

The Inside-Out Center NEWSLETTER

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The Inside-Out Center at Temple University
International Headquarters of The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®

Lots Happening and So Much More to Come

I think you'll see – from what you read in this issue of the newsletter – that we have quite an extraordinary community... ordinary people coming together and doing extraordinary things. It is in that coming together, that sense of community that we share, that we are able to accomplish so much more than we could on our own as individuals. In fact, there is no doubt in my mind that this very coming together is what brings so much that is inside of us, out – to be shared with a world that needs what we each have to give. You'll see here descriptions of some impressive projects happening through a couple of our think tanks (realizing that what is being highlighted in this current issue is merely the tip of the iceberg). And you'll see some really wonderful creative pieces – poetry, reflections – offered by alumni of both our classes and our trainings. It is really quite awe-inspiring.

And – you may be interested to know that we held five international trainings this past summer: one in Michigan (in collaboration with the Theory Group at Macomb Correctional Facility), one in Oregon (with the ACE group at Oregon State Penitentiary), our first in Canada (with the Walls to Bridges Collective, our first women's think tank, which meets at the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario), and two trainings with the Think Tank at

Graterford Prison in the Philadelphia area. Over the four months of the summer, through these trainings, another 90 instructors joined the Inside-Out community – from the U.S. and Canada, as well as from Australia and the U.K. We now have 464 instructors in all, with classes of all kinds multiplying each semester.

January Inside-Out Training Coming Up in Philadelphia!

January 13–19 (Monday – Sunday)

Application information
is on our website.

While there aren't any articles included here about the trainings, I can tell you that each one was powerful and distinct in its own right. I am always impressed that groups of people set aside a week of their lives to enter into a process that is, in large part, unknown to them. It takes a lot of trust and openness and flexibility and willingness to try all kinds of new things. And what we have been able to do in the last year or so is increase the amount of time that we spend on the inside with our think tank coaches. This has made a huge difference in the depth and contours of the training. We are thankful that we have the ongoing institutional support that allows this all to happen.

Finally, we have exciting news on a different front. *The Prison Journal: An International Forum on Incarceration and Alternative Sanctions* published its summer edition, a special volume focused on the Inside-Out program, edited by Jamie Martin, including seven articles written by folks in the Inside-Out community. And – something to look forward to – the first book about Inside-Out is forthcoming in the next couple of months through Palgrave Press. Edited by Barbara Roswell and Simone Davis, *Turning Teaching Inside-Out: A Pedagogy of Transformation* includes dozens of chapters on the many and varied facets of the program, incorporating the voices of inside students, outside students, and instructors in multiple genres and timbres. From what I have seen so far, it promises to be very impressive!

Goodness abounds! Keep on doing great things. There's so much more coming our way!

– Lori Pompa, Founder and Director
The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

[Special thanks to Felicia Henry and Tricia Way for their help with this edition of the newsletter. Since there was so much to include this time, it was necessary to shorten some of the pieces. Hopefully, not too much was lost in the process. Unfortunately, there were some submissions that could not be included, due to length and/or photo clarity.]

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program® promotes social change through transformative education. It is an initiative directed at deepening the conversation – and transforming ways of thinking – about crime, justice, and related social issues. Founded in 1997, and a national (now, international) program since 2004, Inside-Out brings college students and incarcerated individuals together as peers in a classroom setting that emphasizes dialogue, critical thinking, collaboration, and the creation of new ideas.



A Remembrance: Penny Pether

Penny Pether passed away on Tuesday, September 10th. While I can't claim to have known Penny as well or for as long as many people, what I can claim is to have met and begun to know and love a deeply kindred spirit. I met Penny when she attended one of our Inside-Out trainings two years ago. She came, along with 17 others, to learn about the intricacies of offering a class in the Inside-Out style. And Penny fell in love with this approach to learning – deeply in love. It became clear to me that this crazy thing that we were doing was exactly what she had been waiting for – it was what she was made for!

At the end of the week, part of which was held inside Graterford Prison with a group of men there who are experts on Inside-Out, Penny offered the following reflection: "I was utterly unprepared for meeting inside a maximum-security prison a concentration of the most highly evolved and highly educated people I have ever met in my life. To have the chance to be educated by these men was the greatest gift I've ever received."



Penny offered her first Inside-Out class through Villanova University's law school in the spring of 2012 at the Federal Detention Center in downtown Philadelphia. In fact, she was only the second person ever to have done such a class through a law school. This past summer, as she was struggling so intensely with her failing body, she spent weeks preparing for her second – and what she knew would be her last – Inside-Out class. It meant everything to her to do this class. And she almost did it – but, as the semester started, her body stopped cooperating.

One might ask why this class was so important to Penny. I can't answer for her, but what I can say is that it was clear that her life's work has been focused on justice – and she knew that the men and women inside prison were, in many ways, the fallout of a justice system gone bad. She desperately wanted her students to know that – to get to know the men and women inside in a direct and unadulterated way. And her belief, as she said to me recently, was that no one should go through law school without this kind of experience. She knew the difference it made – in her life, in her understanding – and that it was at least part of a solution.

This past Wednesday night, I was at Graterford, meeting with the very men who had been involved in Penny's training, and I told them that she had passed on. There is no way to describe the beauty and love and tenderness that poured forth from these gentlemen, as they remembered Penny – her humor, her intensity, her passion, her crazy laugh, and – of course – her incredible warmth. They cried, as did I – expressing unfathomable love from deep in the bowels of a maximum-security prison. She would have loved that. And we are all so much richer for having had her in our lives – and her indomitable spirit, which I think she would want us to always keep alive in ourselves. I mean, really – how could we not?

– By Lori Pompa

Excerpted from comments offered at Penny's funeral (9/14/2013)

An Inside-Out Goodbye

This piece was written for the participants of the May 2013 Inside-Out training in Michigan.

I'm struggling with the thought of knowing that much sooner than later we are going to start your day but end my day with us saying goodbye...the goodbye that shakes your very foundation; the goodbye I always fear. And I know this might be hard for you to believe, me being the manly man that I am who never shows or expresses concern (yeah, picture that), but saying goodbye to you will be one of the hardest things I've ever had to do, that I ever had the honor of experiencing, because I feel that, when I say goodbye to you, I will be giving you permission to take with you a piece of my heart that I never knew existed, but was somehow just recently found.

I'm struggling. I'm struggling with knowing I'm going to miss the gifts you have stored inside of your being, that I won't be blessed to have you shine your insightful point of view on me like you always have, giving me a glimpse of your true substance, causing the world to rotate on its axis, bringing forth your true purpose. I'm struggling with knowing there is a possibility of me never seeing you again, of not being able to share my distorted views or complex ways with the person I started this process with, that I've grown with, that I've shared with on many different levels. I can honestly say I love you much more than just as an individual and a friend because, in the atoms that were put in place to stabilize the lining of my heart, family is not just who you love but who loves you back in return.

So I struggle with the thought of having to say goodbye and as much as I wish that this moment wouldn't happen or even has to exist, your day without us has to start and my day with you has to end with you saying hello and me saying goodbye.

Goodbye.

– By Maurice,
An Inside Member
of the Michigan Theory Group

Forming an Oasis of Humanity

Well, here we are at the end of all things, and as I suspected it hasn't been a long enough time to spend among such a great group of people. I am going to miss our community, and for those of you new to this group, it's a community, not a class. Says so in the syllabus. From the perspective of a college student, that is actually something really radical. In none of my other classes, even the ones I regularly attend, do I feel like I know my classmates as I do here.

That's what sets this class apart from others and what Inside-Out is all about. It's about the people, and as clichéd as that must sound, in a prison setting, it's profound. In a system that has the unenviable task of dealing in punishment, it is unfortunately unsurprising that individuals often feel dehumanized. Outside this system, there are many, my past self among them, who use prisons to put out of sight and out of mind men and women who should be at the forefront of our social concern. This class brought together people from both inside and outside of the system, and we were able to form relationships, a community, and an oasis of humanity in what can feel like a dehumanizing place.

The people and humanity that we discovered in this class are what motivated us to put a piece of ourselves into these projects, to contribute our time and diverse perspectives, and in many of our cases, to show up to class when we looked or sounded like we were knocking on heaven's door. I feel incredibly lucky to have gotten to know such an inspiring group of people and indebted to a community that helped me to grow so much as a person. My only regret is that our time here has drawn to a close.

— By David

*Outside Student at the University of Notre Dame
Excerpted from his Closing Ceremony comments*



Students in the Notre Dame University / Westville Correctional Facility
Fall 2012 Inside-Out Class

Irony of Inside-Out

In a place where freedom is stripped
Inspiration is crushed
Hope is dashed
Minds and hearts are being liberated
Masses are being inspired
Hope is being born
What can happen inside walls and fences
Can happen ANYWHERE
This training is proof.

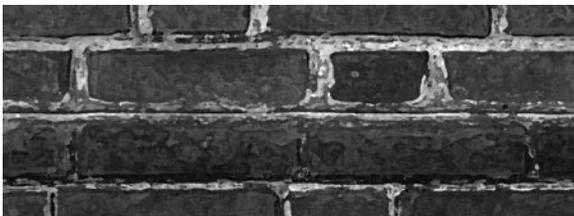
— By Phill, Inside Member of the Graterford Think Tank
Taken from the reflection booklet for the August training

Birthing

We're all born twice—first on the day we were born and then the moment we discover why we were born. I was born again today, and you were all midwives and deliverers of me. To educate, to facilitate, i.e. to make it easy for the best in people to come out. Thank you for your wonderful examples.

Ghani

— By Ghani, Inside Member of the Graterford Think Tank
Taken from the reflection booklet for the August training



Oregon's ACE Group Takes on a Very Special Project

Another Chance at Education (ACE), consisting of Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program alumni, has set out to assist the University of Oregon (UO) "90 by 30 Project." This project is a joint effort between the UO and Lane County to reduce child abuse and neglect. They put forth a list of core values, related to prevention, the importance of support, and the value of various perspectives in this effort. We strongly believe that our voices are substantial and insights imperative to this project.

The ACE group, with the support of the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) administration, put together a questionnaire based on the core values of the 90 by 30 Project in order to gain the perspectives of those incarcerated at OSP. This was a voluntary effort on behalf of both ACE and the questionnaire participants.

After summarizing the feedback on the questionnaires, the inside ACE members facilitated a workshop, including 10 men from the population and 10 ACE members. In an hour and a half, there was a wagon wheel conducted to help break the ice and begin discussion around the topic of child abuse and neglect. This was followed by an activity meant to highlight confusion experienced by children, in which four groups were formed, with each group given separate instructions. Finally, small and large group discussion ensued, with the group concluding that this topic is not finished being explored.

We are currently scheduling a follow-up group discussion that will be solution-based and group-oriented to continue our efforts in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Our desire is to provide as much viable feedback and have as great an impact as possible, based on the experience that we collectively have.

Activities, cognitive thinking classes, and educational services led by people incarcerated at OSP have grown exponentially in the last few years. Such groups offer a dynamic that can only exist with peer-based learning. The impact felt by both those who are leading and those being led can be astounding. Recognizing that fact, ACE is looking to grow this phenomenon within the walls of OSP.

– By ACE Members



Collaborative Poem

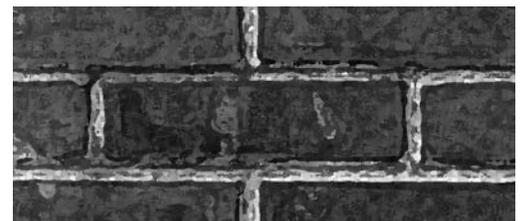
This poem was written by four inside and outside participants in the June instructor training in Oregon as part of an activity created during the training. These poems were composed in small groups by circulating the papers around the circles of the small groups, while each individual added a line to the previous line. The interesting part of this exercise was that no one in the small group could see the whole poem until it was finished; everyone wrote based solely on the line they could see (the rest was folded underneath). This is one example of dozens written that day.

I'll never forget the day when
It came to me
There would be daily trips to oncology
Radiation and chemotherapy
I have cancer, but cancer can't have me

I am caught in the storm, but I dance in
the room
I see in colors in a land of black and
white
I am in this body but it is not me
I swim in the ocean, but do not sink

My favorite color
Can you believe it is pink?
Fall upon the midnight hour
Remove from them the undue power

Show your blooms, as does the flower
Hope guides you, carries you through
Shows you what you need to do
Believe



Participants in the Oregon Inside-Out Training in June, as they write their collective poems in small groups

Update from the DeBerry Think Tank in Tennessee

The Think Tank at the DeBerry Special Needs Facility in Nashville, TN, began in January, 2012 after Kate King taught "Victimology" as an Inside-Out class in the Fall 2011 semester. The students, both inside and out, saw a need to work together on important social and justice related projects that would not be limited by the semester timeline. We currently have 11 inside members and 11 outside members.

Accomplishments:

- The discussion of domestic violence in the "Victimology" class inspired an inside student to write a play, entitled "Last Chance", which illustrates the strains one faces when released on parole and how those stressors can lead to domestic violence, beginning with verbal abuse and escalating to greater violence. We have performed the play in the facility twice at the warden's request, to an audience of approximately 120 incarcerated men each time. We received standing ovations and feedback from both incarcerated individuals and prison staff regarding the heightened awareness and thoughtful conversations ensuing from the play.
- An inside student, who is a professional musician, has written three original songs (lyrics and music), all inspired by Inside-Out and the Think Tank.

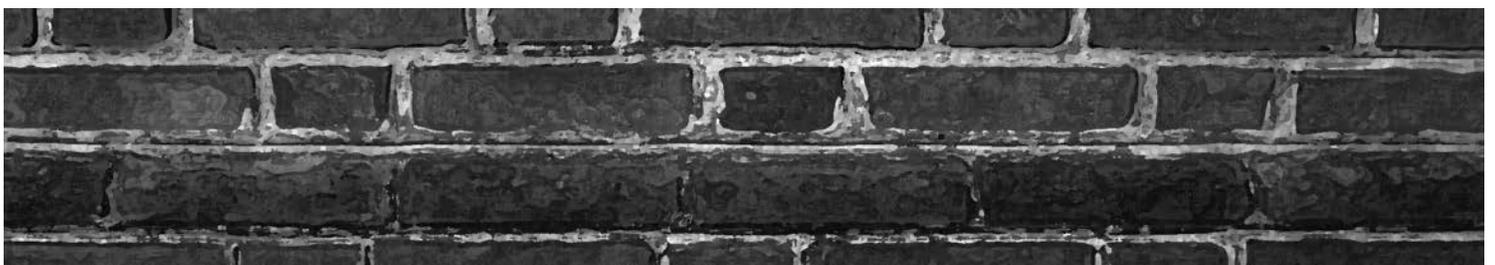
- An outside student conducted a conflict resolution workshop for inside and outside students.
- Inside students wrote articles submitted to the *Yale Law Journal* for its prison writing special edition. None of ours was selected, but the fire was lit, and many of the students have continued to write.
- We began a project called "Kelly's Kids," where incarcerated juveniles wrote anonymous letters to the inside students asking for advice and sharing their life stories. The inside guys responded anonymously with life advice and encouragement to the juveniles. Kelly, an outside student, compiled all letters and responses in a binder, creating a treasure trove of life wisdom from inside.



- We are currently collaborating with the Assistant Superintendent of the Nashville School District to create a workshop in the prison where inside and outside students and public school teachers will discuss the issues facing children of incarcerated parents. Our goal is to raise awareness and brainstorm solutions.
- Our most

significant accomplishment is the creation of a non-profit organization called We Stay Free. "We Stay Free" is a partnership between inside Think Tank members and outside criminology students at Western Kentucky University. Following an intense discussion of the obstacles facing individuals paroling out of prison, we decided to create a parolee hotline, where phones would be answered by formerly incarcerated people who have "made good." Working together, the inside and outside students have compiled an extensive collection of local, regional, state, and national resources to help meet the needs of those seeking assistance.

– By DeBerry Think Tank Members



An Altered Sense of Gravity

Haikus from Members of the DeBerry Think Tank

Life takes us on funny trips. For example, I would've never thought that the Thursday nights of my last semester of college would be spent in a maximum security prison surrounded by men convicted of felonies. Before the class started, I tried to erase my pre-conceived notions in order to go in with a fresh set of eyes, an unbiased opinion. But of course, it was impossible to completely rid myself of all expectations. As far as the actual building, I think I imagined some large castle-like structure. Instead, the DeBerry Special Needs Facility is a series of low-slung buildings sprawled out across acres of very green grass, surrounded by miles of shining silver fences with teeth... and beautiful Tennessee hills just beyond. How lovely.

As far as the guys themselves, I had no idea of what to expect. Men in stripes? Well, I wasn't quite that naïve. Raging, muscle-y cons, hopped up on small spaces and testosterone? Hm. Maybe a little. Ok, that's a little extreme, too. The point is that my brain had some fuzzy non-picture of what would fill that room when the time came, and when it finally did, I wasn't disappointed.

The very time I thought
All was lost, my faith shook me
And my doubt left me

– Mike, Inside Student
DeBerry Think Tank

During that initial handshake line, I was knocked further and further away from my own prejudice, which had somehow managed to survive my best attempts at being dropped. What filed in before me was a line of clean-shaven men, who admittedly were wearing the same light blue attire, but were all smiling and looked me in the eye while they shook my hand. Hm. Color me intrigued.

I, 100%, did not expect philosophical and metaphysical conversations to occur

every week with that specific group of people. I was hoping for inspiration, and oh my, did I find some. Each class brought so much insight and so many new perspectives that, by the end of class, I felt changed. It is exhilarating, filling your head with knowledge. Overwhelming at times, absolutely, but worth the effort, consistently.

Troubles fall on me
I fight them with all my might
In the dark, grace glows

– Kate, Facilitator
DeBerry Think Tank

But what about when we left? Emerging into the dark, crisp air after being locked inside for three hours always feels like a gift. It is a chilly embrace that wakes up the senses after turning them all down in order to put the brain into overdrive. I found that each night I left, I walked away a different person, into a new world, under a different sky. Every night we left, I would look for the moon. Sometimes it was visible, sometimes not. It felt like the sky was unfolding with each step forward that we took. Despite those harsh lights, it was somehow still possible to see the crystal clear beauty that the night sky displayed for us most of those Thursdays. I remember that there were Full Moons on at least two of our meetings. Those were especially good classes. The best though was when the STARS would shine down, like little pinpricks of HOPE sticking through the fabric of TIME.

The men of my Thursday night prison class gave me something that is difficult to define. Ultimately, they blessed me

Prison walls crumble
Holy flowers bloom anew
Freedom is alive

– Mauro, Inside Student
DeBerry Think Tank

with humanity. Listening to them talk and share their thoughts on the workings of the correctional system and then life itself had me thinking so hard and deep that my mind remained locked inside that room for hours. It was like we were in a spaceship far, far away from any other living thing that mattered. When I was finally forced to snap back, my perception of gravity had been altered.

This class changed my life. This is one of the things I know. While I can't speak for anyone else, I will be forever grateful for their dedication, willingness to learn, patience, and all around awesomeness that taught me some truly fundamental things about life that I'm pretty sure I would have had a hard time gathering on my own. So, thank you, guys. You have moved and shaped me, helped to give me direction and open my eyes to the way things happen to be. At the end of the day, we are all humans, for better or worse. As the guys have shown us, no matter what the circumstance may be, life leaves it up to us to decide if positive or negative energy will flow through our thoughts and actions.

Broken by myself
Put back together by you
Forgiveness, keep me

– Twilight, Inside Student
DeBerry Think Tank

Let's choose positive, so we can work towards reversing the wrongs that are evident in the system that they are still a part of: that we are a part of. Together, our energy can move the earth. I want to be a part of that shift, and because of this class, one more group of college kids has a chance to do just that.

– By Bobbi-Lee, Outside Student
Class at DeBerry Special Needs Facility
and Western Kentucky University
[Excerpted from a paper written for class]

Update on Alumni Activity in Ohio: People for Change

People for Change (PFC), the alumni organization of the University of Toledo (UT) Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, continues to sponsor academic workshops and events at the Toledo Correctional Institution (ToCI) and in the community. Thus far, we have sponsored over 14 eight-week workshops in the fields of expertise of our faculty core.

With the direction of Alexandra Scarborough, of PFC, we put together a performance of writings by members. This play was put on for the Midwest hub meeting in April and for a community meeting in May. It is a very exciting piece of our work to be learning about acting and performance.

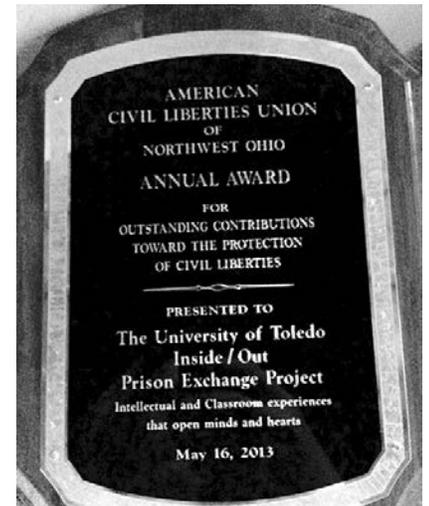
We recently hosted a community meeting to which we invited people from organizations doing important re-entry work who were interested in getting more involved in programming inside ToCI. Organizations like Families Beyond Bars, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Ohio Family Services office and others discussed the status of current programs and brainstormed ways to develop new initiatives and networks. One idea that related directly to the work that People for Change does was to get on board with the national initiative to reinstate Pell Grants for incarcerated students.

Additionally, the University of Toledo Inside-Out program was recognized as the "Civil Libertarian of the Year" for work on prison reform by the Northwest Ohio American Civil Liberties Union. The Northwest ACLU has a long history of doing significant work on prison reform, so this was quite an honor for all of us involved with Inside-Out and People for Change.

Some other good news is that we have received funding from the College of Literature, Languages, and Social Sciences at UT to continue our work. This will help us fund the purchase of books, train additional faculty in Inside-Out pedagogy, develop new programs, and sponsor speakers in the interest of furthering educational initiatives inside the Toledo Correctional Institution.

Finally, Dr. Carter Wilson will join our ranks at UT as an Inside-Out instructor, as he completed the Michigan training in May. He is teaching a course on civil rights in the fall of 2013.

– By People for Change Members



Award to People for Change from the Northwest Ohio ACLU

Congrats to Tyrone!

Earlier this year, Tyrone Werts was named a Soros Justice Fellow to support his work on ending the culture of street crime. In early 2011, Tyrone received a commutation of his life sentence after spending more than 36 years in prison. Since then, he has been working with Inside-Out in a public relations capacity.

During his last several years at Graterford, Tyrone and a few other men developed a theory about the culture of street crime and how to address it through a transformative process while folks are still incarcerated. That program is still operating inside Graterford, and now, through this fellowship, Tyrone and others can make the vital link between people in prison and those who are back out on the streets.

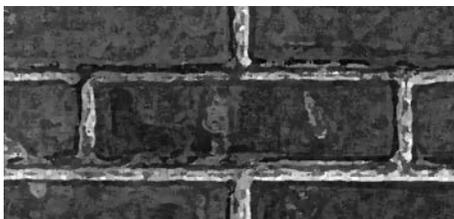
Participants in the Oregon Inside-Out Training in June engaged in group conversation

The Art of Writing from the Inside

Writing is many different things to many different people. To some, it is a mode of individual expression, to others it is a form of entertainment, and to still more it is an emotional outlet. Regardless of the writer's intent, the practice of stringing words together into a coherent pattern that allows for communication of an idea, a fact, or an opinion is really art.

I started writing when I was in middle school because I wanted to read about my favorite comic book characters in daring and bold situations that weren't considered in the comic book medium. I didn't know it at the time, but I was a writer. Unfortunately, growing up, I lacked focus and never pursued writing as a serious path. Then, while still a high school student, I was sentenced to prison.

One constant of prison is idle time. This time can be spent watching television, working out, playing basketball, reading, or any other number of activities, productive and otherwise. After drifting, reflecting, and wondering what came next, I finally picked up a pen and put it to paper. It wasn't easy. Writing takes practice, practice, and even more practice. Since there is not much help or encouragement in prison, I experienced long stretches of inactivity. Eventually, I met Bryan, a like-minded individual, who put me on the writing path.



Bryan and I had many similar interests and he always wanted to write. I knew a little about writing, so with his drive and my limited knowledge, we set out

to dominate the writing world. It didn't take long for the reality of prison to set in as Bryan was "churned" and transferred to another facility. I was again left to my own devices, but this time I had Bryan's drive as a model. Through determined patience and painstaking research, I was able to hone my skills as a writer while building a small index of reliable editors.

The Contemplation of a Fallen Leaf

Separated from what it once was
Form distorted, structure bent
Lost amidst the dying
Identity repurposed
Naked against the cold winds
Alone in a vast field of decay
Anticipating the inevitable
Covered in dirt
Trampled beneath foot
Forever silenced.

– By Jay, Michigan Theory Group

Then, after seven years of rejections, lost motivation, tests of patience, and nose to the grindstone hard work, I received my first acceptance letter. My work was accepted and I was paid for it. I was excited and full of confidence. I thought I had finally found my groove and that the acceptance letters would be pouring in. I wouldn't receive my next acceptance for two years. The market I found was a non-paying publication on the low end of quality. For me, it was an unsatisfactory arrangement. For awhile, I simply gave up, only writing the occasional poem when a moment of inspiration struck.

Almost four years went by before I showed my work to an incarcerated peer named Jerry. He was so impressed with what he read that he drew pictures of scenes from the work he liked best. Then he asked me to write more. I had never been

given such high praise. It left a deep impression. I went back to writing. I think the break I took actually did me some good. Once I built up a new portfolio of what I thought was quality work, I decided it was time to re-enter the market.

I only submitted to paying markets. It was daunting, intimidating, and sometimes discouraging, but I persevered. Despite the rejections, and they were many, I kept submitting and submitting and submitting. I finally broke through ten years after my first and only paid publication. I was just as ecstatic this time as I was the first time.

Every acceptance that I've earned has come with twenty rejections, but the ecstasy of success is very much worth the effort. For others to ask to see my work, to actually pay me to print it, offering the world a glimmer of my innermost thoughts and feelings, and knowing that someone somewhere might relate to my experiences and emotions, is absolutely amazing on all levels. The "failures" only make the successes sweeter. Hard work, patience, and more than a little persistence have taken me a long way toward achieving my dreams.

– By Jay, an Inside Member of the Michigan Theory Group



Inside-Out at Marymount Manhattan College

Seven students from the Manhattan campus of Marymount Manhattan College traveled up to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women every Thursday during the Spring 2013 semester for a “combined class,” based on the Inside-Out model, with nine inside students in the Bedford Hills College Program. The course, “Theories of Justice,” explored how various political philosophers have defined justice and how those definitions of justice are implemented in practice, particularly in public policy. Our work was demanding but also rewarding. We struggled with big questions, weighed painful realities of injustice, and worked toward mutual understanding that might improve social justice. We’re excited to be part of this community!

– By Michelle Ronda

*Assistant Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology
Marymount Manhattan College*

Thank You

Outside and inside students,
together we learn and grow,
Not only from our lessons,
but the people inside we show.
Open-minded and eager to earn, you see,
a degree in Sociology.
Same struggles, homework and class
same hopefulness, that we will pass.
Many are appalled at what we do:
College in prison - you are fools!
Why waste the money and time
on those convicted of a crime?
They are not worth it, it's a mistake,
your college for prison inmates.
To many we are just a number, see
once through the gates, no longer human beings.
Yet the outside students, teachers and staff
volunteer to come into the prison for class.
Giving us a chance to correct our mistakes
become responsible human beings, not just inmates.
Many of us will not leave here alive
yet that doesn't mean opportunities should die.
College gives us this chance
with the combined class too
To realize the similarities and role models, too.
Many could gain a lot
from combined classes, too.
It helps you think outside the box
and show you what you could do.
I took to these ladies and gentlemen
in my class, you see.
And I see a future person
that could one day be me.

– By Voorhees, Inside Student
(Marymount Manhattan College)

Discomfort Embraced

In the fall of 2013, I plan to offer a course at Drexel University that will partner students with non-profit community groups in the surrounding neighborhoods. To prepare myself for teaching this non-traditional course, I enrolled in a four-week workshop for developing community-based learning programs led by Cyndi Rickards, Coordinator of Community Outreach at Drexel. In week four of this program, she focused on the topic, “Embracing Discomfort: Dealing with difficult issues of race and class,” and took us on a field trip to the Inside-Out community at Graterford.

On the way to Graterford, I began to feel an acute anxiety. My only sense of prison life came from watching season one of the HBO series *Oz*. I was so disturbed by its portrayal of people who are incarcerated, I stopped watching the series and resolved to stay away from prisons. I tried to modulate my anxiety by remembering the stories Cyndi related about her experiences with the Inside-Out program. I believed her, but only because she is my trusted colleague. Nevertheless, I found it hard to shake my anxiety as I passed through the metal detector at Graterford. As we were escorted down the main corridor, I looked furtively at solemn faces and drab walls. I wondered what interpersonal communication for the next two hours was going to be like in this setting.

We were led into a huge auditorium where a dozen or so of the men incarcerated there came up to us and introduced themselves. A series of interpersonal exercises quickly followed that made the word “incarcerated” seem irrelevant. In two short hours, I felt my anxiety turn into cognitive dissonance. In fact, when our group was sharing during the final plenary session, I felt so overwhelmed that I couldn't put my thoughts together in any cohesive way. Lots of thoughtful and inspiring words were exchanged during our discussions, but I was especially taken by the non-verbal exchanges I experienced. The warm smiles, firm handshakes, and engaging eye contact went a long way towards eroding the preconceptions and stereotypes with which I entered the room.

continued on page 11

A Reflection: No Obstacles on this Trajectory

My name is Tiina. I am one of the few inside students from Grand Valley Institution for Women or members of the Walls to Bridges Collective (Canada's first think tank) who has been privileged enough to have made the transition from inside to outside student. Inside-Out has been instrumental in this journey. Not only has it helped me to achieve my freedom (due to past history, I was not considered a good candidate for parole), it has given me the goal of continuing my education and working towards a realistic career goal. I have been accepted into George Brown College's Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program, where I will begin my graduate studies this fall.

While inside, I participated in two Inside-Out courses which very quickly built up my confidence and passion for change. In my second course, "Diversity, Marginalization and Oppression," taught by Shoshana Pollack, one of the assigned readings was "Breaking Down the Walls: Inside-Out Learning and the Pedagogy of Transformation in Challenging the Prison Industrial Complex," by Lori Pompa. In the reading, Lori discusses how Inside-Out can change people's "post-prison trajectories." Those words had such a profound impact on me. I was already seeing the ways that Inside-Out was changing my life and those words caused me to begin to examine how I was going to change my own trajectory.

Sitting here as a free person, I sometimes need to give my head a shake and wonder how I have come this far in such a short time. When my sentence began six years ago, I was a truly lost person. Buried deep inside of me was a confident, strong, intelligent woman who, I believed, was truly gone forever. At the beginning, I made all the same mistakes a lot of people make: becoming known as a troublemaker, someone

too far gone for change. Dwelling in that environment caused me to believe it was my inevitable reality; I would never be able to break free. As time progressed and I grew older, that strong woman inside was trying to break out. Slowly, I was finding my voice. Sadly, it was an "inside" voice. I had fear and anxiety when it came to dealing with anyone not associated with corrections. I was terrified of the outside world. When I first became eligible to go on passes out into the community, I found I was too afraid to go.

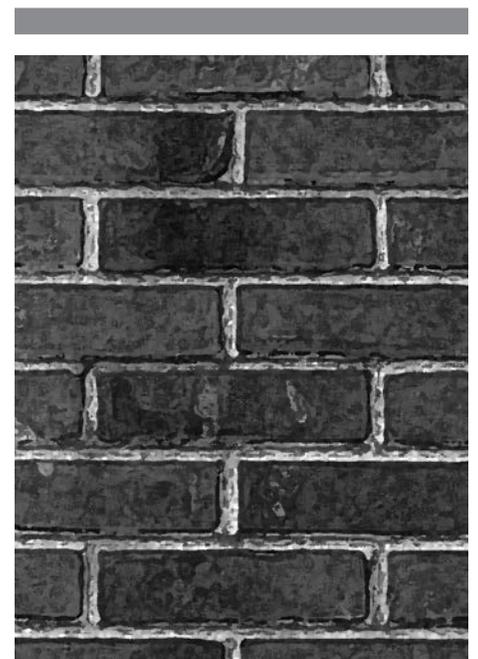
Inside-Out gave me a chance to interact in a meaningful way with the outside community, at the exact moment that I most needed it. I felt myself growing and changing and gaining confidence each and every time I spoke in class. I felt accepted and appreciated by my classmates and I learned to listen to and appreciate them as well. This taught me to foster and grow positive relationships, something I had never learned in my life. Then I became involved in the Walls to Bridges Collective and my sense of myself and my value grew. I discovered skills I had no idea that I possessed, and I learned that I enjoyed public speaking (well, as much as anyone can enjoy it!). This was such a far cry from the lost and silenced individual I had been just a few short years ago. My involvement in Walls to Bridges gave me so many opportunities to develop new capacities. The latest skill I am building is that of research interviewer, as we conduct a study of past Canadian Inside-Out students. This brings me, today, to this need I feel to express how instrumental Inside-Out has been in my life.

One of the questions in the interviews we've been conducting focuses on the transformational aspects of Inside-Out. While the answers to the questions have been amazing and inspirational and made me so proud to be involved, I don't feel my peers understand the depth of my own personal transformation or the role each and every one of them played in it.

After one of the interviews, I expressed to the participant how significant this change felt to me and talked about how she personally had affected me. Her reaction was surprise. She told me that she'd assumed that I had always just naturally been that outspoken and passionate!

I need everyone involved in Inside-Out to know that these changes were by no means inevitable. I could have never invoked this sort of transformation by myself. The person I have become was buried so deep within me by a lifetime of trauma (self-inflicted and otherwise) that I was lost forever. Everyone helped me to resurrect my lost spirit – and she is fierce and strong. There are no obstacles that she cannot climb over – because she knows there are people there who will help her. So, thank you to all. I am a free person today and will remain free forever because of you and the work of those who created this amazing opportunity for change.

– By Tiina (Former Inside Student and Member of the Walls to Bridges Collective in Canada)





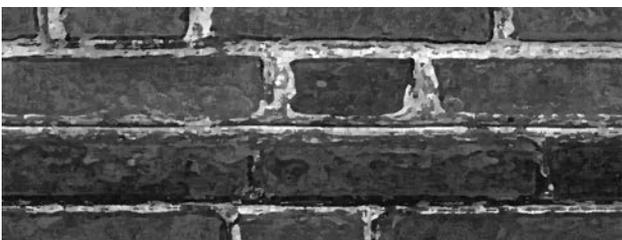
Participants in the Oregon Inside-Out Training in June grappling with issues in their small groups

Discomfort Embraced

continued from page 9

I found myself off balance. Communication is my academic discipline, so I like to think I know a thing or two about it. However, the Inside-Out experience was humbling because it gave me a chance to communicate with what I thought were “the others.” It was an experience that recalled for me one of my favorite quotations of Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they don’t know each other because they can not communicate; they can not communicate because they are separated.” I can’t imagine a population that I have felt more separated from than the folks at Graterford. I’m grateful to the Inside-Out program for the chance to at least momentarily bridge that separation, so that I might communicate, know, and maybe even embrace the men and women among us who are incarcerated.

– By Lawrence Souder, Drexel Professor



The Gift that Really Does Keep on Giving

Hello, everyone – and happy fall! As many of you know, one of the hats that I wear at The Inside-Out Center is the development hat. That is, one of my roles is to identify and garner funding opportunities for The Inside-Out Center so that we can support each of you in our growing network. I co-facilitated the two trainings that took place in the Philadelphia area this summer, and I can say with even more conviction than ever that we are all are part of something very special and important.

It also became clearer to me this summer that we all have a responsibility to keep the program afloat. The Inside-Out Center continues to increase our numbers so that we can have a more substantial impact on higher educational opportunities in prisons and jails around the U.S. and abroad. But, as you know, we also participate in a larger set of local, regional, national, and now international conversations about mass incarceration, justice, social injustices, and community renewal. Though we do not participate in political advocacy or lobbying, we still constitute a movement of sorts, with now 464 instructors in 38 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, and at least three other countries. More than 15,000 inside and outside students having engaged in the kind of transformative experiences that Inside-Out contexts invite. We are making important contributions to much-needed conversations about prisons and other social disparities – and building stronger, more equitable communities as we do so!

This is vital social justice work. It can only continue to grow and improve and, actually, flourish – particularly in our support of already-trained faculty (offering more specialized trainings, conference and publication opportunities, etc.) – if we can adequately fund it. And we need your help to do that.

The 2013/14 Donor Appeal will begin in a month or so. Last year, we raised a record amount, enough to secure a matching grant of \$25,000! Thanks again to all of you who were able to make a contribution. We would like to aim even higher this year. Our stakeholders include faculty, alumni, administrators, invested academic departments, and family and friends of alumni and instructors. Please attune your giving practices to Inside-Out in the coming months and help us spread the word to anyone who you think would want to support our work.

If you are interested in giving now, please visit our website at: <http://www.insideoutcenter.org/donate.html> (you may even want to consider a monthly pledge, as more people have begun to do).

*Thank You,
Tricia Way
Assistant Director
The Inside-Out Center*

How to Contribute to The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®

Your gift to Inside-Out will make a profound difference in the lives of incarcerated students and the outside students who join them in classrooms across North America and beyond.

To Contribute

You can make a secure online donation.

Follow the directions on the website page at:
<http://www.insideoutcenter.org/supporters.html>

Or you may send a check made out to TEMPLE UNIVERSITY (with "Inside-Out – P9894" in the memo line – this is VERY IMPORTANT, to assure that Inside-Out receives the money) to the following address:

Temple University Institutional Advancement
P.O. Box 827651
Philadelphia, PA 19182-7651

(Please email us at insideout@temple.edu once you've made a donation, whether online or by check. It will help us in tracking it.)

Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. You will be provided with a receipt and letter of thanks from both Temple and the Inside-Out program for your files.

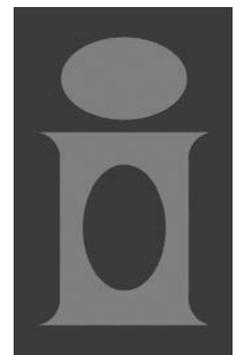
Thank you from the Inside-Out Team

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2014 Calendar

January 13–19, 2014	Training #32 (Philadelphia)
March 21–24, 2014	Steering / Research Committee Meetings (Philadelphia)
May 18–24, 2014	Training #33 (Michigan)
June 16–22, 2014	Training #34 (Oregon)
June 30–July 6, 2014	Training #35 (Philadelphia)
July 28–August 3, 2014	Training #36 (Philadelphia)



THE INSIDE-OUT CENTER

Suite 331, MB 66-10, 1810 Liacouras Walk, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122
Phone: 215-204-5163 | Fax: 215-204-3872 | Em: insideout@temple.edu | Web: www.insideoutcenter.org