

# Gateways for Incarcerated Youth

Issue 3

June 2009

Issue Editors: José Gutierrez, Jr. & Tony Zaragoza

## Peace and Greetings

By José S. Gutierrez, Jr., Gateways Program Manager

What an amazing year it has been serving as Program Manager for Gateways for Incarcerated Youth. I entered this "dream job" with visionary thoughts and goals to further the tremendous work of Dr. Carol Minugh and Haley Lowe who served as Program Managers/Directors before me.

During my tenure with Gateways I have witnessed the power of passion and results of determination as demonstrated by our Gateways team, including: Dr. Tony Zaragoza, Samantha Franks, Emily Sladek, Dr. Carol Minugh, Astra Martin, Kathleen O'Brien, Jeannette Garceau and our plethora of students, volunteers and institutional partners. Our team at Gateways fuels this unique program. I am as impressed as I am thankful for their unwavering support and dedication on Gateways' behalf.

I say these things as a farewell of sorts. I was informed on May 26, 2009 that the Gateways Program Manager position has been eliminated by The Evergreen State College as part of its budget cut process effective June 30, 2009. Although the Program Manager position is and has been privately funded, TESC administration has determined that the only option is to eliminate it. I adamantly disagree with this decision and it leaves many questions to be answered by the remaining Gateways staff. I am confident in the staff's ability to continue our work with our friends, family, supporters and partners of Gateways.

On a positive note our academic, mentoring/tutoring, and intern programs will remain to serve our students and communities. These



At the podium Samantha Franks and José Gutierrez, Jr. thank and honor a few of the challenge program volunteers: left of the podium John Nicholson, Chantal Brouillard, Ed Tuffree, and right of the podium Hillary Hacker and Thomas Kolb.  
Photo: Heidi Stygar

programs are essential to the foundation of Gateways' philosophy of providing a platform for education, cultural diversity and self-esteem building programs.

I will always be an alumnus and representative of Gateways and will continue to support and be a part of Gateways beyond this challenging transition. I hope that you will consider being a part of the solutions as well.

## Cultural Groups Update

By Samantha Franks, Challenge Program Coordinator

All of the cultural groups at Green Hill have had a successful year and are preparing for their annual Cultural Fair. The Cultural Fair offers the groups a chance to work together and to share each other's cultures. This 2-day all school event will take place in June. The Cultural Fair follows on the amazing work that each of the cultural groups have done this year.

The Green Hill Chicano Cultural Group celebrated Cinco de Mayo by putting on an outstanding presentation at an all-school assembly. They made a power-point, brought in

traditional Folklórico singers and dancers, created raps, costumes and speeches that all centered around the history of Cinco de Mayo. They also remembered Cesar Chavez in an all-school assembly where they marched through the auditorium as strikers. They created small skits and presented an interactive presentation that honored the life and work of Chavez.

The Green Hill African American Cultural Group celebrated African American History month at an all school assembly where they presented a power-point of history from the 1700's to the

present. They also brought in traditional drums and performed songs, poetry and raps. They then went to Maple Lane School to repeat the performance there at an all-school assembly.

The Native American Cultural Group at Green Hill recently held their annual powwow. This year, Maple Lane, Naselle, and Echo Glen all participated in Green Hill's powwow by performing different dances, songs, and poems. The groups coordinated with local and statewide tribes to bring this event to the school.

The Asian Pacific Islander Group at Green Hill is preparing

for their annual Luau in July, where they will put on a Poi dancing performance, roast a pig in the traditional underground style, and create a presentation talking about the history and importance of each heritage of the group's members.

Thanks to the staff at Green Hill for all their work supporting the cultural groups: Reggie Parker, Tony Arredondo, Gus Williams, Hezekiah Carter III, Mike Smith, Ben Lupo, Todd Donaldson and Evergreen student Alvina Wong. Samantha Franks is the Gateways AmeriCorps Challenge Coordinator.

**Gateways Staff:** José Gutierrez—Program Manager, Ellen Shortt-Sanchez—Director Center for Community Based Learning & Action, Tony Zaragoza—College Class Faculty, Samantha Franks—Challenge Program Coordinator, Emily Sladek—Cultural Evening Coordinator, Jeannette Garceau—Internet Class Study Leader, Carol Minugh (Retired)—Founder, Dreamer & Schemer

# Voices of Incarcerated Youth

## Repulca Dominicana by Dominique Stewart

Dominique walked and walked around the island looking for the children and their families that survived the massive hurricane that hit the small island of Hispaniola. As he's walking he sees shattered glass everywhere, he sees children, clothes, silverware and dishes, bed frames, blankets, box springs, and even gutters and shingles from the houses. When Dominique walked around taking in all the damage, devastated by it all, he cries for the family's houses that were destroyed, and all the families that most likely got killed by the hurricane.

## My Mother by Antwan Reche

Amelia Rechè is my mother. A strong believer in Jesus. A person who speaks the truth. My mother "Never gives less than your very best." "A friend will never ask and your enemy will never believe you anyway." My mother. These lessons spoken from her. Spoken as fierce and strong as a lion. Yet, as eloquent and wise as Martin Luther King Jr. himself. My mother. Protective as a mother goose over her goslings, yet willing to allow us to fall and bump our heads. Not out of anger or frustration, however as a lesson learned. My mother. Strong willed with an enormous heart. Never scared to stand for what's right even when she may be standing alone. My mother. Even though we were raised thru some rough times, she taught us the meaning of perseverance. Taught us to stay strong when the tough times come, and to never forget where I came from when times get good. My mother. Taught us Yes mam, No mam, Yes sir, and No sir. Not to be only respectful and courteous, but the whole meaning to proper etiquette. How to be respectful and honor the elderly. My mother. Not just a person who can talk the walk, but a person who walks the walk. A person who can bring joy to any weeping person and peace to any storm. My mother. A person who accepts you for you and will help you write your own life story. A person who believed in me when no one else did. My mother. A person who turned cream into butter and a coal into a diamond. Yes, a person who fell three, but rose five. My mother. The greatest influence in my life. The person who loves me. Amelia Rechè. A strong believer in Jesus. A person who speaks the truth.

My Mother

Love

## Bus Stop by Kylan Houle

Slowly going by fast the city moves more than an ant pile. Partly cloudy and partly smoggy it makes for hard seeing. Tall buildings, huge parking lots, and too many fast food restaurants. Loud cars, smelly buses, bright lights. So much to see, but not wanting to leave the sight before your eyes. So many smells, but only enjoying the smell of your heart. Your heart pounding for the beautiful sights, but also the repulsive smell of a drunk, some old food, and exhaust. All this and I have not left the bus stop.

## Dialogue by Desmond MacAdory

"Tavonne, what's up with you?" Desmond replies, "How's life been treating you?"

Tavonne turns toward me and says, "I have been having dreams about getting out of jail."

Desmand replies, "Me too. We will be getting out sooner than you think, Tavonne. It has been rough, but the worst is over."

Tavonne replies, "It's been 3 years for me and 2 years for you. Ain't that true."

"Damn right," Desmond said as we printed off the last Green Hill shirts.

Tavonne lastly says, "We will make it through this," then went back to the living units.

## What is FEAR? by Rory Chaten

Fear,  
is afraid to be out the house at night.  
Fear,  
is afraid to run a yellow light.  
Fear,  
still needs to sleep with a night light.  
Fear,  
still gets stage-fright.  
Fear,  
is the reason some are afraid to fight.  
Fear,  
is the reason some still do fight.  
Fear,  
is why some say "I might,"  
instead of "I will" or "I can."

I don't worry about FEAR,  
I demolish it with this pencil and paper here.

## Mind by Tavonne Jones

Thick or Thin,  
My money never bends,  
Love or Life,  
But some shit aint right,  
Fast or slow,  
Where should I go,  
Dark or bright,  
Nobody could dim my light,  
Stop or go,  
I just don't know,  
I'm writing from my soul,  
Diamonds and Gold,  
Cars and clothes,  
I would never give up my love for my goals,  
I get wise every day, but never a day old.

## Maple Lane by Pablo De La Cruz

Every day I see new kids and old ones. We are all in here for a crime that we did and are waiting for our time to come to go home. As we wake up all tired and ready to go to breakfast, we still do not like the staff telling us to move. Every kid is different, some wake up feeling down and some wake up to see what the day will be like. Some of us are going to change what brought us here and others are going to go back to what they did before. Some of us are going to get out soon and others are not. Our lives are controlled by the system, we have a week schedule which means that every day of the week is planned and from the day you come till the day you leave every week will be just the same as the week before. We all come from different parts of the state, we are all here to do our time and hopefully to learn from our mistakes.

## **Brothers** by Harold Lang

Sitting in jail, they are seated next to each other. They are both locked up for drug charges and robbery charges. They are brothers talking about what they did and why. Brother 1 is the older one, brother 2 is younger.

"Damn lil Bro, it's all bad. We both booked until 2015, it's over," Brother 1 said.

"Yea I know, but to me it was worth it. Look mom was broke; kicked out of our house, barely had money for gas. Thank God she had food stamps because she wouldn't or had money for food. Both of us was broke. We both got kids; no where to stay. Life was all bad. What was we to do, continue to suffer? F\*\*\* no, I had to get money the only way I knew how," Brother 2 explained.

"I know we had no choice. We both are too young to work so it's over, but look now mom got a house, money for gas and herself, she's not sleeping in her car. She's happy her life is back on track. Our daughters are eating, got what they need, everything is good except for us being booked, but it's all good," Brother 1 said.

"It's all for mom and our kids as long as their happy, we straight," Brother 2 said.

"Enough with this soft stuff. Did you finish your college work?"

"Yea Bro get out of here. I'm done."

"Fo show Bro, I'm just checking."

## **Hip-Pop** by DeAnthony Kimbrew

My pops is a cool dude. Unlike most young people these days, I love kicking it with pops. He is 48 with the swagga of a youngsta; I like to say he's just reliving his prime years. He's my dad and my #1 homeboy. He's there to pick me up when I fall, put me back on track, and keep it pushin. All he wants is to see me do good and succeed in life, so whatever support I need he's there to share. As a dad he is concerned for my well being, but when I'm confident I can approach a situation on my own he'll kick back and encourage on. As my homie, he's a hip-pop. I talk to him about any and everything. We have some of the same taste as far as material things: nice cars, big rims, flashy jewelry, in-style clothing, fresh fitted caps, and new J's on his feet. an ordinary dad with extra ordinary swag. I like how he likes some of the same music as me rap, R & B and underground music. My pops basically lives my life with me and departs when it's time to do his father thing. He's like my twin: talks like me, walks like me, but I walk like him, broad with my head to the sky ready to take on anything life brings my way. When I was born I had a twin that died in the womb so I always believed pops has played my twin's role and also has been a great pops, a hip-pop at that.

## **My Counselor** by Justin Marsh

Steve usually comes to work with a long-sleeved green shirt under a black vest. The vest looks like it would be great for fishing because of its four pockets down the front. He wears blue jeans and hiking shoes to go with it. The whole getup gives him an outdoorsman look.

He's been working at Green Hill School for a minimum of ten years so he is well acquainted with the rules and policies that gives him a strict decorum.

Often Steve will be spotted with a smile at the checker-board teaching a newbie a lesson or two. Checkers is his favorite way to interact. If he can't beat you, though, you'll never have time to do a thing because he gets determined to find a way around your defense.

He takes pride in his red hair. It's always loosely slicked back. He keeps his goatee well-groomed. It has a mix of grey in it, but he doesn't let his age steal his vitality.

At the end of the day, Steve goes home just as energetic (if not more) as when he came in. That may be because he's always got a cup of coffee in his hand. Either way he outdoes most of the residents here.

## **Shelton Skate Park** by Zack Kaylor

The smooth pavement and the beautiful curves of the half pipe seem as if they were created as one. The cool breeze slapping at kids faces. Laughter, crying, yelling, and talking are heard from all over. The stench of burnt gas and oil from the passing cars. Kids smiling, frowning, confused, amused, and determined. The banging of unsuccessful tricks. Parents looking surprised at how graceful their children are. The look on their faces is like little children when they meet their hero surprised, shocked and in awe at how cool it feels to talk with legends of their own time.

## **Phone Call** by Azel Chavez

When you're locked in a cage, you're stagnate to the world. Almost like you don't exist. Everything, everyone you know, moves on without you. The result is a feeling/emotions, hurt/pain/tearing from the inside. You can't even get away from yourself. It's not an easy transition. It's slow; an everyday wound that only gets deeper, more painful, and harder to endure. Every time it comes, this feeling, these emotions, it's worse then before, harder to get through. The angel inside only grows deeper more imbedded in the heart and mind. Where there were once tears of a broken heart there is now only wrath.

But even this is left behind by time. Our conversation took place 15 minutes ago, it's gone. But one side will never know what took place thereafter to the heart of the other. Why must we suffer over and over again after such hard and broken lives have already been lived. After we've been through so much that nothing could possibly break us down. But then, a cold reality from none other than this cold world is put upon one's life with only the objective to inflict an unspoken and unseen brutality. And it's like the first time all over again.

## **The Judge** by Evan Savoie

My judge was a man in his mid-fifties. A man in a black robe, with glasses and grey hair. It did not appear to be grey with wisdom, but grey because of the constant judgment of others. He was a powerful man. Not because of his actions, but because of his words. His words were sharper than any sword and could do more damage than the mightiest blow. He knew how powerful his words were, and therefore he was confident and self-assured. His walk portrayed this. He walked how a lion must walk through a jungle. With the knowledge that he is the king secure in his mind. He knows that no one can oppose him, for who can defy a man who with words alone can end ones definition of life. I was 12 years old when I met this man. 15 when he said I would not be going home. 15 and a half when he said I would be spending the next 2 and a half decades behind bars. I have often wondered how this affected him, if it did at all. Was it as hard for him to say as it was for me to hear? I find myself doubting that he felt any discomfort when he said the words that changed my life forever. Because as I am here wasting away, dead to the world, he is living life as he always has.

## **I Walk** by Antonio Newsome

I walk and I see clean houses, large neighborhoods and people with something to do. I walk down the road five miles and I see dudes with big cars and big rims, colors that could make you lose your life. Females with next to nothing on. Houses that look like they are not fit for animals to live in. I walk and listen for the sounds of police sirens because when they come around someone is going to get harassed.

I walk and look over my shoulder for one of the biggest gangs in my town, The Pierce County Sheriff's. I walk and I am raised by the code of the streets. I walk and I am separated not by the color of my skin but by the color I choose to wear. I walk and I am looked at as being different because the girls I choose to date are not the same color as I am.

I walk and obstacles are put in my way like prison, drugs, and gangs. I walk and I see females selling their bod's to make some money to feed their kids. I walk because life is too short to be running.

# Gateways for Incarcerated Youth

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## Gateways Programs

**Cultural Identity Groups** offer participants the opportunity to learn more about their cultural heritage while bonding with others of similar backgrounds. Gateways provides program support to staff with a strong commitment to cultural diversity. Gateways subscribes to the philosophy that when an individual is secure in their identity and proud of their heritage they are able to be more accepting of others.

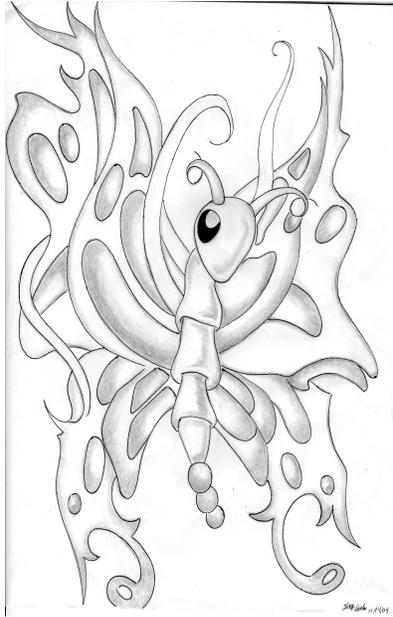
**College Class** offer residents the opportunity to work with teachers and students from The Evergreen State College. Evergreen students work as co-learners with residents on a weekly basis. Students read and discuss a college level text, write response papers, and engage in a positive peer relationship.

**Diversity Workshop** Through small and large group discussions and interactive workshops, students are challenged to participate and learn from multicultural activities to better understand others while further developing their own identities and social skills.

**Gateways Challenge Program** provides Educational Partners for residents to engage in academic planning, tutoring, goals setting, life skills, pre-college testing, pre-college classes, building self-esteem and critical thinking skills.

**Cultural Evenings** take place once per month and are open to the entire campus. The performances and presentations provided by the cultural evening are intended to entertain, educate, and enhance the audiences understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

**Associate of Arts Degree Program at Green Hill** is taught as a hybrid distance learning program that allows Green Hill students to enroll in full time courses online through Grays Harbor Community College. The curriculum is fast paced, challenging and collaborative with excellent faculty who are student-centered.



Shaded Drawing by Derek Holman

## Gateways Raffle *by Samantha Franks*

Amidst the brightly-colored costumes, smiling faces, chalk-covered streets, interactive art, storefront galleries, and music-filled air, Gateways for Incarcerated Youth had its first annual Raffle. April 24th and 25th Gateways volunteers stood on Fourth Avenue in Downtown Olympia in front of Last Word Books, talking to hundreds of Arts Walk attendees.

In the months building up to Arts Walk, students from the Gateways class collected donations from local business adding up to over \$800 to raffle off. Our prizes ranged from upscale dinners to tattoos, from books to massages and everything in-between.

During the event we had books, CD's, zines and tee-shirts to sell with our raffle tickets. By the end of the weekend we surpassed our goal of raising \$1,500 and raised \$2,000 for books and tuition for our students at Green Hill and Maple Lane schools.

We would like to thank all of the businesses that donated, all of the people who supported us with buying tickets, and all of the volunteers that made it possible. Without you, our fundraiser would not have been as successful as it was. We look forward to next year's raffle and hope that we can double what we raised this year.

Again thank you for making our first raffle such a huge success.

[And a huge thanks to Samantha for all her work in organizing the raffle!]

## Correspondence

*Thanks for sending the newsletters, I really appreciate it. It's inspiring to know that the Gateways programs are growing. [...] Participating in Gateways was a truly transformative experience for me. It was both challenging and deeply personal, and I'll never forget it. It's without a doubt my strongest memory of Evergreen. [...] Thanks for keeping me informed, and please let me know how I can continue to support the work of Gateways in any capacity, no matter how small.*

*Hope all is well, Alex Becker, Evergreen Class of '08*

Send your correspondence with Gateways to Tony at [zaragozt@evergreen.edu](mailto:zaragozt@evergreen.edu) or to the address above

## First Year at Evergreen *José S. Gutierrez, Jr. & Waylon Littleton*

Recently, I had the opportunity to talk with one of our Gateways alumni who was once incarcerated at Green Hill School, but who chose to attend college and is now completing his first year at The Evergreen State College. Waylon Littleton has come a long way and he says he is still searching...

### *How are you doing with your new life and the responsibilities of school, employment and freedom?*

It's better than being locked up (laughs)! Working and getting paid is important to me. I have to balance a schedule that includes school, work and friends. And I have to watch the company I keep, because there is always the chance of being tempted to go in the wrong direction.

### *How do you deal with the temptations?*

I have good friends like Dr.

Minugh, people at Gateways and some friends who care about me. That's a good thing. It helps to have people who care, who will listen and sit down with you. You know?

### *You had a chance to speak in Centralia on behalf of keeping Green Hill open, as it is facing a budget cut and possible closure. How was that?*

I get nervous speaking in public sometimes, but I said the truth. I didn't really like Green Hill and being there, but Gateways being there helped me to see life differently and I chose to get an education.

### *What are you studying and pursuing now as life goals?*

Well, I recently got a car! That was a goal. And I am working on music – writing, singing and rapping. Right now I am in a performance arts class at Evergreen. I like to have a good time, so it has been fun.

### *How do you see yourself as a role model for others? Or what would you say to young cats who are incarcerated now?*

Well, I don't really look at myself as a role model, but I tell guys that college is a good thing to get into. I have some friends interested in college, but they don't have the support and resources like I received from Gateways so it's hard. I just let guys know to keep their heads up and to stay away from the garbage, because its easy to get into.

### *Thanks, Waylon!*

*"It's easy to get in, but it's hard as hell to get out" – Jayo Felony, from the album, Whatcha Gonna Do?*

Young men like Waylon Littleton are examples of what support, an opportunity and more support can do for a brilliant mind. Thank you for being you, Waylon.