

HUMANS *of San Quentin*

2022 Impact Report





"In many ways, you can say that the prison serves as an institution that consolidates the state's inability and refusal to address the most pressing social problems of this era."

-Angela Davis

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Message from our co-founder



Juan Haines

When I sit with the participant and he or she begins to understand that I'm listening to their story and that I really care about what they are saying, they are sometimes overwhelmed with tears. It also becomes a moment of creativity about self. That person realizes that they care about themselves. The process of wiring actually turns into the process of humanization. After the session, they send the results to Diane, where she tightens the language to fit on our social media channels and our website. After she posts their story, she sends the participant a certificate with comments from their post. I wish you could see the faces of the participants when they get that certificate and comments. They are excited and see that they are validated as a human being by the free world. The process of getting a person to believe they are worthy is one of the first steps in getting someone, who might have been stuck in criminal thinking to change that antisocial behavior.

I can't do this work on the inside alone. We have a great staff of incarcerated folks who work tirelessly in content creation, from everything from poetry to painting, and now we're even featuring recipes created by San Quentin residents.

I'd like to introduce you to a few people on our inside team.

Michael Moore became our communication director and makes sure our incarcerated population has access to Diane and the interns who help us in the free world. I see Michael everyday, promoting our mission, passing out flyers, scheduling and interviewing people wanting to be interviewed.

Alex Ross, our poetry director, is a good friend of mine. One day he dropped by my cell asking me to read his poetry. He told me that it's the easiest way for him to communicate his feelings. When he found out about HoSQ, he asked if we had a poetry page. I gave it some thought, realizing how serious he was about opening the door of poetry to a larger segment of San Quentin residents and other prisons. What I already know about Alex was his determination to finish something he started. I knew that in spite of our situation that he was a dependable and honest person. He likes to keep it real. Well, in the end, he convinced Diane to roll out a poetry page. The opportunity has been a tremendous boost to his self-esteem and he's extremely proud of what he does and I get to see him transform himself before my eyes to my next door neighbor to a director of poetry for HoSQ.

Bruce "Brew" Fowler can be considered the resident artist of San Quentin. When Diane said that she wanted to feature artists on HOSQ, it was a no-brainer. The challenge for me was to get Brew to say that he'd give it a try. I knew that I was up against all of the other restorative justice programs that pulled at Brew for his advice. But, I think it was our willingness to allow his creative juices to flow as he sees fit, which got him on board. Brew's artistic brilliance is a boon for HoSQ. We would not be gifted with the talents we see on our social media channels and websites without his keen eye and brush!

The number one reason I am involved in Humans of San Quentin is that I know what we're doing on the inside is changing lives from negative self-imagery to a positive self-love. It is one of the first steps in finding value in their own lives – one must value self to value others and that's a great step towards successful rehabilitation.

Who we are

Our founders

*Diane Kahn
Juan Haines
Eddie Herena*

Board of Directors

*Eddie Herena
Susan Hirsh
Desiree Shaw
Andrea Coomber*

Outside team

*Oona Prozinski
Dwayne Antojado
Paige Gibson
Sheri Codiana
Michael Adams
Laurel Wilson
Marcus Blevins*

Inside team

*Michael Moore
Juan Haines
Bruce "Brew" Fowler
Alex Ross
Edwin Chavez
White Eagle Coates
George "Mesro" Coles
Henok Rufael
Ben Shuah*

Volunteers and interns

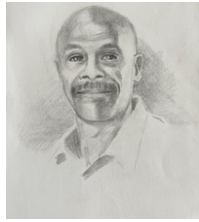
*Raiveon Wooden
PJ Pfeiffer
Anne Federoff
Parker Rothbart
Amanda Koeppel
Lauren Olsen
Finn Mallard
Aanika Sawhney*

*Emerson Swift
Jake Neulight
Madison Herrero
Max Cohen
Oliver Broek
Quinn Newlin
Sophie Havens
Maren Jones*

Our Inside Team



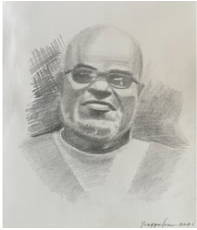
Michael
Communications
Director



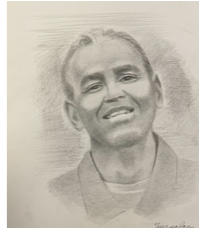
Juan
Co-founder



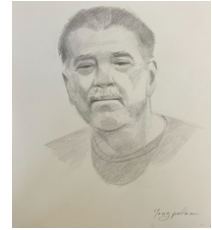
Henok
Administrative
Assistant



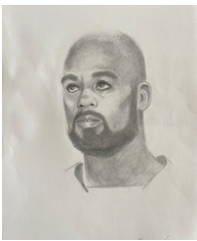
Alex
Poetry Director



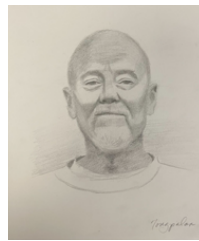
Edwin
Spanish Director



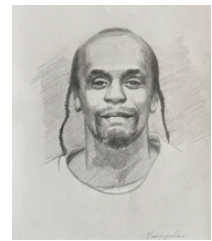
White Eagle
Community Outreach
Coordinator



Mesro
Literary
Consultant



Bruce
Art Director



Ben Shuah
Videographer

A little about us

History

In 2018, Diane Kahn, a teacher inside San Quentin was inspired by the storytelling project, Humans of New York and her passion to share the voice of the men inside. The idea began to take shape with a conversation between Diane and James King, an accomplished incarcerated writer at the time. James suggested Diane meet with Juan Haines, Senior Editor of the San Quentin News. From the moment Juan and Diane sat down, they shared the passion to interview the men in blue and share their stories with the outside world.

Mission

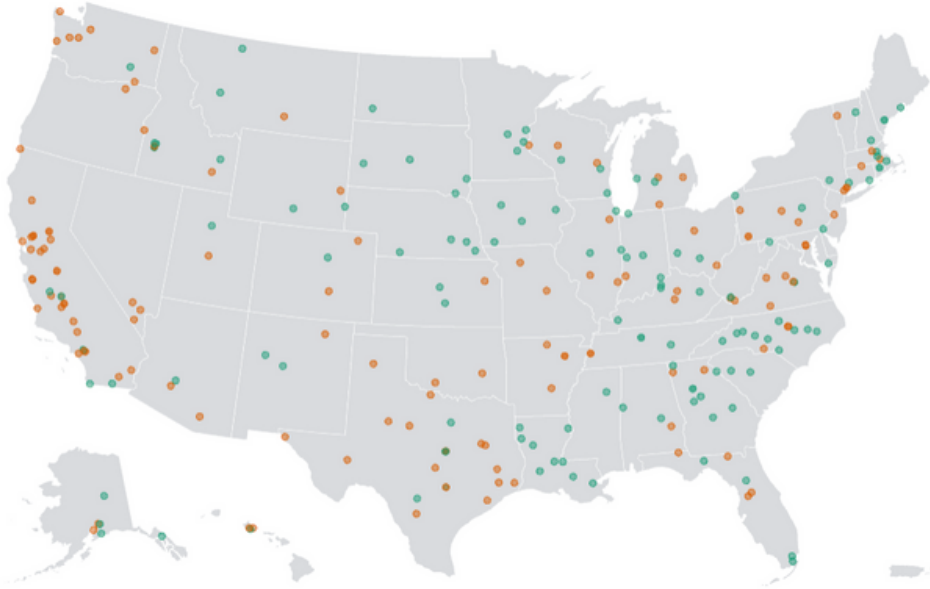
Our work is a reminder of our shared humanity. We seek to break down the walls and stereotypes of prison life and to humanize the lives behind the bars. With the use of social and restorative justice reform we give people the opportunity to improve the lives of the underserved. We strive to provide a collective place to share resources, beliefs and to promote activism regarding social justice.

Values

Humans of San Quentin value restoring social justice by changing the narrative and believing that dignity and equal rights are the foundation of justice. We strive to transform the criminal justice system to build a more humane and restorative community. Our organization acts as a hub of stories, insights, beliefs, and resources that humanize the people inside our nation's correctional systems and promote social reform.

Empowering the movement with facts

■ outreach ■ in correspondence



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau 2021 boundaries](#), [summitpost.org](#)

- **Featured over 100 different prisons on our social media**
- **Corresponded with over 130 prisons in the U.S. alone**
- **Reached out to over 70 women's prisons**
- **Reached out to over 260 prisons in the world**



Impacting the World One Letter at a Time

We are currently in all 50 states of the U.S., South America and Europe

“Prison can be the death of our connection to humanity. Every year that goes by our memories of a life before fade away. And our only connection to “a life” is a plain white envelope. Thank you for keeping the connection.”

-Darren, 60

Incarceration in America at a Glance

11 mil.

People are currently incarcerated in the world

500%

Increase in the last 40 years

1 in 7

People in the U.S. prison system are serving a life sentence

1 in 5

Incarcerated individuals are locked up for a drug offense

\$20–50k

Is spent to keep an individual behind bars annually

10x

More Black people are in incarcerated for drug offenses than white people



Humans of San Quentin's Impact

218

Humans featured

1.4k

And growing incarcerated humans we have communicated with

11k

Instagram followers and growing

252k

People have seen our content

We are international!



In Mexico, we reached Chiconautla Women's Prison in Ecatepec, as well as the Neza Prison in Nezahualcoyotl.

We were able to meet and talk with a few people incarcerated there and hear their experiences with the justice system, seeing how it differs from the United States.

In Norway, we reached Bredtveit Prison in Oslo. In Colombia and Guatemala, we reached Tague Prison, CO, and Pavoncito Prison, GT.

While abroad, we spoke at two conferences about Humans of San Quentin, as well as the social justice system and prison reform. In 2023, we are going to four conferences to raise awareness for the same issues.

There, we mentioned our two research papers and how our organization helps tell the story of those incarcerated and unheard.



Beyond the Bars

Once our humans are released, we share the stories of individuals we have interviewed during their time incarcerated and were fortunate enough to interview post-incarceration.

In the past year, we have interviewed and featured 11 individuals who have been released from prison, and in that process, we reveal to you their life experiences, both positive and negative.

Below are those 11 individuals.



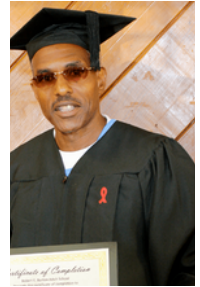
Fateen Jackson



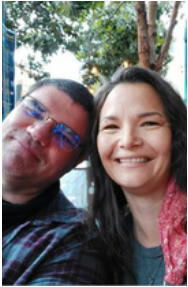
Larry White



Anthony Ammons



Patrick Fletcher



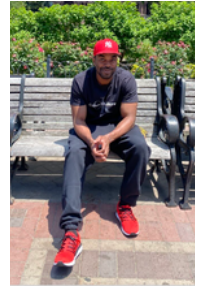
Joe Krauter



Tommy Ross



Thanh Tran



David Baxter



Jesus Cortez



Raiveon Wooden



Maurice Reed



"I realized that the possibility of spending the remainder of my life in prison didn't have to deter me from striving for a better education and being able to make something of myself. I didn't have to live within the confines of my crime."

-Johnny, 45



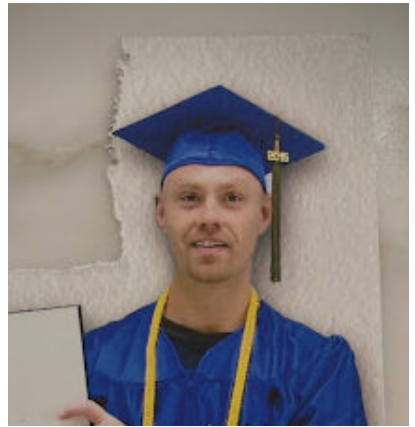


"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending."

-Raul, 63

"Prison is an ugly, unforgiving place where arbitrary rules are enforced as a disruption without a destination at the whims of those with the power of indifference to anything the incarcerated person is going through – indeed, indifference has become the rehabilitative paradigm."

-Eric, 42



"I realized that despite my circumstances, I needed to forgive, otherwise, I would destroy myself, and I need it to live."

-Sean, 34



Goals for the future



- **Satellite offices in other cities and countries**
- **Welcome a staff of eight people**
- **Humans of San Quentin League conference**

- **Two books, coffee table, research**
- **Summer Offender podcast**



"I am writing to help raise awareness. I appreciate the many opportunities we have to speak about our crimes and our actions. I see the Humans of San Quentin as one of the platforms for the incarcerated to reach out to the free community. I knew little about the system and those incarcerated but it is good to bring an education to others. I hope the stories leave the readers feeling that these are people rehabilitating, maturing, and gaining an understanding of the choices that put them in here. A humanness factor to the facade of a prisoner."

-Michael, 40



Internship Program

Humans of San Quentin's intern program seeks to expose highly motivated adolescents, some of whom have visited prisons themselves, to the realities of incarceration in the U.S. and beyond. Inspired by the compelling stories of individuals behind bars, our interns regularly transcribe, internalize, and empathize with the plethora of messages we receive daily. Reading the varied vignettes of incarcerated people from all walks of life aids in developing their understandings of the systems governing the world around them, their perceptions of others, and their view of humanity itself. Though our interns do not correspond to incarcerated individuals by name or in person, many come to feel they personally know those they only meet on paper – the tenderness, vulnerability, and perseverance those inside impart to those outside often goes far beyond the margins.



Nichole Johnson- Alumni Success Story

She was one of the first interns at Humans of San Quentin and is currently attending the University of California, Santa Barbara, hoping to pursue a career in criminal justice, policy, and history.



The various roles of the interns

- **Correspond with incarcerated individuals**
- **Help make our social media posts**
- **Send your comments to our incarcerated authors**
- **Write the newsletters for our donors**
- **Publish all the stories to the website**

Supporting our work

www.humansofsanquentin.com

@humansofsanquentin

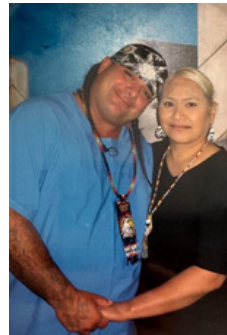


Thank you to our partners: Silkroad, Friends of the San Quentin Library, Imani's Safehouse, Friends of San Quentin News, The Beat Within, Solitary Watch, BigHouse Card, California Arts in Corrections, Ella Baker Center, ACLU, and more.

Thank you for donating!

Visit our website and click the "Donate" tab!

Your investment brings the voices of people living in prisons around the world into our communities. Together we provide employment opportunities and professional development for people formerly and presently incarcerated. We thank each and every one of you for your time, generosity, and continued support. Because of you, we can shine a light into every cell around the world to reveal the humanity inside every one of us.



Humans of San Quentin

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Call us: (415) 295-7139

2022 Media



The Ark (newspaper): "Belvedere woman helps share stories from inside San Quentin."



Meant For It (podcast): Diane Kahn was featured in an episode where she explained what HoSQ is and how it changes the narrative of those incarcerated.



Research Gate (research paper): "Humans of San Quentin: Humanising the incarcerated through social media advocacy" by Dwayne Antojado, Marietta Martinovic and Diane Kahn.



Marin IJ (newspaper): "Belvedere woman gives a voice to incarcerated people through Humans of San Quentin."



Research Gate (research paper): "Challenging the 'Social Death' of Incarcerated People Through Storytelling and Advocacy" By Dwayne Antojado, Marietta Martinovic, Diane Kahn and Tarmi Vard.

HUMANS of San Quentin

Thank you so much for your donation to our cause. Because of you, incarcerated individuals have gotten to share their voice and spread awareness. Your gift will greatly contribute to breaking down stereotypes and humanizing the people who live behind bars.

You are giving those incarcerated a reason to remember our shared humanity and an opportunity to improve the lives of the underserved. You are now a part of the effort to provide a collective place to share resources, beliefs and to promote activism regarding social justice.

Without your donations and support, we would not be able to accomplish everything that we do. We hope that this gift is a first of many and your involvement with Humans of San Quentin has just begun.

With much gratitude,
The Humans of San Quentin Team

