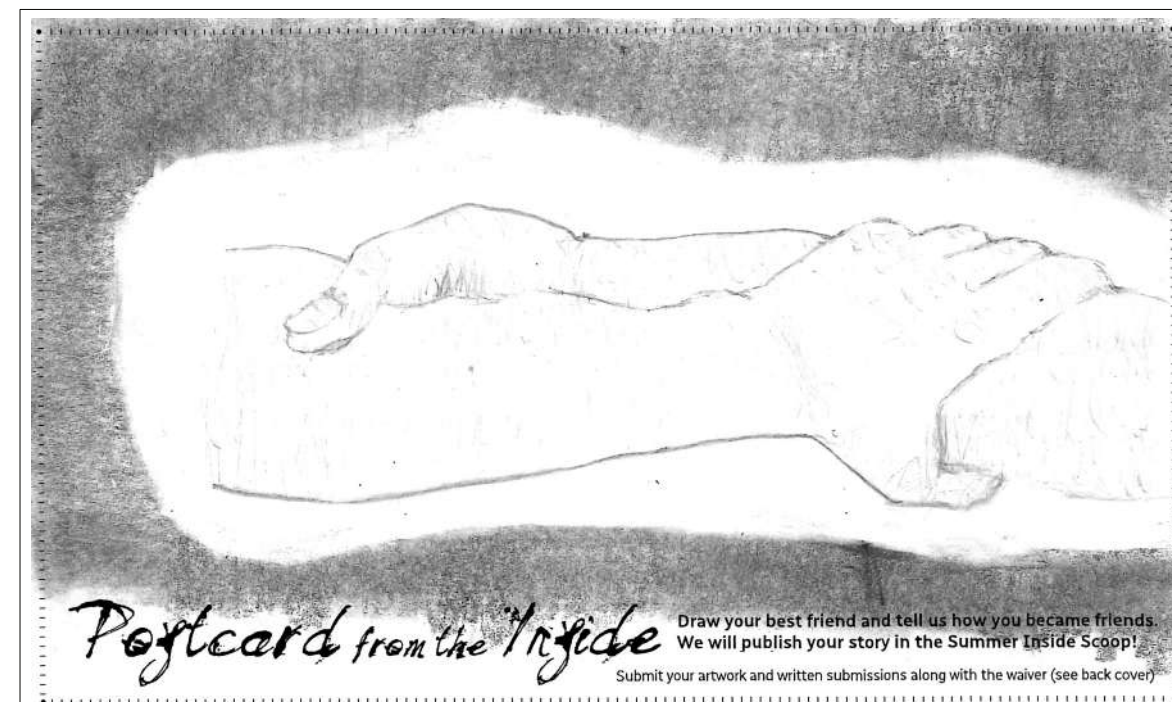
The Orange

BY WENDY COPE



At lunchtime I bought a huge orange –
The size of it made us all laugh.
I peeled it and shared it with Robert and Dave –
They got quarters and I had a half.
And that orange, it made me so happy,
As ordinary things often do
Just lately. The shopping. A walk in the park.
This is peace and contentment. It's new.
The rest of the day was quite easy.
I did all the jobs on my list
And enjoyed them and had some time over.
I love you. I'm glad I exist.

*Editor's note: "The Orange" by
American poet Wendy Cope, is a well-
known homage to simple pleasures of
good company.*



"BROTHERS" BY DENNIS G.

Ode to Viking

For Chris, aka Viking

BY RAYMOND M.

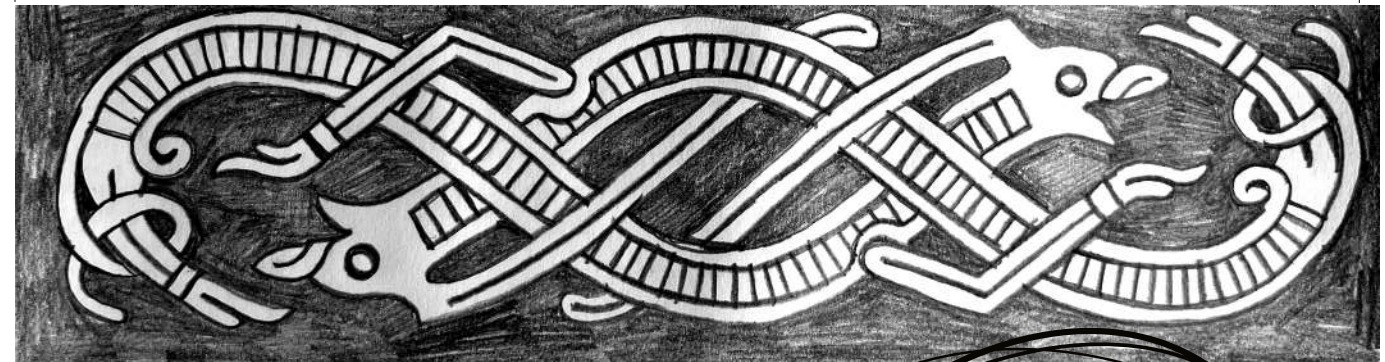
My scarred, pagan brother,
Is this the way to Valhalla?
Or is there another?
And is this samsara?
(Oh, All-Father)
Some kind of blasphemous karma?
The path of the poet
The failure of the system
Neither worthy nor stoic
Who will say "I missed him"?

So much noise,
Though nothing as loud as this quiet
It screams through the realms
Inciting chaos of the livid riot

Could you not take one moment more
of a view through wire and chain?
A spirit yearning to be free,
Getting there any way she can?

Wounds on our arms don't compare
to the slash job on our spirit
cut to the bone of despair
when you speak, they don't hear it
when you yell, told to shush,
and in the end, it's all too much
It's all too much

Life looms long
Life, Ha, yeah this is Life alright,
More like the slowest painful death imaginable,
Can't someone make this manageable, at least?
I'm not asking for some award, banquet, feast,
Just a step above a caged beast, or even that
scenario
Has more mercy than the one given;
Is it really any wonder I don't want to
go on livin'?
You take and you take and you take
Till there's nothing but shreds
Expect us to keep breathing, feeding,
defecating,
Because we're worth more money than if dead;
But there's a reason it was called the
Mercy Seat,
A moniker which didn't suit your taste
Yeah, your altruistic, benevolent feat
Alive, but slotted below the untouchable caste
Never to see the sun again,
Is it any wonder; why act so surprised?
You'd think by now you'd have realized,
by the lack of laughter, the never-ending
gray skies,
that this is not a regular occurrence...
Though it's regular enough, right?
We're backed into a corner,
declawed, not allowed to fight,
Just lose, and lose and lose and lose
Until everything, every last shred
is lost, except,
this thin, little boy's voice, reedy
contacting the last string on what used to
be his vocal cord,



One last plea; final choice, not eloquent, not
even chill-inducing, or needy
Almost unheard, certainly so by the officers of
the bored,
And with one last red offering, to the Witch and
to the Lord,
Just to make sure that which goes unheard is at
least underscored:
I want to go home, please,
just let me go home.

*Editor's Note: Raymond shared
some backstory to his poem that
we thought was rather moving.
For context, he is the inmate
librarian at his institution.*

"One morning I came to the
library and my co-worker told me
he had some bad news. Viking
was in the hospital. I
immediately wrote "Ode to
Viking." After, I went to the
Infirmary and was able to obtain
visiting rights. I visited Viking
every day, until things got worse
and they transferred him to the
Hole. I saw him twice more there
until he transferred to Max. I
have received two letters from
him since, awaiting a third, and
he seems to be doing better. I
gave my poem to him. He said
he liked it and would put it on
his altar. Viking is Norse pagan."

**Cree
Word of
the Day**
nitôtêm
my friend



WOLF, BY LAWRENCE M.
IS THE WOLF MAN'S FIRST BEST FRIEND?

HU/MAN'S BEST FRIEND?

While the title of "man's best friend" often goes to the noble canine (woof, woof), our Remand class's contenders included cats, turtles, and even some rowdy kitchen trustees, and all in all, give Lassie a run for her money!

Blacky

(Black German Shepherd)

The best animal friendship I've had was with my dog Blacky when I was in my teenage years. He was the smartest dog, capable of understanding me as if he was a human being himself. He was the most comforting, loyal, smart, understanding and protective animal friend I ever got to spend time with.

Faron S.

Garf

(Fat orange cat)

My cat Garf! He's about eight or nine, he's orange and really fat, and he's seen a lot of sh*t – if only he could talk!

Isaiah R.



NOELLE BY MICHAEL L.

Noelle

(White and grey piebald cat)

I currently have the best animal friendship I could ask for in my pet Noelle. She's smart for her kind and can read human emotions well. For example, whenever I'm feeling down and lying in bed, she comes into my room to lay on me and tries to console me. Whenever that happens it pulls me back to reality and I realize how lucky I am to have adopted her from the Humane Society. She was found and saved when she was almost frozen, but honestly, Noelle saved me, too.

Michael L.

Sniffer

(Dog)

My dog Sniffer liked to sniff shoes, and would always be by my side. The good thing about Sniffer was that he walked kids to school and made sure no other dog would bother them.

Dylan L.

Scrat

(Rat)

My rat Scrat, we would chill and play games. He would hide in the couch and it was sad when he died. We buried him in the front yard. My friend Scrat!

Darren B.



CHIP-INNS
BY JORDAN M.

Chip-inns

(Turtle)

My pet turtle was an escape artist! Everything I put him in to contain him, he escaped from. I always found him by following his wet foot prints to a warm vent. I had him until I freed him into the river, not knowing that he was a freshwater turtle. R.I.P. Chip-inns!

Jordan M.

Parrot

Back in the Congo, my parrot watched me when my mom would go to the store. One time I left to watch a soccer game, my mom couldn't find me, but I had told the parrot where I went and it told my mom! My mom came to the game and grabbed me by the ear and took me home. But, the parrot was very close to me. We would talk to each other and make jokes. I am the last child of my family, but it felt like my parrot was the last child because it would always tell on me when I would do something or sneak out.

Norbert K.

QUOTES & QUOTIENTS

"I have learned that to be with those I like is enough."

Walt Whitman

"It is morning. Remember that."

Cookie Monster
Sesame Street

"To the world you may be just one person, but to one person you may be the world."

Dr. Seuss

Every year, nearly 1 million people access programming through Friendship Centres.

On May 6, 2004, 52.5 million people watched the final episode of Friends.

From the Margins to the centre:

How Indigenous Women’s Leadership Created a Legacy of Friendship Centres

Every year, nearly one million Indigenous people access programming through Friendship Centres. Friendship Centres are local organizations that provide an array of resources to Indigenous folks living in bigger cities, acting as a referral centre, cultural hub, and crucial first point of contact for accessing specialized programs and services. Friendship Centres are pillars of many communities across Canada. Individual centres’ specific goals can vary, but they all share the central goal of supporting Indigenous people living in urban settings, and working to improve their lives and wellbeing. Guided by Indigenous traditions, values, and teachings, they support Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike from a status-blind and non-political perspective.

The first Friendship Centre was founded in 1951, in The Inside Scoop’s hometown of Winnipeg, MB, as a response to the influx of people moving off reserves and out of remote communities into larger urban areas. It was formed by a group of Indigenous activists, primarily women, a prominent figure among them being Marion Meadmore. Meadmore was born in 1935, on Peepeekisis Cree Nation, SK, she moved to Winnipeg in the early 1950s to attend the University of Manitoba, and became one of the first female Indigenous lawyers in Canada.

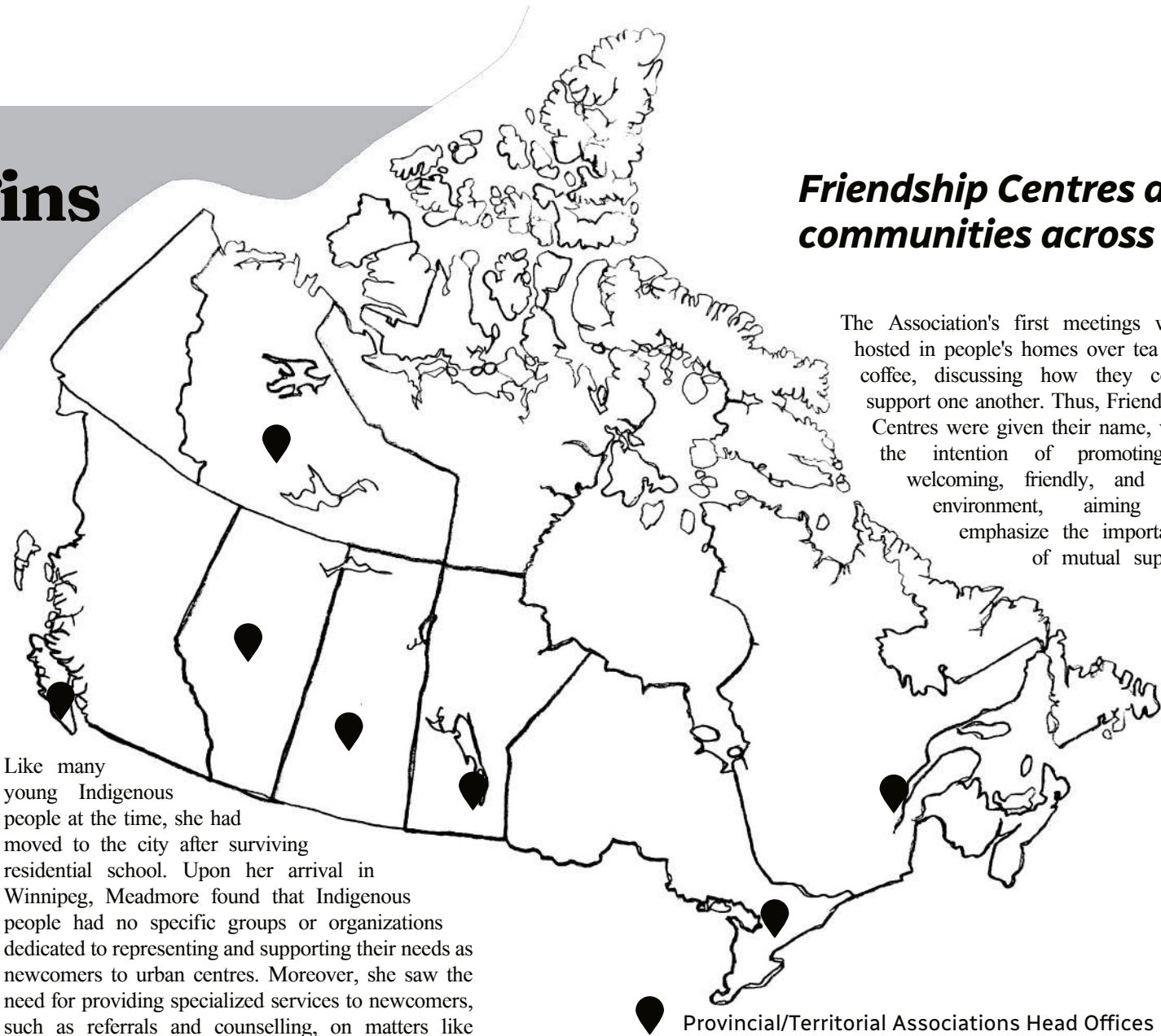
Like many young Indigenous people at the time, she had moved to the city after surviving residential school. Upon her arrival in Winnipeg, Meadmore found that Indigenous people had no specific groups or organizations dedicated to representing and supporting their needs as newcomers to urban centres. Moreover, she saw the need for providing specialized services to newcomers, such as referrals and counselling, on matters like housing, employment, healthcare, and education, as well as liaisons to other community organizations. Meadmore was inspired to create a solution! She, alongside other activists, formed the Urban Indian Association, the organization that laid the groundwork for the first Friendship Centre and for all of the Friendship Centres across Canada today.

Friendship Centres are pillars of many communities across Canada.

The Association's first meetings were hosted in people's homes over tea and coffee, discussing how they could support one another. Thus, Friendship Centres were given their name, with the intention of promoting a welcoming, friendly, and safe environment, aiming to emphasize the importance of mutual support

within Indigenous communities. By 1972, the Friendship Centre Movement had grown far and wide across Canada, and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) was established to represent them as their collective entity. As of today, 125 Friendship Centres across Canada are connected through the NAFC, with the federal government committing in March 2026 to an investment of \$168 million over five years to aid Friendship Centres’ mission to support Indigenous people across Canada.

Because of Marion Meadmore and these early activists, millions of people are able to access vital resources whether or not they are living in their home communities. The history of Friendship Centres stands as a testament to the importance of grassroots community-building and to the power of friendship itself.



Provincial/Territorial Associations Head Offices

- | | |
|---|---|
| Northwest Territories/Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres | Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres |
| British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres | Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres |
| Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association | Regroupement des Centres D'amite Autochones Du Québec |
| Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan | Atlantic Friendship Centres |



National Association of Friendship Centres

Contact the National Association of Friendship Centres to be connected to a local organization that can support you!

Tel: 613-563-4844
Toll Free: 877-563-4844
Email: NAFCgen@nafc.ca OR
visit their website:
nafc.ca/friendship-centres

What are the qualities you look for in a best friend?

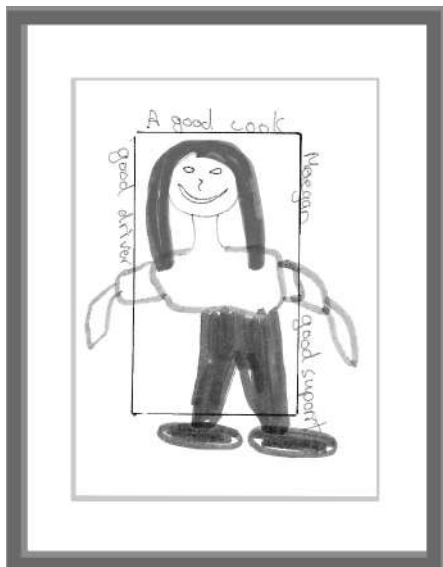
Scoop readers give their two cents as they describe – and draw – their besties.



She's always there when I need her. Loyalty, honesty, trust. Never judges, if it's good or bad.
Denise



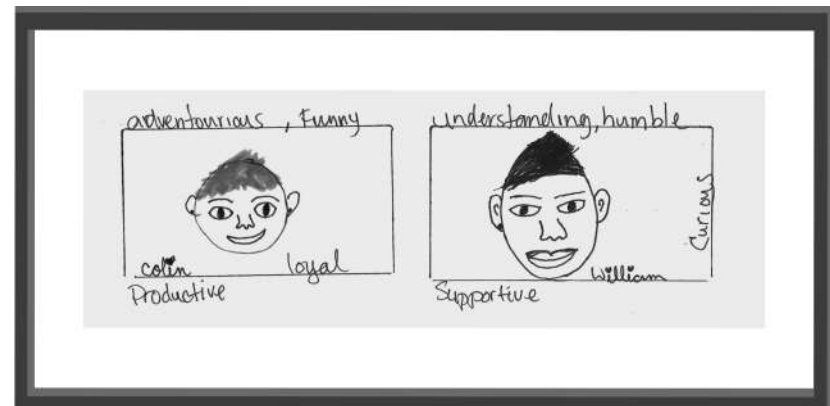
Loyal, respectful, funny, kind.
Shelby T.



funny, outgoing, knows how to have fun. Can take jokes and is good at pool!
Jenelle P.



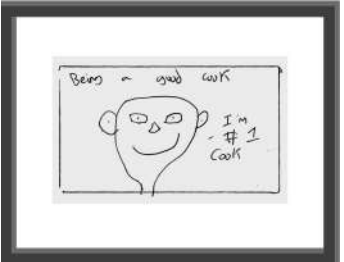
Sense of humour, lots of loyalty, a person I can trust.
Stephanie D.



Brittany S.



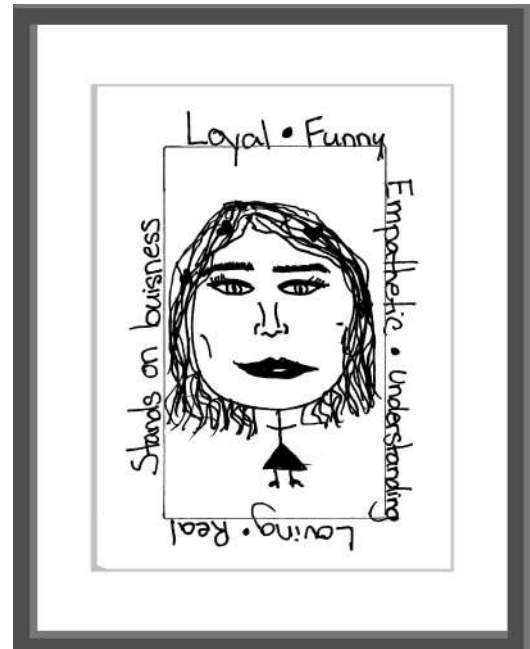
funny, honest, caring. We can laugh together.
Kay-lei F.



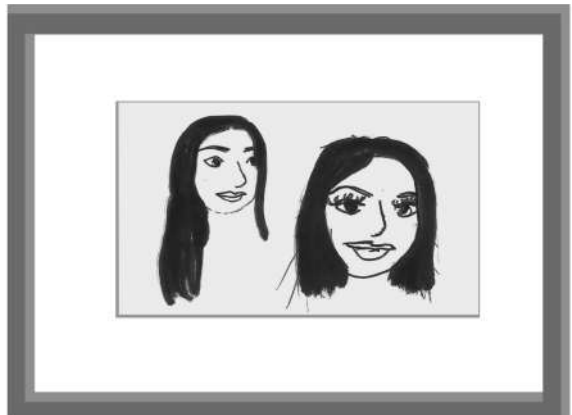
Brown, round, and good in the kitchen!
John S.



Outgoing, adventurous, unique, crazy!
Michelle G.



Carlita V.



funny, pretty, smart, loyal, thicc.
Kashta D.

BLANK FRAME VECTORS BY VECTEEZY



IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WHEN YOU GO TO JAIL. YOU DON'T SEE LOVED ONES EVERY DAY, AND SOMETIMES IT CAN FEEL LIKE YOUR OLD LIFE AND THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW ARE GOING ON WITHOUT YOU.

But, as a prisoner, you have the right to maintain contact with close personal relations through the phone, letter mail, and in-person visits. For this edition of Right to Know (our legal segment), we're going to explore the right to getting visits a little bit more.

Federal and provincial legislation dictate what exactly your rights are, as well as the rights of your visitors. Here is a summary of the regulations and legislation around visitation. Unless otherwise noted, the statements apply to visitors at both federal and provincial institutions.

The Basics



Visits should be as **unrestricted as possible**, and any restrictions must come with a justifiable reason, like safety risks.

Every incarcerated person should have the opportunity to meet with visitors. That may come with a physical barrier between you and the visitor, or supervision, depending on the circumstances.



Visitors

Visitors have to fill out application forms every two years. All visitors have to be screened and approved for visitation by the appropriate justice body, whether that is federal or provincial.

Immediate family and people whom you have a close relationship with are eligible for private family visits, except in certain cases. You have to apply for these visits and they can be refused or suspended. If they are, you have the right to know why, and the right to appeal it.

Visits with your legal team should happen in private rooms.

<A HREF="HTTPS://WWW.VECTEEZY.COM/FREE-



The Visit

In provincial custodial facilities, visitors may also be required to have their photograph taken to assist with identifying individuals entering the institution.

Correctional staff are allowed to search or frisk visitors in a non-intrusive way without suspicion.

If staff suspects a visitor is carrying contraband, they are allowed to strip search a visitor, but they have to have reasonable suspicion, get approval from the head of the institution, and they must give the visitor the option of leaving voluntarily first. If they suspect contraband is in the visitor's vehicle, they can search that, too.

The items visitors are allowed to have on them when they visit have to be listed at the visitor control point. If a visitor brings in something that isn't permitted, a staff member may cut the visit short.

SOURCES:

THE CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT (DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, CANADA)

THE CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE REGULATIONS (DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, CANADA)

THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ACT (GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA)

Staff can cancel or end a visit early if they think there is a safety risk. A visit can be refused or suspended. Both the visitor and the inmate should be informed if a visit is being refused and why. You are able to ask that your situation be re-considered, and if you're rejected again, you can re-apply in six months or sooner if new information comes up that could change the refusal.

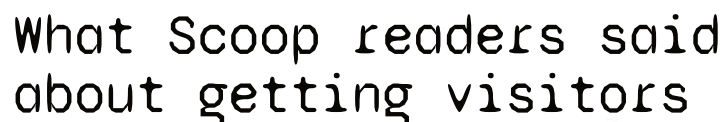


Staff are not supposed to open your mail or listen in on phone conversations, but they can if they believe a crime is being planned or anyone's safety is at risk. If you are sending mail to or calling someone who has requested in writing not to be contacted by you, staff can block communications.

Please note:

This is public legal information, not legal advice. As always, when in doubt, check with your lawyer.





"Getting on the visitor list is way harder than it used to be. You used to wait maybe 24 hours to get approved, now we can wait weeks or even months for loved ones to get cleared"

John L. S.

"It puts us in a better mood and makes us happy. But, it sucks to see them leave."

Austin N.

"You only have thirty minutes from when your visitor arrives. If there's a code, the visit is ended. No matter how far they travelled the visit is still only for thirty minutes. If it takes you ten minutes to come down from the unit, that time is cut out of your visit."

David M.

Post It Vectors by Vecteezy

"I had a visit like seven years ago with my ex. It was very pleasant and got me in more high spirits!"

Kashtin R.

"My parents are disabled and it is hard for them to come and see me."

Christopher F.

"It eases the mind knowing and seeing your loved ones."

Jordan M.

I haven't had visitors yet because they have had troubles getting approved. We should be entitled to visit the ones that we love, and love us, for their benefit and ours."

Jarod R.



PSA!

Bar None *is a free ride share program*

Offering rides to

Headingley CC,
Women's CC,
Milner Ridge CC,
Brandon CC,
Agassiz Youth Centre, and the
Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

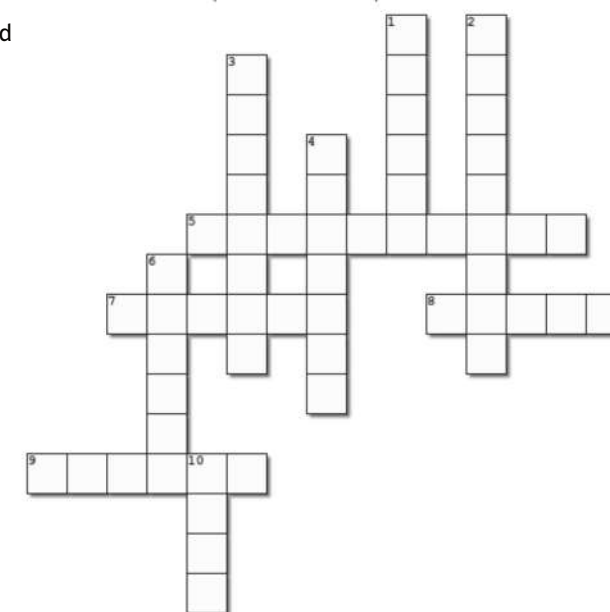
**Contact them to arrange
your ride today.**

204-861-0642

barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Summer 2026 Scoop

Complete the crossword puzzle below



DOWN

1. The addressee of Raymond's Ode
2. The facial hairstyle sported by Marshall's friend
3. According to Dennis G., friends can also be
4. Word of the day
6. Friendship Centre founder Meadmore
10. The fat, orange cat

ACROSS

5. What might be taken prior to a visit at a provincial institution?
7. Norbert's winged pet
8. Kashta's last must-have in potential friends
9. The subject of Wendy Cope's poem

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)

Call for Submissions

We welcome your submissions of writing and artwork!

The theme for our fall issue is **CRYPTIDS!** (Think Sasquatch, Moth Man, or the Loch Ness Monster!) Submissions for the fall issue are due on **September 24**. Submissions not based on themes are always welcome.

If you want to work with an editor on your piece, please indicate that in the waiver and tell us where to reach you.

Please note that we cannot publish photographs.

Send submissions and a signed waiver (below) via Canada Post to:

**Anna Sigrithur, John Howard Society of MB
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 questions. Not incarcerated? You're still welcome to call, of course!

(204) 775-1514 ext. 112 (Anna) or ext. 113 (John)

the **INSIDE**
scoop
SUMMER 2026



On the Cover:
Marshall's Friend by Marshall D.

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.