

## **Humans of San Quentin: Humanizing Incarcerated Identities**

Humans of San Quentin, a story-telling project established in the United States, uses social media advocacy to counter the negative stereotypes proliferated in mainstream media about people who are involved in the criminal justice system (CJS). Our current penal system appears to dehumanize individuals who are incarcerated. Individuals entangled within the CJS are often viewed as faceless, nameless, and inhuman, reduced to their crimes and stripped of their identities as individuals with hopes, dreams, and struggles. This dehumanization contributes to a culture of stigma and discrimination that perpetuates the cycle of incarceration and hinders the successful reintegration of individuals back into society. Social media advocacy has emerged as a powerful tool for humanizing incarcerated identities and challenging negative stereotypes. Our social media platforms amplify the voices and stories of people incarcerated, showcasing their experiences and highlighting their humanity. This approach counteracts the dehumanization associated with the criminal justice system and fosters a more empathetic and compassionate understanding. Humanizing incarcerated identities through social media advocacy has the potential to promote effective criminal justice reform. We believe that by increasing public awareness, we are changing the narrative which in turn can implement just and equitable policies and interventions. We encourage a shift in public attitudes towards incarcerated individuals, reducing the stigma and discrimination that accompanies the label of "criminal" and promoting a more inclusive and compassionate society.