

# Inside Education

SEPTEMBER 2023

## Message from the President:

Welcome to the Fall edition of the ACEA newsletter.

As I start to see the leaves turn colour and the gardens slumber for the Winter, I am drawn to reflect on the wonderful Spring and Summer seasons we have experienced. The ACEA annual conference shifted to a virtual space this year, and while we miss the in-person camaraderie, we joyfully welcomed so many colleagues from across the country into our association. The sheer diversity, both geographic and correctional role, has provided us an opportunity to explore and understand the challenges and successes we experience while working within carceral environments.

The ACEA board members have been working, creating, and exploring this larger vision through several working groups. We are investigating the needs of correctional educators at a national level through diverse stakeholder conversations, scanning for expertise and experienced Canadians to speak at our 2024 conference, exploring other types of professional development activities that we can participate in year-round, investing in our communication and promotion opportunities, and even analyzing our current association structure to ensure we are organized in a way to best support correctional educators across Canada. I am honoured to lead and learn from the passionate individuals on our board. I know their efforts will enhance and evolve the professional development opportunities for correctional educators.

I am excited to announce the theme of the upcoming conference:

## *Growth and Connection*

We will be exploring the growth and changes of educational practices and drawing on our colleagues' experiences of learning with technology in corrections.

Watch for our Save the Date announcement coming soon!

Wishing you all the very best!

Christina

The newsletter is published on behalf of the ACEA and submissions are always welcome. The ACEA is a professional organization facilitating the educational needs of the incarcerated. The ACEA strives to broaden professional horizons and interdisciplinary interaction of all personnel involved with correctional education. Texts published in Inside Education express the views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the ACEA, its executive, or the editor.

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JOURNAL OF  
PRISON  
EDUCATION  
& REENTRY

## **Article:** Teaching in an unfamiliar place: A mixed methods-grounded theory study on the experiences of new correctional educators

Nicole Patrie

Our board member and immediate past president Nicole Patrie has published an article with the Journal of Prison Education and Reentry. It's based on the experiences of a few prison educators in Alberta, about their first experiences teaching in prison, and how to best support new teachers in our field.

Please read the abstract below and use the link to reach this opensource article.

<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jper/vol7/iss3/6/>

### **Abstract**

New correctional educators must learn to teach in an unfamiliar correctional environment. In this convergent mixed-methods study, experienced correctional educators in Alberta, Canada reflected on their first 6 months teaching in adult correctional institutions. Teachers initially struggled to do something familiar (teach) in an unfamiliar place, perceiving prisons as non-conducive to education. Seeing the absence of a purpose-built community, they built one or attached to existing non-educational communities. New educators invoked strategies such as engaging in mutual support, connecting with non-education professionals, asking others to demystify institutional culture, and practicing reflexivity. When reflecting on useful training and orientation activities, participants favoured community and relationship building. The teachers' actions are framed using the concept of communities of practice, and a substantive theory of learning to teach in correctional environments is proposed. Finally, recommendations are provided to help ensure that new teachers are supported and prepared as they enter correctional education.

## Book: Doing Life 8 Hours at a Time: My Life In Corrections

Ken Hamilton

Recently, retired Probation Officer and Correctional Officer Ken Hamilton, wrote a book describing his experiences in the many roles he has held within the criminal justice system. His book is currently sold on Amazon, and the description is listed below.

*“In 1978, when Ken was sitting in the electric chair at the Indiana State Prison, (good story there) could he have never imagined that he would have a 35-year career in Corrections? When he returned to Lethbridge, he was accepted into the University of Lethbridge Bachelor of Physical Education program, with a minor in Sociology. As a summer student during university, he enjoyed working at the Canada-United States border at the Carway Port of Entry in Alberta, near Glacier National Park. Upon graduation from the U of L, a decision had to be made. Did he want to make the hour plus drive, each way, to Carway and work as a uniformed Customs Inspector? Or did he want to make the 15-minute drive to the Lethbridge Correctional Centre to work in the recreation department? Oh yeah, no uniform either. He chose the latter and spent three years at the LCC in a variety of job descriptions: Rec. staff, Programs Department, and Living Unit Officer. After those first three years he was lucky enough to transfer to the Community Corrections Office and become a Probation Officer where he would spend the remainder of his 35-year career in Corrections.*

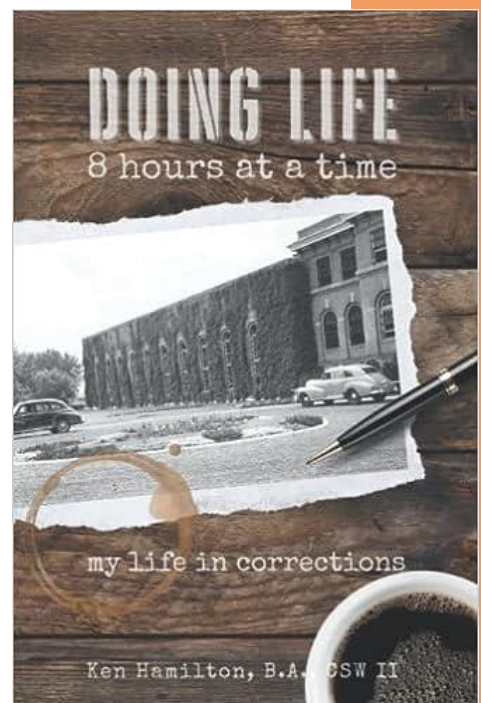
*As a Probation Officer he was able to work in a variety of rural communities and supervise a variety of specific caseloads. Approximately 15 of the next 32 years was spent working with Young Offenders. It was during those years that he often reflected on the time he spent doing volunteer work at the Indiana State Prison. He finally knew that he was supposed to be right where he was, working with not only Young Offenders but also Adult Offenders, both in Lethbridge and numerous rural communities. Who would have ever thought he would end up having this career? Certainly not him, yet here he is 35 years later.*

*When he started in Corrections, there were no such things as copy machines, or computers, or cell phones. If something needed to be typed, we had secretaries that would do the typing for us, and if we needed more than one copy, we had to use carbon paper.*

*When he transferred to Community Corrections, there were only eight other Probation Officers where now that number has doubled. The area of Southern Alberta that the Lethbridge office was responsible for has changed a little over the years, but not significantly.*

*What has changed is the philosophy of what Community Corrections was expected to do. Programs and methods of delivery changed more than many would have liked, but they told us that was called progress. Ken took pride in his work and how he dealt with his clients. Possibly the most productive period of his career was the time he spent working with Young Offenders. Due to the Young Offender Act, the youth convictions of some would be sealed upon their becoming an adult and meeting some other requirements. Ken has accomplished something that has never been seen in the Province of Alberta from any other Probation Officer. Three of the Young Offenders that Ken supervised went on in their lives and eventually also became Probation Officers! All three of them credited the way that Ken dealt with them as one of the main reasons that their lives took the turn to becoming Probation Officers themselves. As a rule, Probation Officers don't get to see a lot of positives from their clients, so you take it when you find it. Ken found it a few times.*

*Ken attempts to describe our Justice System and how Probation fits into that system. This book is full of explanations and real-life experiences. Some are from clients, and some involve other staff, but they were all seen firsthand by Ken. No names have been used to protect the innocent, the guilty, and the stupid (that goes for clients and staff). There are many stories left to be told, but they will have to be experienced by today's Probation Officers.”*



<https://www.amazon.ca/Doing-Life-Hours-Time-Corrections/dp/B0BMZNF5M5>



# Living Library Programming at Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre

## Camille Bultena

Correctional Library Technician  
Library Services & Correctional Business Ops | NorQuest College

The Book Vault is the aptly named library inside the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre. It is operated by NorQuest College and as a part of an effort to pursue more library programming decided, in the fall of 2022, to host a Living Library event in the Centre amidst still stringent Covid protocols.

Living Libraries, also called Human Libraries, began in Copenhagen in 2000 and since then have been held by libraries all over the world\*. The event is meant to create a library of people, where participants can hold conversations with individuals with whom they might not normally converse.

There were numerous challenges to launching this event in a correctional setting, including cohorting regulations in the Centre, and the logistics of recruiting storytellers (human stories) for the event.

To simplify the process, we recruited storytellers internally from NorQuest College. We had a total of three storytellers participate and each storyteller held 6 “mini sessions” (approximately 30 minutes long) during the day to allow different units to come through and experience the story and converse with the storyteller. Storytellers spoke of grief, trauma, and displacement, but all with underlying themes of hope and resilience.

Before the event we hung promotional posters in the units and distributed sign-up sheets. Over the course of the one-day event, we had over 80 participants or listeners from multiple units with a total of 18 storyteller sessions and 3 storytellers.

We collected anonymous feedback from the participants of each session through a series of debriefing activities facilitated by volunteers. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants appreciating the honesty and vulnerability of the storytellers and relating to their experiences.

*“I like hearing other peoples’ stories. It makes me interested more. It shows me that I’m normal.”*

*“I really enjoyed his story growing up around addiction and being able to rise above that is awesome.”*

*“I would like to say thank you for your sharing and it made me share. Now, I feel a little bit better to know that most of us share a similar pain of the past. Stay resilient!”*

Storytellers too felt enriched and broadened by their conversations with the participants. The event was positively received and was held for a second time in the spring of 2023.

The success of the events highlighted the need for more library programming and The Book Vault is planning increased services in response.

\*[www.humanlibraries.org](http://www.humanlibraries.org)

# Community Program Spotlight:

## Drug Treatment Court

*Information provided by Chelsey De Groot, Regional Director, Drug Treatment Court in Lethbridge, Alberta. Chelsey is also a correctional educator and a member of the ACEA.*

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Lethbridge Drug Treatment Court is contained within the criminal justice system and operates within the same legal framework that governs all adult criminal court proceedings in the Provincial Court of Alberta. The drug court operates based on a guilty plea with a delayed sentencing process (s.720 (2) of the Criminal Code) with entry being dependant on the consent of the Crown, Court, and the Accused. The Lethbridge Drug Treatment Court program is founded on national and international principles for drug treatment courts, is committed to community justice and restoration and is a support service program under the direction of McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association.

### **PURPOSE:**

- Reduce drug abuse for the participants of the program with a goal of abstinence.
- Support participants to address the issues behind their addictions.
- Support participants to change criminal and addictive thinking patterns.
- Give participants the opportunity to become productive, contributing members of society.
- Restore justice by reducing criminal recidivism and victimization in the community.
- Reduce overall expenditures of the Justice and Human Services systems.

**WHO IT SERVES:** Adults who commit crimes against society to sustain and support their drug addiction. Eligible applicants:

- Exhibit high risk with respect to their level of addiction, risk of relapse, and risk of returning to a life of crime.
- Are looking at an early case resolution offer of 1 to 5 years for their drug-related offences.
- Do not have a recent history of significant violence.
- Do not have significant gang involvement or affiliation.
- Are addicted to drugs, excluding cannabis and alcohol.
- Are genuinely motivated to make changes in their life.

# Community Program Spotlight:

## Drug Treatment Court

### HOW IT WORKS:

The operation of the Drug Treatment Court is based on a multi-disciplinary team concept. This team is composed of the Judge(s), Provincial and Federal Crowns, Alberta Legal Aid Duty Counsel, Alberta Justice & Solicitor General Probation Officer, Lethbridge Police Service liaison, RCMP liaison, and the McMan Treatment Team. Program services are delivered by the McMan Treatment Team, which consists of the Program Manager, Case Managers, and Peer Support Mentors.

The multi-disciplinary team works collaboratively with the participants by way of intensive judicial supervision that includes bi-weekly court appearances, addictions treatment, community recovery involvement, regular and random drug screens, community restoration, and ultimately provides the participants with the opportunity to obtain housing, address medical and mental health issues, gain education and employment, and reintegrate into their community.

Successful participants will graduate after a **minimum** of one-year active engagement and participation in the program, completion of the 5 case management phases, substantial time sober, and evidence that they have contributed to the community through volunteer involvement.

### CONCLUSION:

The goal is to break the cycle of addiction and criminal activity; Drug Treatment Court places an additional emphasis on the reintegration of participants into the community. The participants are supported to improve every dimension of their lives including housing, physical health, mental health, education, employment, and giving back to the community through volunteer work and community involvement. Drug Courts have been proven to illicit the most effective and cost-efficient results for offenders who are drug-dependant and at risk of failing in less intensive rehabilitative programs. The participants of the Lethbridge Drug Treatment Court will graduate as productive members of society.

# Student Artwork



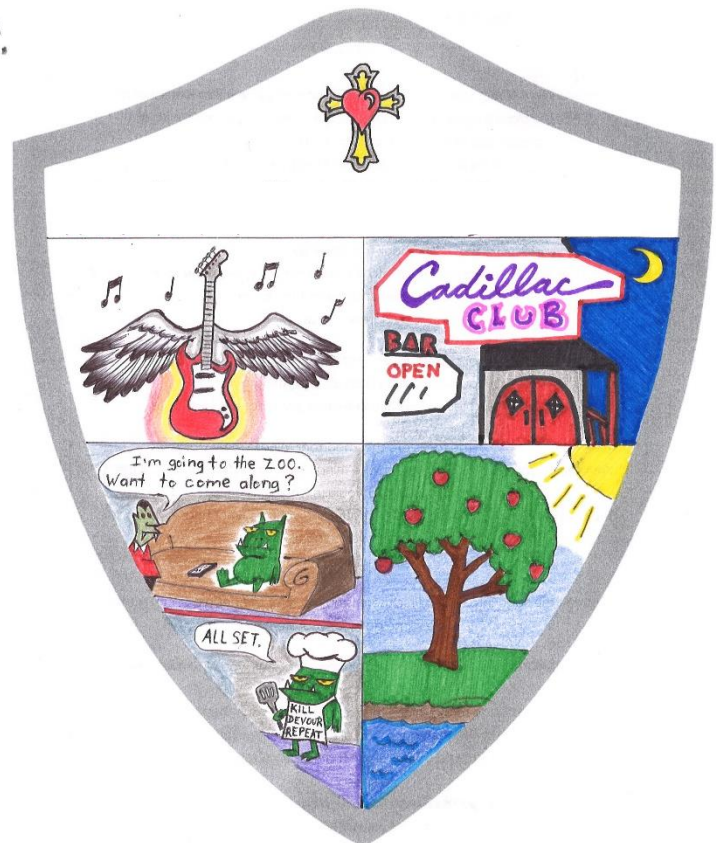
*You need to give positivity to receive positivity!*

## PERSONAL CRESTS

Students showcase their artistic side in designing their own personal crests for a class assignment. Full permission was received from the students to include their work in this newsletter.

## Request for Submissions

Our newsletter welcomes any student submissions that may come your way, or any success stories! In the past there has been both art and poetry shared, as well as stories about those we have helped succeed. Please get your student's permission to share and send it into [albertacea@gmail.com](mailto:albertacea@gmail.com) to be featured in an upcoming newsletter.



## Indigenous Art: Peace River Correctional Center



Some samples of student Indigenous artwork at Peace River Correctional Center through classes at Northern Lakes College

**Top:** a tobacco pouch and with beaded jewelry



**Middle:** a hand-crafted drum, drumstick, and rattle.



**Bottom:** A poplar bark carving that uses traditional materials gathered by their instructor. The poplar bark must be from a tree at least 100 years old, that has been dead for approximately 5-10 years.



## 2023 ACEA Board Members

The members of the ACEA board remain committed to producing a high-quality annual conference.

If you have any questions regarding the ACEA, suggestions for the upcoming conference or contributions for the newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us at [Albertacea@gmail.com](mailto:Albertacea@gmail.com)

### *Christina P. Ed.D. – President*

*I am an adult learning specialist, experienced educator, adult learning researcher, and proven leader in educational administration. I have been working in correctional education since 1999. My professional experience includes various non-profit organizations and over 24 years in postsecondary education. My broad area of research explores the effects of transformational learning and self-perception in adults as they adapt to and adopt change later in life. I am currently researching the impact of technology-assisted literacy and language learning in incarcerated adults and the effects of policing and crime prevention education programs on youth.*

### *Trent G. – Vice President*

*I am a Correctional Educator with CSC in Saskatchewan, and have been since 2011. I think correctional education is important for helping with recidivism rates and giving those incarcerated something positive in their life they can be proud of.*

### *Nicole P. – Immediate Past President*

*I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Safety and Justice Studies at MacEwan University, and a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, specializing in adult education. My research focus is on the role of education and learning in the criminal justice system. I have over a decade of experience working in Canadian prison education programs as a teacher and administrator.*

### *Kathryn V. – Treasurer*

*Discovering Choices – Administrative Secretary – Alberta I work with high school age students in an outreach program in Calgary. Education is the key to so much for these young adults. The diploma is the goal, and along the way they learn about their community, themselves, and how much they can and have to contribute. Every day we work with students we see that education is freedom.*

### *Ashley O. – Secretary*

*My name is Dr. Ashley O. and I am the Dean, Student Success at Northern Lakes College in Slave Lake, Alberta. In the past, I've also served as a correctional educator and program Chair, overseeing correctional education. I've had the privilege of working alongside many adult students within the correctional environment and I've been amazed at what they've taught me throughout this process. We are all on a unique journey, however, we share a common human condition. Helping students to (re)build their confidence in education and learning, see their potential, and experience success, becomes the pillars that drive change. In 2021 I completed my doctoral research which highlighted care in correctional education, from an educator's perspective. Although I have moved out of the correctional education classroom, my dedication to the field and to those who commit to making a difference each day for their students within centres across the province has not wavered. It is with great excitement and ambition that I serve on the ACEA Board for the upcoming year!*

### *Courtney B. – Webpage & Newsletter*

*My name is Courtney and I have been a Correction Educator in Southern Alberta since 2017. I am serving my second term with the ACEA and look forward to the expansion of the board this year to include many members from outside of Alberta. I currently teach two Personal Development courses and my previous role was as a Career and Employment Consultant with the Government of Alberta. I have a passion for teaching and believe that correctional education provides a unique opportunity for students to make valuable use of their time. It also allows them to participate in classes they may not have had the opportunity to do so otherwise.*

## Representatives

### *Anna D.*

Hello! My name is Anna D. and I am currently on a term contract with NorQuest through their Correctional Department: Faculty of Skills and Foundational Learning at Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Center. Before NorQuest, I was working as a correctional officer at Edmonton Remand Center. I am originally from Saskatchewan where I worked as a high school teacher from 2016 – 2020. The day I decided to get my Education degree was the day I decided I wanted to teach in corrections. I believe that giving clients an opportunity to learn while incarcerated is vital to their success when they transition back into the community. Even if the programs are “mandatory” for release, everyone taking a program will learn something. Most problems in the world can be solved with education. You don’t know, what you don’t know. My goal is to decrease the amount of clients we see re-offend due to the educational opportunities they took part in while incarcerated. As you can see, I am very passionate towards correctional education. With all the different entities within corrections, working with others towards similar goals is important. I am very excited to be apart of the ACEA!

### *Olivia S.*

I have worked in post-secondary/adult education with Mount Royal University for the last 16 years and transitioned into teaching in correctional education at the end of 2020. I currently teach an Employment Preparation course at the Calgary Correctional Centre in Calgary, Alberta. I believe that employment education is important because having meaningful work helps create an integral part of our identity

### *Roberta P.*

My name is Roberta P. from British Columbia, and I have a long ESL & LINC Teaching background. I feel it has been my main duty to help the people in my environment feel comfortable to express themselves, understand their lives and be understood. This is what my family, friends and teachers have done for me: fostered my learning, boosted my esteem and made me feel wanted and welcome. Now I am the Educational Consultant in Canada for New Readers Press, the publishing division of the not-for-profit Pro Literacy, which advocates for adult literacy, globally. We supply books & resources to guide learning in English, Math, High school Equivalency, Digital Literacy, Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness. I have been passionate about corrections education for as long as I can remember and my commitment to supporting it deepens as I learn more about the beauty and talent that comes out of someone when they are welcomed, encouraged, educated, elevated and given proper roots.

### *Crystal L.*

My name is Crystal L. and I am a Correctional Educator with the Correctional Service of Canada in Alberta. I teach incarcerated adults and help them work towards graduating high school and upgrading for post secondary programs. I have experience teaching men, women, and youth all across Canada. I believe that education is the key to a better future, and that is especially true for students within corrections. Many of my students experienced challenges that prevented them from completing their education, but they now recognize the importance and value of education. Their motivation and eagerness is contagious, and continually reminds me of the importance of providing learning opportunities within corrections.

### *Elizabeth W.*

I am Elizabeth W. and I have been working in Correctional Education in excess of 5 years. Beginning as a Literacy Outreach Facilitator for Calgary John Howard Society at Calgary Correctional Centre facilitating clients in Math and English Literacy and also ESL. I delivered Employment Preparation classes as well as 1:1 literacy learning at Fresh Start and Simon House Addiction Recovery Centres. I am now a Contract Facilitator with Mount Royal University teaching at both the Women’s Annex and Calgary Remand Centre. I deliver Effective Communication and Life Skills Programs to both men and women. I see such importance of education in the most vulnerable clients in our community today. There can never be enough education in the Correctional system. I have the privilege of being able to teach in this environment and work with people that have heart and intelligence in their commitment to learning. I feel blessed, and see this as the ultimate time in my teaching career.

### *J.L.*

*My name is J, and while I am fairly new to the carceral education setting, I have quickly become passionate about it. I strongly believe in correctional education because any individual who wishes to further their education should be afforded opportunities to do so. Correctional students may have been unable to complete school prior to incarceration for a variety of reasons, thus providing educational courses while incarcerated can be an opportunity to complete educational goals that otherwise may be unobtainable. Correctional education is not only tied to lower recidivism rates and increased employment opportunities, but student's success can increase student's self-esteem, prepare them for life post-release, increase their understanding of topics such as addiction and family violence, and can give them hope for their future.*

### *Karen J.*

*Boozoo, Tansi. My name is Karen J. My role as Correctional Educator at Stony Mountain in Manitoba allows me to work with men gaining knowledge and working towards their grade 12 completion. I am also honoured to support post secondary opportunities such as the Walls to Bridges program as well as a grassroots Indigenous Language group. By gaining these skills and credentials, our students leave with more options for employment and higher education, which in turn gives them more power to make better choices. I appreciate the chance to support my students and help them see and believe in their own potential to become better fathers, family role models, and community members. As a Metis women, I am also on my journey along side many of these men, to learn and practice the beautiful Indigenous languages and culture, and celebrating the movement towards reconciliation. Miigwetch!*

### *Nicholas P.*

### *Judith A.*

*I am a teacher, instructional designer, and researcher with a collaborative spirit. I am passionate about research and innovation in learning contexts – particularly in technology- enabled learning environments, digital justice, and equal access to learning opportunities. I currently create and facilitate adult literacy and English language learning experiences for Correctional Services Canada in Ontario. I believe that Correctional Education provides opportunities for those who may not otherwise have the opportunity, and I feel that such educational opportunities are key in aiding learners develop the skills and achieve credentials that can help secure future employment, as well as foster the self-esteem and advocacy skills necessary to live full lives.*

### *Lori G.*

*I have worked with the EJHS since 2016 in various roles, primarily supporting offenders on conditional release. I currently work in Edmonton, Alberta; as a Program Facilitator with the Edmonton John Howard Society (EJHS). I facilitate our Creating Awareness program which includes 5 different workshops: Communication, Financial Literacy, Employment Preparation, Stress Management, and Pre-Release Planning. Our program is offered at the Edmonton Remand Centre for participants who are currently incarcerated there. One of the core values of the EJHS is “we believe in the potential of all human beings and in their capacity for growth and change.” This is a value that guides my professional practice and approach. This value also ties into the core principals and guiding values of the ACEA. I support and encourage correctional education, as it provides an opportunity for folks to access an opportunity for personal growth. Correctional education is unique and essential for those who utilize it. This form of education allows for an opportunity for its participants to learn about their own strengths and abilities, while also preparing them for their reintegration and success in the community.*

### *Patty H.*

*Hi, my name is Patricia H. I have been a Correctional Educator for 11 years at Saskatchewan Penitentiary. During this time, I have worked as both the Intake and range teacher. It has been a rewarding job as I have had the opportunity to watch offenders move through their educational journey from the beginning at Intake to their completion of Grade 12. Through the 16 years of working at Saskatchewan Penitentiary, I have seen education evolve and grow in priority within Corrections. As an educator, this is important as it encourages both a supportive environment to work and learn in*

# DID YOU KNOW



Did you know that Prisoners' Justice Day is August 10? This solidarity movement started in Canada in 1974, after Edward Nalon, and later Robert Landers, died in segregation. Its aim is to support prisoners' rights and take time to recognize all the people who have died of unnatural causes while incarcerated. In 1976, August 10 became a memorial day when prisoners opposed the use of solitary confinement and raised awareness about inmate conditions with a hunger and work strike.

Source: Wikipedia